

BLOODLINE
AND
COVENANT

BY A CHRISTIAN FATHER

Dedicated to all of the brothers and sisters in the
faith who have joined me in praying for
the future of our people.

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Preface

During the twentieth century, the nations that were previously known as Christendom entered a period of apostasy. Atheistic humanism replaced Christianity as the dominant, default worldview throughout the West. The Christian response to this crisis has been seriously hindered by an inability or unwillingness to identify and confront the core belief of our opponents: egalitarianism. The false belief in absolute equality is central to the humanist effort to undermine the Church, the family, and the nation. Tragically, this same false belief has been introduced into much Christian teaching. This has caused us to walk in darkness and has made us helpless to defend ourselves against attack. When Christians affirm their adherence to the doctrine of human equality, they are offering a pinch of incense at the altar of the enemy. This seemingly small offering brings the Christian much respectability and peace in this world, because it communicates that the most important issue will remain untouched. My prayer is that God's people would repent of their adherence to this false worldly teaching about equality. Let us cast out this pagan altar that has been allowed into the Church, and bring our hearts and minds into subjection to the Word of our Lord.

1. The Concept of Bloodline

The enemies of the Gospel demand a belief in human equality in many areas of life, including gender, class, and sexual orientation; but racial equality is the belief that they prize above all others. Christians are given more leniency to deny equality in other areas, but as soon as they deny racial equality, they become completely ostracized by the world. The furious condemnation of all who question racial equality has led many Christians to ignore the Biblical teaching on this topic. Racial identity is one of the most significant aspects of human nature, and it is repeatedly referenced throughout Scripture. We cannot gain a complete picture of God's design for his creation without honestly accepting what God says about race.

When discussing this subject, we often use words such as “race”, “ancestry”, “ethnicity”, “nation”, “kin”, “tribe”, “heritage”, etc. All of these words are valuable, and their etymologies disclose important truths about who we are. In this book I frequently use some of these words, but I have chosen to focus primarily on the term “bloodline”. There are three reasons for this:

1. The term “bloodline” is equally oriented to the past and the future. We must not think of our identity simply

as something handed down from our ancestors, rather we must see it as one of the guiding principles in our daily lives. Our choices and habits have an impact on both the genetic composition and the covenant faithfulness of the future generations of our particular bloodline.

2. The term “bloodline” emphasizes the immutable, physical aspect of human identity. We might be able to alter our national allegiance, but our bloodline cannot be changed. Once we have selected a spouse and begotten children, the bloodline of our posterity is irrevocably established.

3. The term “bloodline” is scalable; that is, it serves equally well when describing a single family or a major racial grouping. Given the overwhelming hostility of the current power structure towards any positive identity amongst certain groups, it can often feel overwhelming when attempting to make positive changes to improve our own people. We are indeed largely powerless to influence our entire race or nation, but at the level of the family we are able to make positive, meaningful choices. These choices are seeds that have the potential to grow into a much wider revival.

Bloodline is an essential concept in Christianity. Scripture uses human relationships such as sonship and marriage to describe the covenant of mercy. These human relationships cannot be properly understood without accepting the goodness of the special affection

and loyalty that is found within a bloodline. Therefore, when the egalitarian demonization of bloodline distinctions is accepted within the Church, the most basic foundation of our faith is distorted. We must seek a clear view of what God has revealed about the nature of human bloodlines, and of how this concept is essential to who we are.

2. Summary of the Christian Faith

When combating the worldly doctrine of egalitarianism, one can often become preoccupied with political questions, and this preoccupation can become a snare. As Christians we should not ignore politics, but we must always keep Christ and his heavenly kingdom as our main focus. I have therefore included this summary of the faith in order to assist in maintaining a proper orientation towards the eternal. Our interest in bloodline is not for the sake of political advancement in this world, but for the sake of seeking the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

-There is one true almighty God, Jehovah (the I AM), from everlasting to everlasting.

-In the Godhead there are three coeternal persons of the same essence and power, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is love, and there has always been uncreated love amongst the three persons of the Trinity.

-God created the heavens and the earth. All things were created through the Son (the Word, the Divine Wisdom). God created man from the dust of the earth and breathed a living soul into him. The soul of man came directly from the breath (the Holy Spirit) of God in a unique way.

Here we find the image of God in man, and here the uncreated and the created meet in the closest union.

-God declared all things created before the entry of sin to be good, save one: that man should be alone without a helper meet for him. Therefore God created woman, not out of the dust of the earth, but out of man himself. The original man and woman came from the same flesh, and in marriage they become one flesh. All children begin their lives sharing flesh and blood with their mother. The bloodline is established in marriage, and natural procreation is the God-ordained means of populating the earth.

-At the creation man was sinless, but not perfect, for he was labile. In the new heaven and earth the saints will be so perfected and united to God that it will no longer be possible to sin.

-Man was created with a spirit and a material body. The body was created to obey the spirit, and the spirit to obey God. When man sinned, he retained both spirit and body, but the proper order amongst God, the spirit, and the body was perverted. The spirit became disobedient to God and instantly suffered a kind of spiritual death, and the body was cursed to eventually undergo physical death as well. The body became disobedient to the spirit, and henceforth all of fallen man, even the spiritual part, is said to be carnal. Because man was created to exercise dominion over creation, when he sinned, God's wrath

(which is seen primarily in death) came not only upon man, but upon all creation, and the creation itself groans for redemption.

-Man was intended through the act of physical procreation to beget new souls bearing the image of God in purity. Because of original sin, man must confess that in his flesh there is no good thing, that his flesh and blood cannot inherit eternal life, but only death, and that he passes this curse to his children through his natural bloodline.

-When God revealed his wrath to Adam, he also revealed his promise of redemption. Both God's wrath and his saving promise were tied to the natural bloodline. Through their bloodline, Adam and Eve passed on the curse of death to their children, while the seed of the woman was promised to defeat death and the devil.

-After the fall, the family, through its own natural power, can only propagate sin and death; but when sanctified through the grace of God communicated through his covenant of mercy, the family can bring forth new saints to fear and obey God.

-The promised seed came with the birth of Christ. The coeternal son of God became man by taking created flesh and blood from the virgin Mary, while remaining the uncreated Word in his person. Although true God, he put aside his glory and allowed his own humiliation.

Only at his ascension into heaven did he gain the full exercise of all divine attributes in his humanity. In becoming man, the son was made like us, sin only excepted. Unlike the first Adam who was of the earth and labile, this second Adam is heavenly and incapable of falling into sin. All children of the first Adam were born of the will of man, but Jesus was born of the will of God. The Heavenly Father is the only father of Jesus Christ, both in his human and divine natures.

-Christ offered himself as the sacrificial lamb for the sin of the world. Those who have faith in Christ and his sacrifice are given the power to be born again by the Spirit. In believers, the image of God is renewed, and they are made temples of the Holy Spirit and partakers of the divine nature.

-Our flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, and so our life in the present age is a matter of dying to the world and to sin, and of planting the corruptible body as a seed from which our incorruptible spiritual body will be raised. This spiritual body will be fit to dwell in the new Jerusalem, where the Lord himself will be our light and where Christ's prayer that we be one with him as he and the Father are one will be fulfilled.

-Despite the fact that the creation is under the wrath of God, his mercy and love are seen in the created gifts that come to us through the natural world. Spouses and

children are chief amongst these gifts. Our duty in this life is to walk according to God's light, his will revealed through the Scriptures, and to direct all of our fellow children of Adam (especially those in near bloodline relation to us) to this light. Those to whom God has given the gift of celibacy, such as St. Paul, ought to have a special yearning for the spiritual welfare of their own wider bloodline. For Christian parents, our primary calling is to sanctify the natural bloodline through discipling our children.

3. Love From Heaven

In the previous chapter, I presented an overview of the Christian faith in order to focus our consideration of bloodline distinctions on eternal realities, not on worldly political concerns. This chapter has a similar aim. We must always remember the areas that are more immediately under our control and concentrate our efforts there. Our chief aim and our chief object of prayer must be the purification of our own hearts and the hearts of those under our authority. This is the starting point for building a godly nation.

God is love, and out of love God became man and died for us. The greatest commandments are to love God with the whole heart and to love our neighbors as ourselves. The true love of God must be out of a pure heart; because the heart of fallen man is corrupt, only those who have been born again by the Spirit can properly obey these commandments. This true love must be a love from heaven imparted by God into the heart of the believer.

There can be much confusion on this point, as fallen men often identify their own carnal affections with the love of God mentioned in Scripture. Heavenly love is distinguished from carnal love in that heavenly love is never offended by the law of God. Any thought within

you that protests against the law of God as revealed through Moses is carnal and is to be repented of. Meditating on the law purges us of the false love that seeks to permit and justify perversion and unrighteousness. If any portion of the law offends your carnal mind, study the passage closely, and then read Psalm 119 and its ecstatic praise of the law, and pray that God grant you the mind of the psalmist. The failure to purge out our false carnal notions about love has poisoned the family, the Church, and society.

In order to have true love, the believer must put to death sinful self-will; he must learn to discern between the inner motions of the heart that originate from God and those that originate from the flesh or the devil. We should only assent to those motions that are caused by God working and willing in us. This is true when it comes to choosing both the proper object of love and the proper manner of love. A carnal man can have the proper object of love, such as wife or children, but this love comes from the fallen will, not from God, so we must say that this carnal man is incapable of loving in the proper manner.

In those who have been born again, the flesh still wars against the spirit, and thus even a Christian man can have the proper object of love but still vacillate between a proper and improper manner of loving. This is often seen in Christian parents. Such parents do have a God-given heavenly love for their children, but they can still have lingering carnal love for their children as well. A godly love for a child desires that God's will for the

child be done for God's glory. A carnal love desires that a child gain worldly reputation or success in order to bring glory to the child or to the parent.

If you love with your own strength rather than God loving in you, your love will often turn to anger and selfishness. Only love that comes from God can lead a parent into the peace that passes understanding.

We read in Luke 1:17 that fathers will turn their hearts to their children as part of the preparation for receiving the Christ. Our principal duty as fathers is to bring Christ into the home. This must involve turning our hearts to our children in love, and this must be the love from heaven. To the extent that we allow sin to remain dominant in us, we fail to attain this heavenly love, and therefore we fail to turn our hearts to our children as we ought. If we habitually walk in the darkness rather than in the light, we in fact curse our wives, children, and extended bloodline. "If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked"(Prov 29:12). The world, the flesh, and the devil will always speak lies to us, seeking to draw us away from God. Because he is the head of the family, if a father hearkens to these lies, this can easily spread wickedness to all those under his authority. Because this influence on the family is spiritual, the father's assent to these lies need not be shown externally in an obvious way in order to cause damage. Any inner assent to despair or carnal anger can poison the atmosphere of the home and damage the father's communion with God.

We must always seek the Lord's refining fire in order to gain more love and imperishable treasure for our children. Our joy must be found in loving those who are so similar to us, being bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh; our joy must be found in sensing the Spirit putting to death our carnal desires for the worldly success of our children; our joy must be found in knowing that all of our activities can be directed towards the goal of bringing eternal life to those who are dearest to us.

Fathers, turn your hearts to your children; put away all worldly distractions. Do not allow either carnal joy or self-absorbed depression and worry to divert you from your calling.

Each human is created to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. Deep in the heart of the believer, deeper than any created thought or will, is the chamber of God, where there is love for all men. As we disciple our children, our aim must be to cleanse these temples, these inner chambers, the part of our children that will last forever when the perfect is come and the imperfect has passed away. The more thoroughly they are cleansed, the more completely they can gain the love of God and fulfill their purpose. Man was designed to be a nexus for God's love to be manifested in the world and contribute to the edification of all creatures; after the fall, man became a nexus for sin and selfishness, parasitically feeding on creatures and his fellow men. Through God's grace working within us, we can regain this original purpose.

We achieve this by willingly taking up the cross and finding our joy in obeying God. If we do not form the habit of taking up the cross, love can be disrupted in relationships when we are required to do things that are unpleasant to the flesh. If we obey Christ and deny ourselves, then we can dwell in love even when doing these unpleasant things. We must keep the commandments to love God and neighbor as the apple of the eye, we must reflexively cling to these commandments as the one great treasure on which all else depends. If a father allows anger at a petty annoyance to lodge in his heart, he risks tarnishing the loving atmosphere of the home and sowing seeds of selfishness and carnal revenge. Any annoyance that starts to build in the flesh must be willingly accepted in the soul as a cross from God. In this way that which would be an annoyance to the carnal mind becomes a teacher of patience to the mind renewed by the Spirit. In period's of self-examination, we must look back at every cross and difficulty encountered during the day and repent of any imperfections in how they were received.

Parents are commanded not to provoke their children to wrath. This is done by walking in the new birth and completely putting off our own wrath and all other carnal passions. We must be able to say with a clean conscience that in all correction and admonition directed at our children we are acting in the name of the Lord Jesus. We must show heavenly love to those under our authority in every word and act. We have brought our children to God in prayer and baptism, and we must

direct their hearts towards this reality of eternal life, seeing them first as reborn children of God, and only secondarily as our own. We must stand in awe of our children, remembering what is threatened against those who offend them (Mark 9:42).

The sanctified bloodline proceeds from a sanctified marriage. Therefore husbands and wives who desire blessings for their children and their race must strive to conform their conduct within marriage to the commandments of God.

Prayer is at the center of all Christian efforts; it directly confesses our own weakness and our faith in God's omnipotence. Without the divine aid that comes in answer to prayer, we can do nothing. St. Peter tells us that an improper relationship with our wives can result in our prayers being hindered (1 Pet 3:7). In order that our prayers not be hindered, we must see our wives as fellow heirs of the kingdom of heaven and as fellow brides of Christ. We are to imitate Christ, who purifies his Church through the Word, in how we lead and comfort our wives. Like all children of Adam, our wives were created for union with God, and those women who have been born again have been espoused to the heavenly bridegroom and look forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb when this union will be fulfilled. An understanding of this reality must shape how we view our wives; they belong primarily not to us, but to God; their heavenly bridegroom hates all sin and wishes to purify his people of it; he desires husbands to be one of

the means of carrying out this purification through their prayer, obedience, and godly leadership within the home.

Our conduct within marriage is not to be based on personal whims or preferences, but rather on conformity to God's Word and the promptings of the Spirit within us. The flesh and the devil will do everything in their power to disrupt this obedience. Temptation to sexual impurity is one of the greatest weapons wielded by the enemy, and constant vigilance is required on our part to meet this danger. We must strive for total purity in the married estate, heeding Christ's warning about spiritual adultery. A Christian man must be a spiritual eunuch in thought and deed everywhere outside of the marriage bed, lest he become defiled and lose the love from heaven. In like manner we must be dead to all carnal anger and selfishness, having put off "the body of the sins of the flesh"(Col 2:11).

Every Christian father is anointed by God to lead his family in heavenly love according to the divine law. Families under this anointed leadership form the basis of nations faithful to God.

4. Sowing the Word of God

In purifying ourselves and our families, we must always look to Christ as revealed in the Word of God. This will keep us from the snares of glorying in our own works or directing our families according to our own wills. The parable of the sower (found in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8) shows us how the Word of God is sown in the heart, and it also warns of the impediments to the flourishing of this seed. This parable is useful for understanding both the initial conversion of a Christian and his growth in holiness, and parents should apply the lessons of this parable both to themselves and to their children. The more firmly the Word of God is rooted in our hearts, the more effectively we can cultivate it in the hearts of others.

In the parable, the seed is the Word of God and the human heart is the ground on which it falls. The seed that falls by the wayside is trodden down and devoured by birds. This ground by the wayside is the man who hears the Word of God, but does not understand it, and therefore the devil is able to come at once and take the Word from him. This warns us against the superficial and careless reading and teaching of Scripture. When we read or hear Scripture in a distracted way, without ensuring that there is proper understanding of what is said, the Word cannot take root. The devil is active

where the Word of God is being read or spoken, trying to steal it away. We overthrow the devil and his plots by patiently spending time with the Word until we understand what we are reading. When teaching our children, we likewise must ask God for the patience to work gently with them until they reach an understanding of what they are hearing. Of course at a young age a child will not gain the same level of understanding as an adult, but at every Scripture reading even very young children can receive some understanding of what is being said.

The seed that falls on stony ground has little earth in which to grow. The seed springs up, but it is scorched by the sun because it has no root and no moisture. The stony ground is the man who receives the Word with joy when first hearing it, but then falls away when there is persecution for the Word's sake. In a healthy Christian who has the Word rooted deeply in the heart, the heat of persecution brings forth fruit and growth. The Christian should be prepared for the dual action of outer trial (the heat of the sun) and inner nourishment from the Word (the moisture from the roots). It is of course beyond our control when and where persecution arises, but I believe we can still learn from the parable how to prepare for such circumstances. We are certainly to receive the Word with joy, but we must be careful about the nature of this joy. The joy of hearing the Word can be emotional and superficial. This type of joy is of the same order as the carnal joy one feels when receiving external physical gifts such as rest,

food, etc., and it only persists as long as external conditions are favorable. When persecution comes, many of these external gifts are taken away. If the joy of the Gospel does not reach deep into the heart, then it will not provide the nourishment needed in these times of trial. We must fight against the merely superficial reception of the Word. Rather than simply reading and understanding, we must spend much time contemplating the Word, meditating on how we fall short of the commands of the Gospel. When we are accustomed to judging all things by the Word and allowing the Word to reshape our inner life, then we are given abundant nourishment by the living water.

The seed that falls among thorns springs up, but is choked by the thorns and yields no fruit. The ground covered with thorns is the man who receives the Word, but his Christian growth is choked by the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things. We have seen that the Word must be carefully understood and laid as a foundation deep in the heart. Once the Word is thus established and rooted, we must war against external temptation that would choke and extinguish the new heavenly life that is springing up within us. The Word drives us to seek first the kingdom of God and not to be anxious about worldly cares or reputation; the Word teaches us that the love of money is the root of all evil; the Word requires that we make war against the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes. All three of these things—the anxiety about what we will eat and drink tomorrow, the love of money, and unlawful

carnal desires—are thorns that suffocate the Christian life. When considering a command or passage from Scripture, ask that the Spirit reveal to you where these thorns might attempt to grow and stifle the application of Scripture to your inner or outer life. Be aware of these thorns, and repent of yielding to them as soon as your sin has been made known.

The seed that falls on good ground bears an abundance of fruit. The good ground is the man who hears the Word, understands it, keeps it in an honest and good heart, and brings forth fruit with patience. Good fruit pleasing to God cannot arise from mere external obedience, it must proceed from the very center of man, from the heart. We must ever pray that God create and sustain a clean heart within us. Although it is certainly within his power to do so, we should not expect God to produce an abundant harvest in us all at once. He wants us to bring forth good works with steadfast waiting and patience. He wants us to mature, growing up into Christ in all things.

In making disciples of our children, we must rely on the working of the Spirit within them. The Spirit works in us to bring forth patience, love, and spiritual discernment. In turn we are to use these gifts to assist in cultivating the Word of God, promoting deep roots and cutting away noxious thorns, and above all praying that God would create honest and good hearts within our children. In this way our children can receive God's teaching about human nature without being deceived by worldly doctrines.

5. Creation and Distinction

The account of the creation recorded in Genesis teaches the goodness of distinction. Sin first arises when Adam and Eve fail to recognize God-ordained distinctions as being good. Both the Law and the Gospel are given by God so that fallen men can once again recognize the goodness of these distinctions and live according to them.

The first distinction mentioned in Scripture occurs in Genesis 1:4, when God divides the light from the darkness. Here we see the separation of two things that are essentially unlike, light and darkness. The next distinction is in Genesis 1:6, where the waters are divided. In this case there is a separation of the same type of thing (water) into different places and/or functions. These two types of distinction are found throughout Scripture. Distinctions can be based on essential differences in the things themselves (such as the distinction between light and darkness) or on God's purpose for the things being divided (such as the waters). In both cases the distinctions are declared to be good, and we must accept this judgment in humility.

In Genesis 1:11-12 we see the creation of plant life and the first mention of biological organism. God brings forth plants from the earth and defines them as having the ability to yield "seed according to his kind".

That is, after their initial creation by God, seed-bearing plants are able to bring forth new organisms of the same kind. This is the first mention of two concepts found throughout Scripture, seed and kind. Seed is the foundation of the male/female distinction, while kind is the foundation of racial distinction.

From a biological perspective, the most fundamental aspect of the male/female divide is that the two genders each have a unique type of seed (or gamete) that is needed for the propagation of life. The male seed contains genetic information, while the female seed contains both genetic information and the nutrition and protection needed for the new organism to begin to grow. This difference in the type of seed exists at the level of plants, and it remains significant as we ascend the scale of living beings. In humans, the female's ability to nourish and protect the new organism is so complex that it results in major differences in the anatomy and daily activity of the two genders, as pregnancy, breastfeeding, and the general care for the helpless child form an extended process.

The concept of kind is the foundation of race, family, and bloodline. Living things are able to procreate and produce the next generation, but they are providentially limited in their procreation in that they can only bring forth creatures like themselves. This is true both across species, where procreation is physically impossible, and across subspecies. In the latter case, different subspecies within the same species can reproduce with each other, but when they do so, they

produce a hybrid that is recognizably different from either parent, often losing the unique goodness of the parents. For example, a polar bear can reproduce with a grizzly bear, but the offspring would not have all of the features of the polar bear subspecies that make it fit to survive in the arctic environment. We saw above that some distinctions made by God are based on the essential differences in the things themselves. This is the type of distinction found in the division of living things into different kinds. Some of these distinctions are absolute and immutable (for example, a reptile and mammal cannot procreate together), while some of these distinctions are not absolute but are maintained by the providential separation within a species. This separation can be geographical or based on the special abilities and roles of the subspecies. The division of the children of Adam into different racial groups is not absolute and immutable, as procreation across racial lines is possible. God has, however, providentially maintained distinct human racial groups over thousands of years through geographical separation, differences of temperament, and the inherent in-group marriage preference found in humans. Wide-scale mixing between human racial groups has largely been the result of military conquest, mass enslavement, or totalitarian political systems.

On the first day God made the light and divided it from darkness, calling the light day and the darkness night. On the fourth day God made the sun, moon, and stars. Genesis gives multiple reasons for why God created these heavenly bodies:

- to divide the day from the night
- to be for signs, seasons, days, and years
- to give light upon the earth
- to rule the day and the night
- to divide the light from the darkness

Here we find another type of distinction: things that have already been separated because of essential differences are further arranged and distinguished in order to emphasize these differences. God has already divided the light from the darkness on the first day of creation, and now he accomplishes the same division through means of the heavenly bodies. We see this same type of secondary distinction in the commandments of God (and in the customs of men) that distinguish male and female, and that distinguish different ethnic groups from each other. These secondary distinctions do not necessarily follow from the essential differences of the things themselves, but they serve to accentuate these essential differences, to preserve order, and to prevent confusion. Just as the precise and regular variation of the heavenly bodies allows us to have a thorough knowledge of days and seasons, so the differences in dress, manners, and speech that exist between the two genders and amongst the various ethnic groups allow us to preserve the order and distinction that is needed for human flourishing.

On the following days we see the creation of animals and man, and again we find the principle of procreation “after their kind”. With the first creation of animals on the fifth day, God commands them “to be fruitful and multiply”. This same command is given to

man, with the added directive to subdue the earth and exercise dominion over all the lower creatures. This is the proper order of creation: man, who is made in the image and likeness of God, was to rule over all other things. His soul was to be subject to God only, not to the creatures. Man's original task was to imitate God in adding further order and distinction to the creation. This was accomplished by dressing and keeping the garden and by naming the animals.

In the case of man, the need for both the male and female of the species is given special emphasis. Adam is first created without a female counterpart by the direct inbreathing of God's Spirit. God then shows Adam that he is incomplete and incapable of fulfilling his role by himself. As Adam's soul comes directly from the Holy Spirit, so Eve comes directly from the flesh and blood of Adam. Adam declares that his wife is "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh". To this day the Church describes marriage as the man and woman becoming one flesh, and this description recalls this origin of Eve out of Adam. The declaration that a man will leave his father and mother and join with his wife (Gen 2:24) establishes the relative primacy of the family, even within the framework of the extended bloodline.

Throughout the creation account, God declares that what he has made is good; indeed, "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good"(Gen 1:31). This goodness extends to the souls of Adam and Eve, and the cleanness of their hearts and

minds is beautifully expressed by the statement that “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed”(Gen 2:25).

Despite the subsequent fall into sin, much of the goodness of the original creation is still preserved. When we are saved by grace and born again by the Holy Spirit, we are given new hearts that rejoice in the order and distinction ordained by God. We rejoice in the fact that we have lights to rule day and night, regular seasons, and a separation of dry land from water. We rejoice that the plants and animals still procreate after their kind. We rejoice that we are called to take dominion over the earth and further the order and distinction established by God. We rejoice that we are given spouses of like blood, with whom we can be unashamed and untroubled in conscience when we become one flesh.

Christ teaches us that doing the will of his Father is our rock (Matt 7:21-27). In the creation account of Genesis, we have a precious revelation of God’s will for man: living in obedience to God, ruling over the creation, entering into a fruitful marriage and bringing forth the next generation, knowing and maintaining the natural distinctions found in the world. May we accept this will of God for us as our rock. May we put to death the carnal mind that desires perversion, confusion, and indiscriminate mixing. Pray that your own soul and the souls of your wife and children may attain the peace and purity intended for the whole creation.

6. Sin and Distinction

With the entrance of sin into the world, we encounter distinctions of great significance: life and death, good and evil, and the separation of the children of Adam into faithful and unfaithful bloodlines.

The Trees of the Garden

The first indication of these distinctions was found before the fall with the description of the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

“And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil...And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen 2:9,16-17)

Here we see the first negative commandment given to man, the first mention of good and evil, and the first mention of life and death. There is some question as to whether or not Adam and Eve ate of the tree of life

before the fall into sin. While it is not explicitly stated in the text, I believe that they did not. In Genesis 3:22 God explains that if they were to eat of the tree of life after the fall into sin, they would live forever. Adam is driven from Eden for the specific reason that he is to be barred from eating of this tree. While prior to the fall, Adam and Eve had no personal experience with death or bodily pain, they had not yet advanced to the permanent state of immortality and impeccability promised to the saints in the Gospel. The tree of life is mentioned again in Revelation 2:7, 22:2,14. In these passages, eating of the tree of life is presented as the reward for those who have conquered in the fight and entered into the New Jerusalem. Thus at the very beginning and the very end of the Bible, access to the tree of life is definitive of man's relationship with God.

Proverbs is the only other book of the Bible that refers to the tree of life, where it is associated with Wisdom and her blessings.

“She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.”
(Prov 3:18)

“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.” (Prov 15:4)

The Divine Wisdom of Proverbs is the pre-existent Logos of God, and the cross of Calvary is a life-giving tree; thus the Church has long associated the tree of life

in Eden with Christ himself. When we turn to God, and Wisdom pours out her spirit upon us (Prov 1:23), we have access to the tree and we pass from death to life. By speaking God's truth to those around us, we become a conduit for others to encounter eternal life.

There was no command against eating of the tree of life in Eden, and it seems that eating of this tree may have been the original means provided by God of advancing to perfect blessedness, just as this same gift is offered to us through trusting in the cross of Christ. It is possible that had they first eaten of the tree of life, Adam and Eve would have overcome any subsequent temptation to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is not completely clear why the knowledge of good and evil was forbidden to Adam at this stage, as the whole revealed law of God is the knowledge of what is good and what is evil, and God desires us to have this law planted deeply in our hearts. If we assume that Adam and Eve had not yet eaten of the tree of life, then I believe we can more easily understand why simply knowing good and evil was itself forbidden at this time. In our own experience after the fall, the knowledge of good and evil by itself does not lead to blessedness. Rather, the knowledge of good and evil can lead to ungodly anguish and mourning over one's inability to resist evil, or such knowledge can even lead to further temptation, as the carnal mind contemplates evil and conceives a desire to perpetuate it. The knowledge of good and evil brings us sorrow until we are given the gift of eternal life through faith. Then this knowledge

becomes a salutary teacher and guide that helps us to grow in our union with God. If Adam and Eve had first received the gift of eternal blessedness, it is not unreasonable to suppose that God would have eventually instructed them in all things, including the mystery of iniquity and the existence of evil.

With the taking of the forbidden fruit, man first violates the distinctions established by God. This becomes the pattern for all sin and rebellion. The serpent tells Eve that if she and her husband eat of the tree, they “shall be as gods”(Gen 3:5). He uses the false promise of equality to tempt Eve to violate God’s command. It is the desire to supplant God, not simply the desire to satisfy intellectual curiosity, that brings about the fall of our first parents. God and man are not equal, but the serpent says that eating of the fruit will make them equal, and the distinction between God and man will be undone. Thus the false doctrines of egalitarianism and humanism are at the root of man’s fall into sin.

The eating of the fruit also shows another distinction that is found throughout Scripture, the distinction between inner truth and outer appearance. God desires above all truth in the inward parts, that is, he desires that his will be embraced in the heart of his creatures. Proper external behavior then proceeds out of the truth that has been established within. God spoke the command to Adam to refrain from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He intended that this command be received into Adam’s heart and then govern his external actions. When we give internal assent to

God's revelation about himself and the world (i.e., when we walk by faith), we also possess a true understanding of the inner reality of external objects. We do not judge external objects by their appearances, but we understand them according to what God has said about them. We understand the moral implications of external objects and how our relationship with them can affect our eternal state. This is walking by the light of Wisdom. Once the serpent had caused Eve to doubt the reality of God's clear command concerning the tree, "the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise"(Gen 3:6). The external appearance, as interpreted by a mind no longer subject to God's will, brought about death.

The Two Seeds

After being deceived by this false interpretation of the external appearance, Adam and Eve feel shame at their nakedness (their own external appearance). They vainly seek to conceal this shame by making clothing and hiding themselves amongst the trees; but relying on external objects cannot save us from God's wrath. Here God for the first time appears as a judge of the guilty, and in his judgments we can see the same love of order and distinction that was evident in the creation. Adam and Eve share the same punishment of death, but they also receive specific judgments connected to their essential differences. Woman is punished with the pains

of childbirth, man with the pains of manual labor, specifically agricultural labor. Thus the original design of God for Adam and Eve to multiply and to keep the garden remains in place, though now the original blessing of this design is mixed with a curse.

In Genesis 3:15 we find the first mention of two different “seeds” that will be in conflict throughout history: the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”. Here God shows that there will be conflict between the righteous and unrighteous seeds, but he also promises that the seed of the woman will be dominant. The woman is given hope that her seed will overcome the seed of the serpent. The seed of the woman only comes to fruition through childbirth, to which God attaches the promise of great sorrow. Thus hope is attached to suffering in this life. There is no promise given to the seed of man, only to the seed of woman. In normal conception, the mingling of the male and female seeds is required. In the birth of Jesus, the seed of the woman alone is used by God to bring forth the Christ who crushes the power of the devil.

Upon first feeling shame, Adam and Eve make coverings for themselves out of leaves. Prior to their expulsion from the garden, God makes them clothing out of skins. This is the first mention of the physical death of a living organism after the fall. Adam and Eve now see the result of sin; they see the physical death that awaits

them in the slain beasts. They are covered with the skins of dead animals, a reminder of the encompassing effect of sin.

With the birth of Cain and Abel, there is the first division of mankind into godly and ungodly bloodlines. The sin of Cain grants to his posterity a heritage of rebellion against God, while the line of Seth (who takes the place of his murdered brother) produces the holy men of the antediluvian world. Although God desires that all repent and turn to him, and although people born into ungodly families or nations can respond to the offer of God's grace, we still must recognize that the piety and covenantal status of one's ancestors often play a decisive role in one's relationship with God. Faith is a gift of God, and at the same time faith is a heritage passed from one generation to the next. Salvation is wholly the work of God, and yet it is brought through human preaching, including the preaching of parents to their children. In saying this there is no glorification of man. It is merely a recognition that the sanctified bloodline is one of the primary means ordained by God to spread his truth. Thus while there is not an absolute correlation between ancestry and salvation, there is a strong correlation nonetheless. Being aware of this correlation is essential to understanding human history and the present state of society.

The difference in the piety of Cain and Abel is shown in their different approaches to sacrifice. God's wrath was manifested in his promise to Adam and Eve that after falling into sin, they would experience death.

Death is thus the punishment due to sin, and yet at the same time, death is shown to be the remedy of sin and the means of restoring our relationship with God. God was pleased by Abel's offering of the firstlings of his flock, and Hebrews 11:4 explains that "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain". When offered in faith according to his command, God sanctifies death. Death is the result of God's wrath, but his wrath is assuaged through the sanctification of death in sacrifice. The conquering seed promised in Genesis 3 is Jesus, the perfect sacrifice who once and for all takes away the sin of the world. The Bible focuses on the history of both the physical bloodline and the covenantal community that will bring forth the Christ. It is from the physical bloodline that the Word of God assumed human nature, which allowed the very blood of Jehovah to be shed on the cross. It is as the king of the covenant people that Christ fulfilled the law that was a type and shadow of his glorious work.

Cain, who is without faith, is greatly angered when the Lord does not accept his sacrifice. The Lord then comes to Cain and encourages him to escape the danger of sin by repenting and doing good. Rather than turning to God, Cain fully gives in to sin and commits the first murder, bringing about the first human death. Here blood is emblematic of life itself, as it is the blood of Abel that cries out to God from the ground.

God then separates Cain and his posterity from the community of the faithful. Amongst Cain's descendants is found Lamech, the next murderer

recorded in Scripture. Lamech is also the first to institute polygamy, straying from God's original intention for marriage. Other of Cain's descendants are credited with various inventions, such as metalworking and musical instruments. Such inventions are clearly not bad in themselves, as they come to be used in the divine worship of God in the tabernacle and temple. However, we can see here that achievement, even genius, in the external world does not correspond to righteousness within. The one thing needful is not outer achievement but union with God. In the posterity of Seth, rather than murder and polygamy, we see godly men calling upon the name of the Lord and walking with him. Cain was born into a family that knew God. He was part of a family that offered sacrifice to God. God himself came to Cain to encourage his repentance. Cain rejected all of these advantages and instead chose sin and self-will, cutting himself off from the presence of the Lord. This choice determined the religious orientation of his entire bloodline until the flood. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that any of his descendants came to know the Lord.

Growing Wickedness and the Flood

Genesis 4 and 5 contain the first genealogies in Scripture. Genealogy remains of great importance throughout the entire Bible and it is inseparable from the revelation of God's saving Gospel to fallen humanity. Scripture passes over in silence almost all the details of

what life was like in the antediluvian world, and yet it preserves an account of the genealogy from Adam to Noah, through whom humanity was preserved during the flood. Thus genealogy is one of the most important things for us to know about the first several hundred years of human history. Because Christ has come and fulfilled the promises about the seed of the woman, today we no longer consider genealogy in terms of the messianic expectation. However, genealogy remains of great importance to society and human life. Knowing who one's ancestors were and what they believed and did gives one great insight and power. This knowledge is essential to maintaining cohesion within a bloodline, which is why certain of the enemies of Christendom, such as the Jews, ridicule the importance of genealogical knowledge when speaking to Christians, while jealously keeping this type of knowledge for themselves.

In Genesis 6:1-2 we read that "it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose". God is so displeased by these marriages that he diminishes the normal human lifespan to 120 years. I understand the "sons of God" in these verses to refer to the godly descendants of Seth and of other sons of Adam, and the "daughters of men" to refer to the ungodly descendants of Cain. Thus these mixed marriages represent an unsanctioned union of believers with unbelievers. In his commentary on Genesis, Martin Luther writes:

“Those two races or churches, namely, that of Adam and that of Cain, were separated...And so Adam undoubtedly urged his descendants also to beware of the church of the evildoers and not to intermarry with the accursed race of Cain. For a time his descendants obeyed this advice or command. But when Adam had died and the respect for the remaining patriarchs declined, the sons of God (that is, those who had the promise of the blessed Seed and belonged to the blessed Seed) also yearned for marriages and affinity with the ungodly race.”

Following these mixed marriages, human wickedness increases to such a degree that God brings about the flood in order to cleanse the entire earth. The flood was the most terrible temporal judgment ever brought by God against sin. Genesis 6 speaks in general terms about the wickedness and violence of man, but *mixed marriage is the only specific sin mentioned leading up to the flood*. At that time the Church was distinct not only by faith but also by ancestry, as only the descendants of Seth are said to call upon the Lord. It appears that the Sethites maintained a godly heritage for many years, but once mixed marriages are allowed, the whole human race except for Noah and his line becomes utterly corrupt. After joining themselves by marriage to the descendants of Cain, the Sethites are degraded to the unbelief of Cain, rather than bringing the Cainites to know the Lord.

It is only Noah, a just man who walked with God, who is chosen to carry on humanity after the judgment of

the flood. In Genesis 6:18 we find the first mention of the word “covenant”, with God promising to make a covenant with Noah. The narrative of the flood and the subsequent rebirth of the world repeats much of the language used to describe the original creation. Noah brings “every beast after his kind”, “two and two of all flesh” into the ark. Immediately after the earth dries, God tells Noah to come forth out of the ark with his family and to bring forth every living thing, “that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth”(Gen 8:17).

Upon exiting the ark, Noah builds an altar to the Lord and offers sacrifices of every clean beast and fowl. The distinction between clean and unclean beasts was already made in Genesis 7:2, where Noah was told to take clean beasts “by sevens” and unclean beasts “by two”. Unclean beasts were taken “by two”, the minimum number needed for procreation. More clean beasts were taken into the ark than was needed for procreation, presumably in order that Noah might offer sacrifice as soon as the waters of the flood receded. It is possible that Noah sacrificed all of the clean beasts beyond the two needed for procreation. If this is the case, then a significant proportion of the beasts brought on to the ark were intended for sacrifice, not procreation. The blood of this sacrifice was pleasing to God, and it was essential in establishing the merciful covenant that was promised to Noah. In this covenant God declares that he will never again bring about a similar flood or general cataclysm as long as the earth remains, despite the perpetual

wickedness of man. This is an external, physical blessing promised in a covenant established by the blood of beasts.

God repeats to Noah and his sons the command to be fruitful and multiply. He also confirms man's role of taking dominion over the creation by saying that all animals will fear and be subject to him, and also that animals will henceforth be food for man. Two further commandments, both related to blood, are included in the covenant. Man shall not eat the blood of animals together with the flesh, and "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"(Gen 9:6). As in the case of the one negative commandment given in Eden, the penalty is death. The reason given for this penalty in the case of murder is that man was made in the image of God. Thus man is similar to the beasts in that men and beasts both have blood, a physical substance that sustains bodily life, while they differ in that man's inner life resembles the divine nature. Man can only take or spare the life of man according to God's judgment. Man may by his own judgment take or spare the life of an animal, but he may not consume its blood. The aversion that contemporary society has for capital punishment, even in the case of convicted murderers, indicates our total rebellion against the most fundamental law of God, and this brings severe judgment upon us.

The sign of this covenant with Noah and his seed is the rainbow. In the flood, water from the sky was terrifying and deadly; in the rainbow, water in the sky is

peaceful and aetherial, visible yet intangible. The instrument of death and judgment becomes a sign of mercy, just as in the case of the cross. The rainbow reveals the inner nature of the light created by God by showing its different hues. It is also a revelation of God's heavenly glory: "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord"(Ezek 1:28).

The Origin of the Nations

From the end of the flood narrative to the beginning of the narrative concerning Abraham, the Bible focuses on the origins of the different nations. Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, are commanded to repopulate the earth, and they are the patriarchs of all modern humanity. Immediately after the flood, the three sons show that they vary in character, and their character makes a lasting mark on their bloodline, just as in the case of Seth and Cain. Ham demonstrates a shameful disrespect for his father, and in return Noah curses Ham's son Canaan.

"And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." (Gen 9:25-27)

The blessing pronounced upon Shem, that he would belong to the Lord and have a position of prominence above his brothers, is quickly fulfilled in the call of Abraham in the following chapters of Genesis. The curse upon Canaan is also soon evident in the Scriptural narrative of the Israelite conquest of the Canaanites in the promised land. The statement that Japheth will be enlarged and dwell in the tents of Shem is generally seen to have been fulfilled in the spread of the Gospel to Europe, where the sons of Japheth became the leading nations of the Christian Church, and then subsequently came to dominate the entire world. The servile nature of Ham's descendants in Africa has often been assumed to be connected to the curse upon Canaan. A typical example of this interpretation is found in the Bible commentary of Paul Kretzmann:

“The sons of Canaan in Palestine were either annihilated or became servants of the children of Israel; and his later descendants in Africa were, for many centuries, the slaves of the Japhetic peoples...The blessing of God came upon Japheth and his descendants, chiefly the European nations. They have been spread out far and wide; they have had the destinies of the world in their hands, under God. But the highest distinction of these peoples was that they partook of the blessings of Shem, that they became partakers of the one salvation, in Christ. Like a refrain the fact of Canaan's servitude is

predicted three times, showing that his curse indeed would be heavy and long enduring.”

The fact of these racial and ethnic distinctions should not cause us to be highminded, but to fear. The impact that our personal sins can have on our own bloodline is profound. In order to properly warn and instruct our fellow men, all those who love the Lord must humbly accept how God deals with nations and bloodlines in history. We are certainly to bring the Gospel to the children of Ham, but we do not properly love them if we do not openly discuss the nature of ancestral curses and their impact today.

Genesis 10 gives the genealogy of the sons of Noah as they repopulate the earth. The text states that these sons of Noah spread out “after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations”(Gen 10:31). The original concept of a nation was a group sharing a common ancestry, language, and inheritance. Even in cases where certain outsiders were assimilated into an existing nation, the shared ancestry of the core group was still a definitive feature of the nation. Throughout history, God has brought collective blessings and curses upon nations using the definition of nation found in Genesis 10. Whether or not men recognize the reality of racial distinctions does not change this fact. When we deny the significance of race, we blind ourselves to how God deals with the sons of Adam. God certainly desires that all men repent individually, but the collective temporal judgments he

brings upon certain nations are meant primarily to bring about repentance in that nation as a nation. Just as personal repentance includes both a recognition of one's own sinfulness and of one's positive value in the eyes of God as an individual, so national repentance should include a recognition of the goodness of national identity as such.

God's will for mankind following the flood was that Noah's descendants spread out upon the earth into distinct nations and tribes. The blessings and curses upon the sons of Noah implied that these different nations would have divergent cultures and destinies. This desired order for mankind is mirrored in the history of animals following the flood, as numerous subspecies that were adapted to different environments arose from the ancestral pairs preserved on the ark. But rather than following God's design, the men in the generations following the flood fell into the sins of fear and rebellion, and they sought to build the tower of Babel.

Genesis 11:4 explains the motivation for building the tower: "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth". The tower is to "reach unto heaven"; this is motivated by idolatry, the desire to manipulate the divine through human effort and ritual, rather than obeying the God of heaven and accepting his will for us. The tower is best understood as a prototypical counterfeit holy mountain, a man-made substitute for the true religion revealed by God. The later

pyramids, ziggurats, and other pagan structures follow this model. The true holy mountain and ladder to heaven is spiritual, as shown in the dream of Jacob, although this spiritual reality is also set forth in external form in the earthly Sinai and Zion. The text of Genesis is therefore not implying that the men of Babel sought a tower that could physically stretch to heaven, but rather a center of worship from which heaven could be controlled through human action. They build the tower in order to “make us a name”. This is motivated by pride, specifically by the false belief that security is to be found in human greatness. By contrast, in Proverbs 18:10 we read that it is the name of the Lord, not the name of men, that is to be a strong tower for the righteous. The ultimate goal of building the tower is that the men not be “scattered abroad”, thereby disobeying God’s command to spread out upon the earth. This refusal to disperse would mean that the children of Shem and the children of Ham would remain in the same political community, which would greatly increase the danger of mixing the blessed and cursed seed. God gives careful commandments against such mixing throughout Scripture, and this is likely one of the main reasons for frustrating the construction of the tower.

In response to man’s effort to build the tower of Babel, the Lord does two things: he confounds their language and he scatters them over the face of the earth. This description of God’s response is very brief, but we must infer that God accomplished this in a supernatural way. Languages do change and diverge over time (as we

can see from the languages that have developed within the historical period, for example the Romance languages that come from Latin), but this takes several centuries to occur. A division of language that could have obstructed an imminent project must have been accomplished through supernatural means. (It is reasonable to assume that only the primary language families were miraculously created at Babel, and that related languages, such as those in the Indo-European family, developed organically over time). This miraculous distinction in language was not a mere superficial change. It was a profound transformation in the deepest mental life of the people. Bible commentators Keil and Delitzsch state:

“The differences, to which this event gave rise, consisted not merely in variations of sound, such as might be attributed to differences in the formation in the organs of speech (the lip or tongue), but had a much deeper foundation in the human mind. If language is the audible expression of emotions, conceptions, and thoughts of the mind, the cause of the confusion or division of the one human language into different national dialects must be sought in an effect produced upon the human mind, by which the original unity of emotion, conception, thought, and will was broken up.”

Thus with the confusion of tongues, God creates not only diversity of language, but diversity of culture. This diversity of language and culture creates a barrier that

further God's design of different bloodlines staying separate.

Next we must consider the geographical dispersion of the nations. Was this a natural result of the distinction of languages, or was it too carried out miraculously? I favor the second option, as the text states not merely that the people were scattered or that they scattered themselves, but that "the Lord scattered them". The text implies that the scattering was accomplished at the same time as the confusion of tongues, not gradually thereafter. This is possibly what Paul refers to when he says of the nations that God determined "the bounds of their habitation"(Acts 17:26).

Finally we consider the question of the physical diversity of the human race. The text states that there was a miraculous distinction of languages, and it strongly implies a miraculous geographical distribution. In addition to language and geography, physical appearance is one of the main distinguishing features within humanity. In most cases, simply looking at a man's face for a brief moment allows one to determine which continent the bulk of his ancestors comes from. Given how fixed the physical appearance of the major racial groups has been over the last few millennia (as seen, for example, in ancient Egyptian art), it seems unlikely that these differences arose naturally over the relatively short time that elapsed between the flood and the beginning of recorded history. This strongly suggests that the major racial groups were distinguished through a special, miraculous act of God. Although physical racial

distinction is not explicitly mentioned in Genesis 11, this is the only place in the Biblical narrative where a miraculous ethnic distinction is recorded, so it is quite likely that physical racial distinction was brought about by God at the same time. And if the major racial distinctions were brought about by God's miraculous interposition in history for the purpose of keeping man from idolatry and pride, it follows that those who advocate or permit mixing amongst the major racial groups act contrary to God's ordinance. Ethnic differences in language, geography, and appearance were established by God's Word, and this Word has never been revoked. Of course fallen man can make an idol of his ethnic identity, just as he can make an idol of his family identity, or anything else in human life. But it does not follow that we should therefore seek to destroy distinctions established by God simply because these distinctions can be abused. If anyone says that maintaining distinct ethnic groups is more likely to lead to pride than is racial amalgamation, he is directly contradicting the Bible. Mankind being unified in one ethnic and political identity is more likely to lead to idolatry and pride, as we have seen in the narrative of the tower of Babel. This can also be seen in the passage from Acts 17 cited above. Paul says that God divided the nations in order "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us"(Acts 17:27). God divided the nations in order that the nations should seek after him. Ethnic distinction facilitates the search for

God, while destruction of this distinction hinders the search for God. This fact is confirmed by history, as the most viciously atheistic regimes have often been the most zealous for the removal of ethnic distinctions.

It is a mistake to suggest that the diversity of language, culture, and race found in the world is a punishment for sin. We must remember that the confusion of tongues at Babel simply forced mankind to fulfill the ordinance God had already established. God wanted mankind to spread over the whole earth. Even without any divine intervention, this would have naturally resulted in a great variety of languages and cultures. (The kindred peoples of the English and the Germans can no longer comprehend each other, despite having remained in close geographical proximity and speaking languages of the same family; this shows the rapidity with which mutual intelligibility can be lost.) God brought forth beauty from the diversity of languages, as witnessed in the poetry and song of the different races of the earth. This diversity of language and culture is not a punishment for sin, but rather it is a gracious blessing from God to keep us from sin. If all men viewed ethnic distinction as God does, mankind would have been spared the suffering and bloodshed that has arisen from campaigns of forced cultural assimilation and amalgamation.

The current Utopian globalist order supported by elites in the West is very similar to what was attempted at Babel. This order is megalomaniacal but also cowardly and regressive. It presents itself as the

champion of progress, while in reality it stifles human excellence through dysgenic and debilitating economic and social policy. It promises security, while it brings about the greatest slaughter in human history (both in the form of the silent genocide of abortion and in the mass starvation and purges of Marxist regimes). It is those who wish to amalgamate all races and cultures who are truly fearful of “the other”, while nationalists are the ones who embrace and cherish distinction. Instead of admitting this fear, proponents of this globalist order project it onto their enemies.

God declared that mankind being united as one race, with one language, under the rule of one state, was contrary to his purpose for the sons of Adam. God saw that the construction of the tower was just the beginning of apostasy, and that if he did not mercifully frustrate their plans, they would continue on their path of sin, falling into ever greater disobedience. God’s ways are often contrary to fallen human reason. Just as God reveals strength in weakness, just as he overcomes pride with humility, so he builds spiritual unity through political, linguistic, and ethnic distinction. A carnal, worldly unity of mankind leads to idolatry and pride, and to a trust in the flesh that results in a cowardice that prevents man from fulfilling the dominion mandate. Thus God ordains this physical, cultural, and geographical otherness in order to foster the supernatural and spiritual unity of mankind that is found in the Church. God’s ordering of distinct ethnicities is

analogous to his ordering of distinct, independent families and visible churches. Utopian “anti-racism”, both amongst secularists and Christians, seeks to dissolve ethnic distinction in the name of a supposed spiritual unity. Radical communism seeks to dissolve the family and private property. Popery seeks to dissolve independent and national churches into one universal anti-Christ “church”. In all three cases, the move towards carnal unity actually destroys the spiritual unity that is pleasing to God. We are to seek spiritual oneness by obeying God’s Word, not by mixing together the Word with humanistic concepts. It was God’s Word that established distinct families and nations. He has never revoked this Word. He has never commanded political, familial, or ethnic amalgamation.

7. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Immediately after the dispersion at Babel, the sacred history follows the story of the promised seed through Abraham and his descendants. Henceforth the histories of all other ethnic groups are only mentioned in passing, while the genealogy and development of God's chosen people are recorded in very close detail. The narrative of the patriarchs focuses on the blessing of fertility and the sorrow of barrenness, on man's desire to have flesh and blood offspring to carry on the covenant in future generations, and on God's desire to bring forth from Abraham a great and distinct nation. Those who deny the goodness of these desires cannot properly understand God's will for man. Even the spiritual understanding of the seed of Abraham presented in the New Testament presupposes the goodness of the distinct physical seed, just as the spiritual sonship promised in the New Testament presupposes the goodness of physical sonship and all of its duties and privileges.

The very first thing recorded about Abraham is his ancestry, his race. Sarah's barrenness is the first thing mentioned about her after naming her as Abraham's wife. This mention of barrenness introduces a delay in the genealogical record that has so far been proceeding much more rapidly. While God's chosen people are brought forth through physical procreation from

Abraham, this procreation does not occur in a normal, natural way, as God does not open Sarah's womb until she is past her natural childbearing age. This teaches us that we must always look to and trust in the divine promise, not to flesh and blood, although God uses our flesh and blood to work his eternal decree. After the fall, our natural desires became perverted and disordered, and therefore all natural affections implanted by God, such as love of kindred, can certainly be used for evil; but they can also be used for sanctified purposes. We must rely on Scripture when discerning how these natural affections can be ordered in a godly way. The narrative of Abraham shows that racial solidarity and a desire for racial distinction can be pleasing to God.

The Promise to Abraham

The focus on race can be seen in the promises made to Abraham throughout Genesis. These promises include both particular blessings for Abraham's seed and universal blessings for all peoples. God's special use of certain bloodlines does not imply that he does not wish to bless others, nor does the particular love of believers for their own bloodline imply that they do not love foreigners as well. The first promise to Abraham occurs in Genesis 12:1-3 where he is called by God.

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make

of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

Abraham is called to depart from his kindred, and it is promised that he will be a great nation. That is, Abraham will be the founder of a new, distinct ethnic and political unit, a nation. Prior to Abraham, the promises of God were more general, being made to all mankind (such as the promise to Eve in Genesis 3:15 and the promise to Noah in Genesis 9:8ff) or to the great branches of humanity represented by the sons of Noah. From the time of Abraham until the time of Christ, the covenant people of God are one particular nation. This promise to Abraham presupposes that being a particular nation is a great blessing, not a curse tainted with the sin of “racism” or “nationalism”. The blessing of becoming a nation cannot be understood without accepting that being a nation defined by bloodline is righteous and good.

The promise to Abraham also includes a promise to “all families”. When this promise is repeated in Genesis 18:18, it is said that “all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” in Abraham. There is no contradiction between the universal promise of the Gospel and distinct national identity. The offer of grace to all nations is made through one particular nation. This promise of a separate nation that will subsequently bless all other nations occurs in the Biblical narrative immediately after the confusion of tongues and the dispersion of the

nations in Genesis 11. Rather than being a punishment, the creation of separate nations was part of God's merciful design to bless all people. To the carnal mind, a blessing for all people must mean political and ethnic amalgamation, for the carnal mind can only understand external, visible goods, not the internal blessings of the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of the divine image. In order for Christians to walk by faith and reject the worldly definition of blessedness, they must root out every carnal desire to destroy ethnic and political distinctions.

God's covenant of mercy is progressively revealed throughout the whole Bible, and this pattern of progressive revelation is already found in the life of Abraham. From the initial call of Abraham to the command to sacrifice Isaac, God speaks to Abraham multiple times, explaining the nature of the covenant and the role of Abraham's seed. Between these revelations from God, Abraham faces various trials that would normally result in the diminishing or the extinction of his bloodline. Abraham's humble obedience shows that the chosen nation is to be established by God, not by human might.

The first challenge faced by Abraham after his initial call is a famine that forces him to seek refuge in Egypt. Before arriving in Egypt, Abraham asks Sarah to tell the Egyptians that she is his sister rather than her husband. A similar event occurs in Genesis 20 with Abimelech king of Gerar. The latter narrative includes a fuller explanation of what transpires, and we consider

the two parallel events together. We learn in Genesis 20 that Abraham's claim to be Sarah's brother is literally true, as Abraham and Sarah have been born to the same father but different mothers. In both narratives the king desires to take Sarah for a wife and brings her into his house. God then intervenes before the intended adultery is committed. In the case of Abimelech, it is said that God appears to him in a dream warning him that he and his household will die if he does not restore Sarah to Abraham. God adds that Abraham is a prophet, and that through his prayers Abimelech's life will be spared. When Abimelech asks Abraham why he did not tell him that Sarah was his wife, Abraham replies, "Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake"(Gen 20:11). God does not condemn Abraham for his actions in these narratives, but rather rewards him with the gifts given by the kings after returning Sarah to her husband. Through Abraham's humility and willingness to trust God to protect Sarah and the promised seed, God punishes and humbles the proud kings of the earth.

After leaving Egypt and returning to Bethel, a conflict arises between the herdsmen of Abraham and the herdsmen of Abraham's nephew Lot. Abraham tells Lot that there ought not to be strife between them because they are brothers. In order to avoid greater strife, Abraham suggests that the two of them part. Although Abraham has been called by God and is from an older generation than Lot (Abraham being the first-born son of Terah, while Lot is the son of Terah's third son Haran),

he humbly gives Lot the first choice of which land to occupy; peace within the bloodline is more important to Abraham than ruling over his nephew. Allowing a different branch of the family to have the first choice in land would seem to be a disadvantage to Abraham's descendants, but immediately after his separation from Lot, God promises Abraham the land and an abundant posterity (Gen 13:14-17).

When God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 12 and 13, he made a promise to him about his seed, but he did not make a covenant with him. In Genesis 15 we find the first mention of a covenant between God and the seed of Abraham, and the first explanation of how Abraham is reconciled to God. The conversation between God and Abraham in Genesis 15 begins with God declaring that he himself is Abraham's shield; that is, even though God has made promises to Abraham about physical blessings, God himself is the almighty protection in which Abraham should hope. After receiving this vision from God, Abraham responds by saying that his blessing is incomplete without physical offspring, lamenting that one who is not a blood descendant will be his heir.

“After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine

heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” (Gen 15:1-6)

God does not rebuke Abraham for desiring natural children, but rather assures him that he will have a physical, genetic heir (from “out of thine own bowels”), and that from that heir shall come a posterity as great as the stars of heaven. The promise of fruitfulness to Abraham receives a double fulfillment: he does become the physical father of great nations, and he also becomes the spiritual father of all those who have faith in the blessing that is promised to come forth from his physical seed. There is no contradiction between the promises of physical heirs begotten through the flesh and the spiritual heirs begotten through the Gospel, as the two are intimately connected. There would be no spiritual heirs if there were not a real physical seed, which seed is Christ. The promise of the Messiah is tied together with the godly desire for physical, racially homogenous descendants.

When Abraham trusts God’s promise, this faith is counted to him for righteousness. After being declared righteous before God, Abraham asks for a sign to confirm the promise. God responds by ordering

Abraham to prepare an animal sacrifice, dividing in two a heifer, a goat, and a ram. The presence of the Lord is manifested as a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passes between the divided animals. It is then said that in the same day God made a covenant with Abraham.

As Abraham and Sarah grow old and still have no children, Sarah encourages Abraham to marry her servant Hagar, which results in the birth of Ishmael. This decision is not made by faith but by fleshly calculation. Thus in the New Testament Paul uses the children of the bondwoman Hagar as a symbol of those who are bound to the law and blind to the Spirit. We also learn from the story of Ishmael that although the promised blessing was to come forth from Abraham's physical bloodline, the promise was not by virtue of physical descent, but by grace, as some of Abraham's physical descendants were to be outside of the covenant.

In his dealings with Abraham, God begins by calling him and making a promise to him. After declaring that Abraham has been made righteous by faith, God makes a covenant with him accompanied with the blood of beasts. In Genesis 17 God establishes the covenant of circumcision and clearly reveals that the promised seed will come through a son born to Sarah in her old age, whose name will be Isaac. The sign of this covenant is in the flesh, made with the shedding of man's blood in circumcision. When introducing this covenant, God also gives the moral commandment, "walk before me, and be thou perfect"(Gen 17:1). At this time God changes his name from Abram ("high father") to

Abraham (“father of the multitude”), emphasizing the blessing of fruitfulness. Genesis 17 carefully distinguishes between all the natural seed of Abraham and the particular line that will inherit the covenant, and it also distinguishes between the seed of Abraham and foreign servants dwelling amongst them. The promise of the land of Canaan in verse 8 is clearly made only to the covenant nation, not to the multitude of nations to come from Abraham, which would include the Ishmaelites and Edomites. (Although God will not establish his covenant with Ishmael, in verse 20 God promises that he will bless him. God will make of him a great nation. Being made a great nation is a blessing distinct from covenant membership. Being a great nation and being in covenant with God are both blessings, and we should pray that both blessings be given to our own people.) In verse 12 God commands Abraham to circumcise not only the males of his own bloodline, but also the servants and strangers “not of thy seed” living in his household. We must understand the promises to Abraham as pertaining to his physical, covenant-keeping seed. Even though they receive the sign of circumcision, these foreigners in Abraham’s household are not to inherit the land. Scripture does not deny the importance of physical descent, nor does it deny the importance of the covenant; neither may we ignore either bloodline or covenant status when determining who is or ought to be a member of our political community.

In Genesis 18 the Lord appears to Abraham in the plains of Mamre and again confirms that Sarah,

despite being past the age of natural fertility, will bear Abraham a son. At this time God explains that his choice to call Abraham, although initiated by pure grace, was made in view of the fidelity of Abraham. “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Gen 18:19). Following God’s appearance to Abraham and Sarah at Mamre, the narrative focuses on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the fate of Lot and his family. Abraham always sought the best for Lot, and Lot is saved from the general destruction of the city because “God remembered Abraham”(Gen 19:29). However, through persistent wickedness the bloodline of Lot diverges from that of Abraham, and Lot becomes the father of the Moabites and the Ammonites. This teaches us that while it is proper to have a special concern for one’s own people, we must also understand that hardness of heart and rebellion over the course of generations can create a cleavage within a bloodline. If the moral separation is accompanied by physical separation and the blending of one branch of the original bloodline with alien groups, then a tribe that begins as near kin can end up becoming a hereditary and racial enemy.

In Genesis 20 Abraham sojourns in the land of Abimelech, where Abraham tells the king that Sarah is his sister. The details of this narrative were considered above in conjunction with Genesis 12. Here we observe that Abraham must again wait upon God in simple faith,

trusting that Sarah and the seed promised through her will be preserved during this trial.

After many years of waiting, Abraham receives the promised son Isaac when he is one hundred years old. When the child is weaned, Ishmael the son of the bondwoman is cast out, creating further separation between the chosen seed and the seed that will be outside of the covenant. God then puts Abraham through his greatest trial, commanding him to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. At the last moment, when the knife is already in Abraham's hand, the angel of the Lord appears and stops the sacrifice. The Lord then declares that Abraham's unquestioning obedience has confirmed the promises made to his seed, making his calling and election sure.

“By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Gen 22:16-18)

If we truly desire our bloodline to be blessed by God, we must put obedience to his Word above all else, even when such obedience seems to the carnal mind to entail great disadvantage. The blessings that come from such obedience can persist for thousands of years.

Guarding the Chosen Seed

The final trial of Abraham serves as a type of seal on the promise of the son who will carry on the covenant. Henceforth the narrative shifts to providing a wife for Isaac and guarding the next generation of the chosen seed. Genesis 22 ends with the genealogy of Rebekah, providing the ethnic background of the woman whom God will use to propagate his people. Abraham's chief concern in finding a wife for his son is that she be taken from his kindred, not from the Canaanites. Abraham's insistence on taking a wife for Isaac from his kindred can only be motivated by a desire for racial purity, not religious faith. Abraham's kin were not members of the covenant and had not received the sign of circumcision. Joshua 24:2 states that Abraham's ancestors served other gods, and in Genesis 31 Rachel takes the family gods with her when returning to Canaan, showing that at least some of Abraham's kin were idolators. In Genesis 14:18 Melchizedek king of Salem is said to be a priest of the most high God, but Abraham does not seek a marriage partner from his city. In the same chapter Abraham is said to have over 300 servants who could serve as fighting men. Many if not all such men were presumably circumcised in Genesis 17, and yet the daughters of these men were apparently not racially acceptable to marry Abraham's son.

Abraham commands his servant to find a wife from his kindred, but he refuses to allow Isaac himself to

go, in order that Isaac keep his eye fixed on the land promised to him by God. Thus Abraham desires a racially compatible wife for Isaac while at the same time wanting Isaac and his seed to be religiously, culturally, and geographically distinct. This should be instructive for contemporary members of the remnant of what was once known as Christendom (the white, Western nations). In many cases we will find marriage partners for our children from families that are ethnically compatible but outside of the covenant. We must imitate the diligence of Abraham, insisting on racially appropriate marriage partners, while also insisting that these marriage partners abandon the corrupt culture in which they were raised, lest they draw our own children away from the calling of God.

Abraham says that an angel will accompany the servant in his task, showing that God approves of Abraham's desire for his son. Upon arriving at the city of Nahor, the servant prays and leaves the choice of Isaac's bride to God, asking that the first damsel that he speaks to from the city be the one appointed for the son of his master. Presumably there would be damsels in the city other than blood relatives of Abraham (daughters of servants, etc.), but God chooses to bring forth Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. This is understood to be a great kindness to Abraham. As Rebekah leaves her family to go to Isaac, her family blesses her, saying "Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them"(Gen

24:60). This blessing sees demographic flourishing and racial dominance as naturally good things.

Like Sarah, Rebekah is initially barren, and Isaac prays to God that she would become fruitful. She eventually conceives the twins Esau and Jacob. The Lord tells Rebekah, “Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger”(Gen 25:23). In the case of Abraham, the son born to the bondwoman Hagar was separated from the promised seed, and only the son born to Abraham’s close kinswoman Sarah was chosen to carry on the covenant. With Isaac there is a similar cleavage in his posterity, although in this case the two sons share the exact same ancestry. The separation of Esau from the chosen seed is instructive in many ways. It shows that shared bloodline is not enough to safeguard racial unity and solidarity. There are times when those of like ancestry must be considered as outside the political community because of their sinful choices. The specific character and sins of Esau must be carefully considered. Esau was the firstborn of the twins and is therefore the natural heir. He is described as being covered with hair, “a cunning hunter, a man of the field”(Gen 25:27). Isaac initially favors Esau because he so enjoys eating of his venison. On one occasion Esau returns from the field tired and hungry. He asks to eat some of Jacob’s lentils, and Jacob demands that in exchange for his lentils Esau sell him his birthright, i.e., his status as firstborn. Esau so despises

his birthright that he agrees to this transaction. The sale of his birthright is the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise to Rebekah that “the elder shall serve the younger”. When taking a wife, Esau does not consent to the wishes of his parents, nor does he seek a wife from his own people as his father has done. Instead Esau marries two Hittite women, “which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah”(Gen 26:35). Thus we can see in Esau the bestial, carnal, profligate race-mixer. His hairy body and his desire to be out in the wild indicates his bestial nature. He has no regard for preserving his bloodline, his inheritance, or his status in the covenant; instead he sells all in exchange for temporary carnal enjoyment. His existence tends to that of the animal rather than to that of man. In order to live a Christian life, we must avoid the sins of Esau. The spirit must rule the flesh, the covenant and its laws must take priority over bodily desires, and our choice of marriage partners must serve the continuity of the bloodline, not our short-sighted, carnal desires.

Isaac’s love for Esau and his venison is again emphasized in Genesis 27, where Jacob receives his father’s blessing through deception. When Isaac is old and unsure how much longer he will live, he asks Esau to procure venison, and he states his intention to give Esau his blessing. Rather than accepting the promise given to Rebekah that Jacob shall rule over Esau, Isaac himself is apparently led astray through carnal desire to favor his eldest son. When Isaac does give his blessing to Jacob, thinking that it is Esau, the language of the

blessing confirms Jacob's position of authority over this brother, as Isaac says, "be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee"(Gen 27:29). After learning of the deception, Esau determines to murder Jacob. This again displays Esau's carnal understanding: he covets the blessing of his father as something of value, and yet he has no regard for obeying the blessing itself, as this would require him to be subject to Jacob. This desire to dominate the people of the covenant while disregarding all laws of the covenant is commonly found amongst deceivers in the Church today.

Rebekah tells Jacob to flee from Esau's wrath and dwell with her kin for a time. Before Jacob departs, Rebekah says to Isaac that if Jacob were to imitate his brother and enter into a mixed marriage, her life would be worthless (Gen 27:46); may all Christian mothers have this same heart for their own children. By this point, Isaac is apparently resigned to the fact that Jacob will be the heir of the covenant and of the promise made to Abraham. Isaac confirms the blessing to Jacob, saying,

"Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein

thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.”
(Gen 28:1-4)

During Jacob’s journey to his mother’s kin, God appears to him and confirms the blessing.

“And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen 28:12-14)

God gives his blessing to the racially exclusivist intentions of Isaac, Rebekah, and Jacob. When Jacob reaches his mother’s kin, Laban greets him by saying “Surely thou art my bone and my flesh”(Gen 29:14), recognizing their racial kinship.

With Abraham and Isaac, God’s promise was only passed down to a single son, and in both cases this son was born to a woman who initially had difficulty conceiving. With the posterity of Jacob, we see the flowering of the chosen seed from a single individual to a larger tribe. While the theme of barrenness does appear in the difficulty of the beloved Rachel conceiving,

Jacob's story is in general marked by fruitfulness rather than barrenness. Jacob is given two wives, the sisters Leah and Rachel. Both of the two sisters also give a maid to Jacob for wife, Zilpah and Bilhah. Leah and Rachel are both close kin to Jacob, while the ancestry of Zilpah and Bilhah is not mentioned, although we presume that they are of Mesopotamian origin, not Canaanite. Through these four women, Jacob fathers the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. All of Jacob's sons, even those born to the maids, are included as heirs of the covenant. There is no casting out of the children of the bondwomen.

Joseph and the Sojourn in Egypt

Near the end of the book of Genesis, we read that "all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten"(Gen 46:27). God brings the chosen seed into Egypt and there multiplies them to become a great nation. Thus in the period of demographic growth, the chosen seed is separated from the nations of Canaan, with whom intermarriage is forbidden, while allowing Joseph and possibly others to take wives from the Egyptians. As we will see when looking at the Law of Moses, children born to Egyptians were racially more acceptable than the Canaanites (Deut 23:7-8). Genesis 46:10 shows that some mixing with the Canaanites has already occurred, as one of the sons of Simeon is said to be born "of a Canaanitish woman". Throughout the Bible, God's covenant people frequently

rebel against his law, and it is therefore not surprising that at this early stage the prohibition against intermarriage with the Canaanites has been violated. The fact that the son of the Canaanitish woman is included within Israel shows that while God does command racial distinction, this does not mean that absolute blood purity is required in order to be a member of an ethnic group. The question of admixture is discussed in more detail in the chapter on the Law of Moses.

The need for this geographical separation from the Canaanites is demonstrated in two of the more sordid episodes from Genesis, the story of Dinah and Shechem and the story of Judah and Tamar. In the story of Dinah, commentators have disagreed about whether she is raped or seduced by Shechem, but generally there is agreement that she bears some responsibility for what occurs because she recklessly associates with the Canaanites rather than staying with her own people.

“Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.” (Gen 34:1-4)

Dinah goes unsupervised amongst a people with whom intermarriage is forbidden “to see” the foreign women.

While there, one of the foreign men “saw” her and his lust was inflamed. Relatively innocent socializing with the women of a foreign nation soon leads to a sinful union with a man from this nation. This warns us against too close of a social connection with people with whom intermarriage is unwise. The Hebrew word “laqach” (translated as “took her”) is a generic word for taking and does not imply violence. The word is used elsewhere for peaceably taking a wife. Rape legislation (Deut 22:25) uses the word “chazaq”, which does imply violence. After fornicating with Dinah, Shechem treats her kindly and seeks to marry her, further suggesting that this was a case of seduction. Dinah’s socializing with a foreign people quickly leads to great sin and threatens the moral and racial purity of the chosen seed.

In verse 5 Jacob first hears that his daughter has been “defiled”. The Hebrew word for defiled (“tame”) is often used in the Mosaic law to describe ritual uncleanness. Dinah is now unclean and is therefore, at least temporarily, not able to participate fully in the covenant community. When her brothers hear of her defilement, they are “very wroth, because he (Shechem) had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob’s daughter”(Gen 34:7). Throughout the Bible, the phrase “wrought folly (nebalah) in Israel” is used of the most serious crimes: Deuteronomy 22:21 which deals with lying about virginity prior to marriage; Joshua 7:15 where it refers to the sin of Achan, which had defiled all Israel and caused military defeat as punishment; Judges 20:6 where it refers to the great sin of murder, rape, and

attempted sodomy by the Benjamites, which resulted in civil war and the near total destruction of the tribe of Benjamin; 2 Samuel 13:12 where it describes the incestuous rape of Tamar by Amnon. Thus the Bible uses this phrase to refer to the most serious of transgressions, all of which warrant the death penalty. Where the phrase “work folly in Israel” is used, the sin is committed by an Israelite, not a foreigner; Israel is not simply a passive victim but a transgressor. It seems difficult to accept that this phrase could be used in a situation where an Israelite is completely blameless. Deuteronomy 22:26 teaches that the victim of rape is innocent. But if Dinah was not raped by Shechem, it is at first hard to see why the crime is considered to be so grievous. According to Deuteronomy 22:28-29, the penalty for seducing a virgin is simply that the man must pay the girl’s father and take her as his wife in perpetuity. Hamor offers marriage and a dowry to Jacob, following what the law of God commands in these circumstances. Therefore the severity of the defilement of Dinah can only be understood in light of the fact that she fornicated with a Canaanite, a race which the chosen seed was commanded to avoid. It was “folly in Israel” because a member of Israel (Dinah) voluntarily committed a sin that threatened to bring about the amalgamation of Israel with the Canaanites.

The prospect of amalgamation is explicitly brought up by Hamor when making the offer of marriage.

“make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.”
(Gen 34:9-10)

Here we see the great danger of allowing even one mixed union. Hamor logically concludes that once Dinah and Shechem are wed, it is only natural that other of their children should marry as well. This one mixed union, if legitimized, could lead to the total amalgamation of Israel with the Canaanites. The promised seed that was to possess the land would be blended together with the cursed seed that was to be driven from the land. This truly would be very great folly in Israel. Like today’s globalists, Hamor touts the supposed economic advantages of ethnic amalgamation. He makes the same economic argument to his own people (verse 23) when trying to convince them of the benefits of joining together with the Israelites.

The sons of Jacob answer Hamor deceitfully, saying that they will consent to become “one people” with Hamor and his kin if they will agree to be circumcised. They accept the offer and circumcise themselves, and Simeon and Levi then take advantage of their soreness and slaughter Hamor, Shechem, and all the men of their city.

Simeon and Levi apparently make this attack without the knowledge or consent of their father, as Jacob expresses disappointment at the actions of his

sons, saying that they thereby endangered him and his house, making enemies of the numerous Canaanites. At the end of his life, Jacob condemns their actions in much harsher terms.

“in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.” (Gen 49:6-7)

Thus while the indignation felt by Simeon and Levi was justified, their actions were not. This further confirms that Dinah had voluntarily committed fornication. For if Dinah had been raped and kidnapped, and the men of Hamor’s city all condoned this behavior, it is hard to see how Simeon and Levi could be worthy of blame (consider the just retribution visited upon Benjamin by the other tribes after the rape and murder of the Levite’s concubine in Judges 19).

Part of the sin of Simeon and Levi could be in their improper use of the sacrament of circumcision. God’s sacraments are not to be used in any way that deviates from their divine institution and purpose. Under the New Covenant, it would be as if you offered a man baptism and drowned him while administering the sacrament. God’s sacraments are a divinely instituted seal of salvation, and they should never be used to bring about death.

How then should Jacob’s sons have reacted in this situation? If an unwed Israelite woman voluntarily

fornicates, while this is tragic (and may even make her liable to punishment in some cases, as in Leviticus 21:9), it is not grounds for punishing the man she has chosen with death, especially if he offers marriage. The Israelites should have disowned Dinah and considered her to be a Canaanite. She had made her choice.

As long as the Israelites remained a small tribe, they were in constant danger of amalgamation while living amongst the Canaanites. Soon after the story of Dinah, God providentially brings the chosen seed to Egypt to make them a great nation. Only then does he bring them back to Canaan to begin their conquest and the extermination of the inhabitants of the land.

This deliverance of Israel from the danger of mixing with the Canaanites begins in Genesis 37 with the sale of Joseph as a slave to Egypt. Before continuing with the main narrative of Joseph, Genesis 38 focuses on the story of Judah and his dealings with his daughter-in-law Tamar. This story again emphasizes how vulnerable the children of Jacob were to being absorbed by the Canaanite population and losing their distinct identity. The close geographical and social proximity with the Canaanites also leads to moral degradation, which is very evident in the actions of Judah and his sons.

The story of Judah begins with him leaving his brethren, dwelling with a foreigner (Hirah the Adullamite), and taking the daughter of a Canaanite for a wife. In contrast to Joseph who is forcefully removed from his brethren and remains faithful to the God of his fathers while in Egypt, Judah voluntarily leaves the

company of his kin and engages in impure relations. Judah takes a wife named Tamar for his firstborn son Er. The Lord slays Er for his wickedness before he produces any children. Judah tells his second son Onan to marry Tamar in order to “raise up seed to thy brother”(Gen 38:8). Onan engages in marital relations with Tamar, but he attempts to prevent conception by means of coitus interruptus, “lest that he should give seed to his brother”(Gen 38:9). The Lord also strikes down Onan for his wickedness. Judah despised the tradition of his fathers of keeping the promised seed pure from unlawful mixture, and in the next generation his son Onan despises the very idea of maintaining the bloodline of his father’s house. Judah tells Tamar to return to her father’s household until his third son, Shelah, is grown. However, even after he is grown, Judah fails to arrange the marriage between Shelah and Tamar, showing that he himself has lost interest in raising up seed to his firstborn son. Tamar, being a childless widow and presumably quite desperate, disguises herself as a prostitute with veiled face in order to entice Judah. According to Keil and Delitzsch, the Hebrew term used for prostitute in verses 21 and 22 literally means “consecrated”, i.e., “a woman sacred to Astarte, a goddess of the Canaanites, the deification of the generative and productive principle of nature; one who served this goddess by prostitution”. Thus Judah not only engages in fornication, but he joins himself with a woman who was assumed to be a temple prostitute. Tamar becomes pregnant by Judah, eventually giving

birth to the twin sons Pharez and Zarah. The moral confusion and degeneracy seen in Genesis 38 is mirrored in our own day, where indiscriminate ethnic mixing advances together with a general rejection of all of God's standards of holiness. We pray that God may deliver us from the present confusion just as he delivered the promised seed by bringing the sons of Jacob out of the land of Canaan to build them into a holy nation.

Many commentators suppose that Tamar is also a Canaanite, although there are strong reasons to doubt this. We note first that there are various traditions claiming Tamar to be a daughter of Levi, Melchizedek, or even Shem. The text itself deliberately mentions the ethnicity of Judah's wife, but it deliberately omits the ethnicity of Tamar. Given the context and the emphasis of the chapter on the danger of amalgamation with the Canaanites, this omission is significant. By not being impregnated by Judah's half-Canaanite sons, the lineage of Tamar's children is kept more pure. In his commentary on this passage, John Calvin writes:

“Moses charges Judah with perverse lust, because he took a wife out of that nation with which the children of Abraham were divinely commanded to be at perpetual strife. For neither he nor his other brethren were ignorant that they sojourned in the land of Canaan, under the stipulation, that afterwards their enemies were to be cut off and destroyed, in order that they might possess the promised dominion over it. Moses, therefore, justly regards it as a fault, that Judah should entangle himself

in a forbidden alliance; and the Lord, at length, cursed the offspring thus accruing to Judah, that the prince and head of the tribe of Judah might not be born, nor Christ himself descend, from this connection.”

Calvin supposes that God providentially arranged the half-Canaanite sons Er and Onan to be killed without producing offspring, in order not to pollute the Messianic line. If Er and Onan are thus excluded because of their ancestry, this could imply that Tamar’s ancestry is more acceptable.

Joseph begins his time in Egypt as a slave. While serving as a slave he suffers a false accusation of sexual impurity, which results in him being sent to prison. God eventually raises him up to be the second ruler in Egypt, inferior only to Pharaoh himself. In his exalted position Joseph is given an Egyptian wife who bears him two sons. “Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house”(Gen 41:51). At this point Joseph appears to have resigned himself to being separated from his kin, but it is soon revealed that his separation from his father’s house is only temporary and was in fact providentially arranged specifically to preserve his father’s bloodline. When famine comes to Canaan and Jacob’s sons are in Egypt in search of food, Joseph eventually reveals himself to his brothers, saying,

“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me

before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.” (Gen 45:5-7)

Joseph goes on to explain that Jacob and his seed will not dwell integrated amongst the Egyptians, but as shepherds in the land of Goshen. In Genesis 43:32 we read that it was an abomination for the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews; in Genesis 46:34 we learn that the Egyptians also considered shepherds to be an abomination. Thus the sojourn in Egypt would not only provide physical nourishment for the chosen seed, but would also ensure its cultural and ethnic separation from the pagan population.

God confirms to Jacob in a vision that in Egypt he will make him “a great nation” and later bring him back up again (Gen 46:3-4). Jacob then goes down to Egypt with “all his seed”(Gen 46:6). The text lists the sons of Jacob and their sons, without giving an exact account of their wives. According to Keil and Delitzsch:

“The wives of Jacob’s sons are neither mentioned by name nor reckoned, because the families of Israel were not founded by them, but by their husbands alone. Nor is their parentage given either here or anywhere else. It is merely casually that one of the sons of Simeon is called the son of a Canaanitish woman (Gen 46:10); from

which it may be inferred that it was quite an exceptional thing for the sons of Jacob to take their wives from among the Canaanites, and that as a rule they were chosen from their paternal relations in Mesopotamia.”

Before his death, Jacob gathers his sons together to prophesy about the tribes that will develop from them. The general premise of these prophecies is that different physical lines of descent will have different characteristics and destinies based on the behavior of their ancestors. Even though all of the tribes of Israel will share in the covenant and the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, this does not mean that they will all be equal or identical. God providentially arranges differences down to the level of tribe and family.

The final chapter of Genesis focuses on the importance of burial for the patriarchs. The chapter begins with the burial of Jacob in Canaan in the field of Machpelah, and it ends with Joseph’s dying request that his bones be taken with the children of Israel when they return from Egypt to the promised land. Throughout Genesis, burial and the afterlife are not viewed as solitary, individual experiences; rather they are tied to the idea of ancestral continuity and community.

When appearing to Abraham, God says, “thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age”(Gen 15:15). The fulfillment of this promise is recorded in Genesis 25.

“Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.” (Gen 25:8-10)

The purchase of Machpelah is recorded in detail in Genesis 23 following the death of Sarah. None of Abraham’s ancestors were buried there, and therefore “going to his fathers” must be understood in a spiritual sense, rather than simply as referring to an ancestral burial place. When purchasing Machpelah, Abraham takes pains to secure it is as a perpetual possession for “his dead”. Thus the physical separation of a special place for the burial of members of his bloodline mirrors the spiritual reality of the soul of a man going to be with his ancestors after death. The afterlife is not described as being “with the dead” in a general sense, but specifically as being with one’s fathers or people. This congruence between the spiritual reality and the physical sign is also found in the New Testament era. The Church does not believe that well preserved physical remains are necessary for the resurrection, and yet at the same time the Christian care of the body of the deceased is in view of the resurrection and the eternal significance of the resurrected body. Likewise, the Old Testament patriarchs did not believe that being physically buried with one’s ancestors was necessary in order to ensure that the soul

joined them after death, but the common ancestral burial place was in view of this spiritual ancestral reunion.

After being settled in Goshen, Jacob begins to approach the end of his life. He makes Joseph swear that he will not bury him in Egypt but bring him to Machpelah to be buried with his fathers. Jacob repeats this request at the very point of death.

“And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace...And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.” (Gen 49:29-30,33)

Here we can see both the spiritual and physical aspect of death and burial. Jacob affirms that he is “to be gathered unto my people”. This is a certainty, for this is where the soul goes after death. He urges his sons to take his body to Machpelah, which is not a certainty. The repetition of the narrative of how Machpelah was acquired by Abraham emphasizes the importance of this place and the significance of ethnic particularity. Throughout the Scriptures, the saints recall what the Lord has done particularly for the chosen seed, not simply what he has done generally for all mankind.

In addition to pointing to the continuity of the bloodline throughout the generations, the separate burial place also serves to protect against amalgamation. Jacob and Joseph were both embalmed in the Egyptian fashion, and we are told that Jacob was mourned by the Egyptians with great pomp. No culture in human history surpassed the Egyptian in the expense and complexity of its funerary practices. Joseph, being second in the land only to Pharaoh, surely could have secured for himself and his father a magnificent burial place in Egypt, but they instead choose to be buried with their ancestors in Canaan. Being incorporated into the Egyptian burial system would have pointed to the permanent joining of the chosen seed to the foreign nation. At his death, Joseph confirms to the children of Israel that God will bring them out of Egypt. God desires them to be a separate nation.

8. Exodus and Conquest

After dwelling in Egypt for many generations, the children of Israel “increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty”(Exod 1:7). This abundance naturally alarms the Egyptians, as they fear that they will be outnumbered by the Israelites, and that the Israelites will be insufficiently loyal to Egypt in the event of a foreign invasion. To address these concerns, the Egyptians first force the Israelites into harsh physical labor. When this fails to reduce their numbers, the Egyptians adopt a more direct policy of genocide, demanding the death of all male children born to Hebrew women (the Egyptians apparently supposing that ethnic identity would be carried primarily through the male line, and that the Hebrew women could be retained as slaves). Pharaoh specifically orders that “Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river”(Exod 1:22).

The Early Life of Moses

Moses is born under this genocidal order. The first thing mentioned about Moses is his ancestry, that he is a Levite through both his mother and father (Exod 2:1). The parents of Moses obey the command of Pharaoh to cast the child into the river, but in such a way that the child survives and is brought into Pharaoh’s own

household, being adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. God thus uses Pharaoh's wicked command to overthrow him. According to Acts 7:22, Moses "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds", suggesting that his Hebrew background was either concealed at the royal court or at least his ancestry did not hinder him from enjoying all the benefits of Egyptian culture. But like Joseph before him, Moses was more attached to God and to his own bloodline than to all of the external splendor of Egypt. According to Hebrews 11:24-25, it was by faith in God that Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season".

Moses begins his public work as deliverer of Israel by protecting one of his ethnic brethren who is being assaulted by an Egyptian. This episode is recorded in both Exodus and Acts, and it can only be properly understood in light of the goodness of bloodline affection.

"And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said,

Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.” (Exod 2:11-14)

The account of this incident in Acts adds two important details: that Moses “was full forty years old [when] it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel”(Acts 7:23), and that when killing the Egyptian, Moses “supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them”(Acts 7:25).

The very first thing said about Moses after the narrative of his infancy emphasizes his strong connection with his brethren according to the flesh. He has already lived to middle age in the Egyptian court, and yet his loyalty is completely with his fellow Hebrews. No amount of enculturation or sharing in the prosperity of a foreign group can ensure total solidarity with this group. As long as someone is of foreign ancestry, there is always a strong chance that his loyalties will be divided, if not totally aligned with his own bloodline. This is a strong argument against transracial and even transethnic adoption. The text does not say whether Moses knew of his true identity from childhood or whether it was recently revealed to him. In the case of transracial adoption, the true identity of the child is of course impossible to conceal, so the child has a lifetime to dwell on his incongruity with his adoptive family. Children of racially mixed ancestry face similar

difficulties, as it is impossible to have equal solidarity with both of their ethnic backgrounds, especially if there is any conflict between the two groups.

Many have wrongly supposed that Moses acted sinfully in killing the Egyptian. In Acts 7 Stephen states that at this point Moses was already acting in his calling as the deliverer of Israel. This sanctifies the indignation felt by Moses when he sees his ethnic brother being assaulted by their racial enemy. Violence between competing ethnic groups is seen as a type of warfare, and therefore it is not governed morally in the same way as violence within a community. When Moses sees an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, he automatically sides with the Hebrew. There is no indication that Moses first attempted to ascertain the cause of the strife. By contrast, when he goes out on the second day and sees two Hebrew men striving, he addresses the Hebrew “that did the wrong” and attempts to reason with him. Moses appeals to the principle of ethnic solidarity, saying “Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?”(Acts 7:26).

Pharaoh learns of Moses’ act of violence in defense of his people, and without any support or understanding from his fellow Hebrews, Moses flees to the land of Midian. There he lives for another forty years as an exile from his people. The Midianites were descended from Abraham through Keturah (Gen 25:2), and thus were racial cousins to the Israelites, although later on they become enemies of the chosen seed. The priest of Midian gives Moses his daughter Zipporah in

marriage, and she bears him two sons. Moses' father-in-law joins the Israelites after their escape from Egypt and rejoices "for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel"(Exod 18:9). This suggests that at least some of the Midianites knew the true God, although the exact nature of their understanding and their form of worship is unclear. (We know that Moses initially fails to follow the Lord's command concerning the circumcision of his sons, which suggests that it was not a common practices amongst the Midianites.)

The Call of Moses

In time, the Lord hearkens to the groaning of his people in Egypt, and he remembers "his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob"(Exod 2:24). He then calls Moses at the burning bush, again emphasizing the ancestral nature of the covenant, declaring that "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"(Exod 3:6). God reveals himself as the "I am", and he describes Israel as "my son, even my firstborn"(Exod 4:22). The Israelites are to revere their fathers according to the flesh for being the chosen bloodline through which the covenant is passed down, and at the same time they are to look to the eternal God as their true father. The paternal care of the faithful patriarchs for the well-being of their children mirrors God's care for his people. God is zealous for the purity of his children, desiring that they avoid all sin and all

snares that would endanger the communication of the covenant to the next generation.

When Moses first appears before Pharaoh, he says that the Lord demands the release of his people “that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness”(Exod 5:1). Moses then says that this feast will be a sacrifice unto their God (Exod 5:3). When Pharaoh later demands that the Israelites make their sacrifice without traveling far into the desert, Moses replies that “It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?”(Exod 8:26). The Egyptians are so attached to their own particular form of worship that deviation from it could elicit rage and violence. When the Israelites first came to Egypt, they lived separately in Goshen, not sharing living space with the Egyptians. After their enslavement, they were in much closer proximity. Living in ethnically mixed societies often results in one group giving offense to another. Differences in religious practice are an important part of ethnic identity. Apparently the Israelites had not been performing sacrifices in their distinctive, ethnic way. Reviving their sacrificial customs is part of reasserting their independence and identity.

The Passover

On the eve of the last plague against Egypt, the death of the firstborn, God institutes the Passover. This feast serves as a type of Christ and his atonement, and it also plays an essential role in establishing and maintaining national identity in Israel. The month in which the Passover is celebrated “shall be the first month of the year to you”(Exod 12:2). Israel is to have its own unique calendar based on what God has done for that particular people. God ordains that the people are to prepare the Passover “according to the house of their fathers”(Exod 12:3), not as disconnected individuals. The Passover is “an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever”(Exod 12:24), established in order to teach future generations about the salvation of their ancestors from a foreign people. “It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses”(Exod 12:27).

In Exodus 12:38 we learn that “a mixed multitude” went up with the Israelites out of Egypt. This is a group composed of various non-Israelites who, presumably impressed by the wonders of the plagues of Egypt, decide to follow the children of Israel. This mixed multitude crosses the Red Sea with the Israelites, and it is again mentioned in Numbers 11:4, “And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?” Forty years later, as the

wandering in the desert is about to come to an end, Moses mentions the strangers in the camp who perform the lowly tasks of hewing wood and drawing water (Deut 29:11). These strangers shared in the experience of God's miraculous deliverance from Egypt and spent forty years with the children of Israel, but they are still considered foreigners because they are not racial Israel. Shared living space and shared historical experience, even over many generations, does not necessarily make a stranger a part of the nation.

When God establishes the covenant of circumcision with Abraham, he distinguishes between the men of Abraham's own bloodline and the servants not of his seed. The same careful distinction is made here at the institution of the Passover, making provision for the mixed multitude that would be with the Israelites for many years to come. God commands that strangers also abstain from eating leaven during the Passover (Exod 12:19). Foreign slaves, after they have been circumcised, may eat the Passover, but not temporary foreign workers hired for pay: "[a] foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof"(Exod 12:45). Strangers who "sojourn" with Israel and desire to eat the Passover must first circumcise all their males (Exod 12:48). While being a member of the bloodline and receiving circumcision are closely related, they do not overlap completely. God distinguishes between Israelite and non-Israelite, and he also distinguishes between circumcised and uncircumcised. Being circumcised does not make one an Israelite.

Sinai and the Golden Calf

When the Israelites arrive at the wilderness of Sinai, God confirms his covenant with his people. In this sequence of events—which includes the initial giving of the law, the apostasy of the gold calf, and the repentance of Israel—we can see both what God desires of a bloodline devoted to his name and what saints should desire for their ethnic brethren. The children of Israel are to be a peculiar treasure to the Lord, and they are to be a kingdom of priests. They are gathered together as a distinct nation, not in order to please or advance themselves, but in order to testify of God’s power and lovingkindness. When speaking to our own children, we must recall what God has done for us in freeing us from the power of Satan and bringing us into the kingdom of light in order to be a special possession of the Lord. Every family must seek to confirm God’s covenant in the current generation and pledge to be obedient to his commands.

“And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. 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: 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. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.” (Exod 19:3-8)

After receiving God’s law in Exodus 20-23, Moses proclaims this law to the people, who respond in obedience. Moses then ratifies the covenant through the shedding of the blood of beasts. As the people enter into the covenant, Moses reminds them of their distinct tribal identity by setting up twelve pillars “according to the twelve tribes of Israel”. This emphasis on tribal identity is repeated throughout all of Scripture. Even within the holy nation there is not indiscriminate mixing or confusion, but rather organization by bloodline.

“And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.” (Exod 24:3-8)

The rebellious Israelites very quickly deny this covenant in the following chapters. After sprinkling the people with the blood of the covenant, Moses returns to the mountain and is taken into God’s presence. God shows Moses the heavenly pattern for the tabernacle and instructs him in the proper form of worship. Meanwhile, the Israelites grow impatient and demand that Aaron make them visible gods. The idolatrous worship of the golden calf is a grievous breach of the covenant that has just been ratified. The people despise God’s law, and therefore they deserve his wrath. God expresses his anger to Moses, saying that he will utterly destroy the people and make of Moses a great nation; that is, Moses will become a second Abraham. Moses is deeply troubled by this possibility, and he urges the Lord to be merciful. He does not plead for his kinsmen by appealing to their own merit, but by reminding the Lord of the promises made to the ancestors of the people, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God hears Moses’ initial prayer for mercy and he does not bring total destruction upon Israel. Moses returns to the camp and harshly rebukes the idolatrous

Israelites. After destroying the golden calf, Moses tells the Levites that the Lord has commanded them to “slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour”(Exod 32:27). This command results in the death of three thousand men, a punishment that begins to bring about repentance.

The next day, Moses speaks again to the Lord to ask forgiveness for the people. At this point Moses brings before God the remarkable petition that if his racial kinsmen are not forgiven, then he too desires to be blotted out from the book of life. Here we can see the sanctified love for his own ethnic group that so shaped the ministry of Moses. Never in Scripture do we read of a saint who wishes to be blotted out of God’s book for the sake of racial aliens. It is only the love for one’s own flesh and blood kinsmen that elicits such a high degree of self-sacrificial devotion. We should pray that God would grant all Christians a like zeal for the salvation of their own particular ethnic group.

“And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will

visit their sin upon them. And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.” (Exod 32:31-35)

God does not rebuke Moses for his zeal for his own people, and although the Lord will not blot out a righteous man from his book, through the intercession of Moses the total destruction of the nation is averted.

The apostate Western nations of today resemble the Israelites who worshiped the golden calf. Our people were brought out of the darkness of paganism by the light of the Gospel and were made the core of Christendom for centuries. In response to this mercy of God, the last few generations of our people have persistently rejected and undermined the Christian faith. We are in need of a thorough corporate repentance, a repentance that is modeled for us in Exodus 33. We must not be content with simply eliciting a fear of God’s judgment and an external reformation, we must ask the Holy Spirit to bring into our people a complete desire for union with God. When the Lord tells Moses that he will fulfill his promise to Abraham and drive out the Canaanites, he says that he will send his angel to guide the people, but that “I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned”(Exod 33:3-4). The people are so zealous in their repentance that they are not content with God’s pronouncement that the external promise about the land of Canaan will be fulfilled; they crave God’s presence

amongst them. Moses returns to the Lord and again petitions him.

“If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.” (Exod 33:15-17)

It is intolerable to Moses either that he be separated from his people or that God’s presence be taken away from his people. If God does not go with them, the conquest of Canaan becomes valueless. It is not the external promises but God being with the people that makes them the holy nation. The blessedness of our own nations or families should be measured by the same standard: to what degree is our bloodline the sanctified dwellingplace of God.

Wandering in the Wilderness

The sin of the golden calf and the subsequent punishment and repentance become a pattern for the Israelites throughout their forty years in the wilderness. This period of wandering teaches us about both the sanctification of the individual believer and the reformation of the nation.

After the repentance of Exodus 33, Moses instructs the people in the design of the tabernacle and the ceremonial law of Leviticus. The Lord arranges the tribes of Israel in their proper order around the tabernacle, commanding that “every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father’s house”(Num 2:2). The tribe of Levi is separated from the rest of Israel, serving as the sanctified firstborn son for the entire nation: “Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine”(Num 3:45). God makes further distinctions within the tribe of Levi, giving different hereditary functions to different families. When the tabernacle is fully set up, “the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers” bring forth offerings “for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed”(Num 7:2,10). After celebrating the Passover, the congregation continues its journey, departing from the mount of the Lord and advancing towards the promised land.

Soon the weakness of the flesh again becomes evident, and the people displease the Lord through their complaining. As a punishment, the fire of the Lord begins to consume them and “the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched”(Num 11:2). Then the people, perhaps initially provoked by the mixed multitude amongst them, complain about the manna and the lack of flesh to eat, looking back towards Egypt. The Lord answers their

complaint by bringing forth a great abundance of quail for the people to eat, but as the meat is “yet between their teeth” he smites them with a plague. During these events, Moses laments that he cannot bear the complaints of the rebellious people. He is so overwhelmed by their lack of faith that he desires to die rather than continue in his calling: “I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness”(Num 11:14-15). The Lord hears this prayer and he takes of the Spirit that was upon Moses and puts it upon seventy elders who are to “bear the burden of the people” together with Moses. After receiving the Spirit, the seventy elders prophesy. Joshua is offended at the widespread prophesying and comes to Moses asking that he forbid some of the men from prophesying in the camp. Moses responds, “Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!”(Num 11:29). Moses shows no envy and simply desires the greatest possible blessing for the greatest number of his people.

Moses next faces hostility from his nearest kin, Miriam and Aaron. These two speak against Moses because he married a non-Israelite; they also allege that because they themselves have prophesied, Moses should not be held in special regard above them. This complaint of Miriam and Aaron must be seen in the context of the previous chapter, where widespread prophesying is

granted to the elders of Israel. This prophesying is granted to the elders as a help to Moses, that they might share Moses' burden, yet for some, this blessing is used as an occasion to question the special calling of Moses. Miriam and Aaron sinfully exult their Israelite ancestry, thinking that it allows them to question God's choice of Moses as lawgiver and prophet over his people. Our appreciation of ethnic distinction must always be under God and his Word, not contrary to it. The Lord punishes Miriam with leprosy, and declares that unlike an ordinary prophet who receives his message through visions and dreams, Moses speaks to God "mouth to mouth". Moses again intercedes on behalf of his rebellious kin and prays that Miriam be healed of her leprosy.

As our specific focus in this study is the importance of bloodline, we must carefully consider the ethnicity of the wife of Moses mentioned in this passage. The Hebrew text states that Moses had married a Cushite woman (Num 12:1). The term Cushite has been translated as "Ethiopian" since the time of the Septuagint, which has led to some confusion. The word "Ethiopian" comes to us from the Greek language, and the Greek word has been understood to mean "burnt face", in reference to the dark skin of the African. In Hebrew, however, Cushite refers to a descendant of Cush (one of the sons of Ham). The Israelites certainly did refer to the dark skinned races south of Egypt as Cushites, e.g., "Can the Ethiopian (Cushite) change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"(Jer 13:23), as apparently

Cush was the patriarch of these peoples; however, the land of Cush is first mentioned in Genesis 2:13, where it is said to be watered by the river Gihon which sprang from Eden, and it must therefore include a part of southwest Asia. According to Matthew Poole, the land of Cush mentioned in Genesis 2 is “not that country in Africa above Egypt, commonly so called; but either Arabia, which in Scripture is frequently called Cush...or rather a country adjoining to India and Persia, with which Cush is joined”. It is apparent that the descendants of Cush were found not only south of Egypt but also in Arabia. If we turn to Genesis 10, we can see that the descendants of Ham and Cush include various peoples of the Middle East and North Africa:

“And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth...And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.” (Gen 10:6-8,10)

Again from Matthew Poole:

“The posterity of Ham were disposed into the parts south from Babel, both in Asia and Africa. Cush was father both of the Ethiopians and the Arabians; who, as it seems, sent forth a colony from themselves more

eastward, even near to India...Mizraim was father of the Egyptians, who are generally known in Scripture by that name. Of Phut sprung the Libyans, among whom is the river Put, and the Moors...Canaan was the cursed parent of that accursed race of the Canaanites, well known in Scripture.”

There is no evidence that any of the races dwelling in Arabia or Shinar (Mesopotamia) in antiquity had African features, and thus it is misleading to refer to these Cushites as “Ethiopian” given the racial signification of that word in modern European languages. It is also worth noting that the term Ethiopian itself does not always refer to black Africans in secular Greek literature. Writing around one thousand years after the time of Moses, the Greek historian Herodotus (Book VII chapter 70) distinguishes between Ethiopians of the east who were straight haired (i.e., not Negroes) and the woolly haired Ethiopians from south of Egypt. Here we see the same fact that is recorded in Scripture, that the sons of Cush inhabited both the lands south of Egypt and parts of southwest Asia.

Having examined the meaning of the term “Cushite woman” in Numbers 12:1, we next look at the question of whether this woman refers to Zipporah or to a second, unnamed wife of Moses. Zipporah was a daughter of the priest of Midian, a territory that could easily be considered part of the land of Cush, as it is located in northwest Arabia. Habakkuk 3:7 mentions “the tents of Cushan” and “the curtains of the land of

Midian” in the same thought, suggesting a common identity. It is also quite possible that the Midianites had intermarried with the Cushites when they went to the east of Canaan (Gen 25:6), and thus “Cushite woman” could accurately describe Zipporah’s ancestry as well as her geographical origin. Why she is here referred to as a Cushite rather than a Midianite could be in order to distinguish her and her father’s house from the Midianites who dwelt near Moab, who are shown to be exceedingly wicked in the later chapters of the book of Numbers.

Some commentators who assume the “Cushite woman” to refer to a second wife of Moses rather than Zipporah point out that marriage with Cushites is not specifically forbidden in the law, and therefore Miriam and Aaron would have erred in criticizing Moses for entering into this union at some point after leaving Egypt. However, this position overlooks the special rules for the priests who are to approach the Lord in the sanctuary on behalf of the people. Of such men the Lord commands “he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the Lord do sanctify him”(Lev 21:14-15). Moses was the greatest of such intercessors and representatives of the whole people before the presence of the Lord. It is difficult to see how Moses could be blameless in taking a non-Israelite wife *after* the rules of Leviticus had been established. Moses acted rightly during exile in Midian in taking a wife from a kindred people, and it was wrong for Miriam and Aaron to complain of her non-Israelite

background so many years later. As a final argument against those who hold that Moses had a second, anonymous wife, we observe that in a book as focused on genealogy as the Bible, it seems unlikely that in the case of a figure as important as Moses the wife's name and her possible children would go unmentioned.

As the time approaches to enter into Canaan, the Lord commands Moses to send twelve spies selected from the people by tribe to survey the land. The spies all agree that the land is indeed rich, but with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, they are afraid to begin the conquest, claiming, "we be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we"(Num 13:31). This fear and lack of faith in the Lord's promise spreads throughout the camp, so much so that the people desire to appoint a new leader and return to Egypt rather than fight (Num 14:4). Moses, Aaron, Caleb, and Joshua all plead with the people to trust in God and go forth into the promised land, and in response the people try to stone them. The Lord then again declares that he will destroy the people and make of Moses a great nation (Num 14:12), and again Moses pleads with the Lord for the sake of the rebellious people seeking to kill him. Moses pleads for the people by appealing to the Lord's glory (pointing out that the Egyptians and others would say the Lord is not strong enough to bring forth his people if he were to destroy them in the wilderness) and to his mercy.

“Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word.” (Num 14:19-20)

Here we can see the power of the prayers of the saints for their own rebellious kinsmen, and this should be a model for us. We should have the same relentless prayers for our own apostate people, even as they slander and attack those who teach the importance of bloodline distinctions.

As punishment for their rebellion, the Lord declares that all of the men from twenty years old and upward, all the men who were numbered, will die in the wilderness and their children will wander for forty years: “your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness”(Num 14:33). While our descendants do not bear our guilt before God when it comes to eternal punishment, they do have to bear the temporal consequences of our personal and collective sins. After repenting, the people vainly try to do what the Lord has just confirmed would not happen, attempting an assault on the promised land. God is not with them, and they are smitten by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

During the period of wandering in the wilderness, the people again rebel against Moses. The leaders of this rebellion are Korah, a Levite, and the Reubenites Dathan and Abiram. The ancestry of these men is mentioned at

the outset of the narrative. Korah and some of his fellow Levites desire to obtain the priesthood, which has been restricted to the house of Aaron within the tribe of Levi, complaining that since “all the congregation are holy”, Moses and Aaron have lifted themselves up above the congregation by not sharing the priestly office. Korah and his followers are guilty of both egalitarianism and self-righteousness. They allege their own special holiness when compared with the pagan, but then they presume that because they have been chosen by God’s grace they can violate the distinctions established by God. This sin is common in the Church today, as many allege that because God has sanctified all those who have faith in Christ, therefore God’s law and created distinctions can be ignored. Reuben was the firstborn son of Jacob, but because of his sin he and his descendants lost the right of the firstborn to rule (Gen 49:3-4). During this rebellion, the Reubenites Dathan and Abiram allege that Moses has not only brought the people out of Egypt “to kill us in the wilderness” but also desires to make himself a prince over Israel (Num 16:13). This complaint is particularly striking coming from the tribe of Reuben. According to the ancestral distinctions established by God through the blessing of Jacob upon his children, the Reubenites should have expected to be ruled over by someone from a different tribe. It is certainly not their place to take command of the people. Our racial gifts and limitations can be due to the choices of our ancestors, and we cannot ignore or deny these.

Moses instructs the followers of Korah to approach the tabernacle with incense to test if their offering will be pleasing to God. The Lord tells Moses and Aaron, “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment” (Num 16:21). Moses and Aaron fall down before the Lord and pray for the people. God hears them and allows the people another chance to choose between Moses and the rebels. After Moses warns the people to depart from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the earth opens up and swallows the rebels together with their households, and a fire comes out from the Lord and consumes the men who illicitly offered incense.

Even after this miraculous judgment, the people are still trapped in the sin of ungodly racial pride. The very next day, they murmur against Moses and Aaron, saying “Ye have killed the people of the Lord”(Num 16:41). The Israelites are shown to value “the people of the Lord” over the Lord himself. Here we see the great sin of this people that bears its full wicked fruit in the Gospels, when they become guilty of the blood of Christ. We must always remember that our own people, even though they historically constituted Christendom, should never be excused for their rebellion, nor should we ever see the judgments brought upon them by God as undeserved. The murmuring from the people again incites the anger of the Lord, who sends a plague upon them. Moses commands Aaron to “Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an

atonement for them”(Num 16:46). This atonement stays the plague, but not before thousands of Israelites perish.

Thus far Moses has been seen as an obedient servant of God before a disobedient people. In Numbers 20 Moses himself is found guilty and is punished for not completely obeying the Lord and sanctifying him before the people. After coming into the wilderness of Zin, the people complain about the lack of water, just as they did many years earlier in Exodus 17. In the former instance, God commanded Moses to strike the rock and he made water flow from it (Exod 17:6). Now God commands Moses to speak to the rock before the eyes of the people. Instead of carefully following this command, Moses strikes the rock with his rod twice after upbraiding the people. Following Moses’ deviation from this precise command, the Lord says “Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them”(Num 20:12). Through his Word God has given us precise instructions on how we should conduct ourselves as individuals and as nations. He has fully revealed to us how we might obtain his blessing and avoid his curse. When we follow these instructions, we demonstrate our faith and trust in the Lord, and he is sanctified among us. If, in times of frustration, we deviate from his instructions and trust in our own judgment, we fail to sanctify him. God will still be sanctified, and when this does not happen through the obedience of his people, it will happen through his judgment coming upon his rebellious congregation. We

must completely put to death self-will and carnal anger, even when dealing with the most rebellious and idolatrous members of our bloodline. This is the cross we must willingly take up. Sanctifying the Lord in ourselves and in our people must be our chief goal.

In the following chapter, after defeating King Arad the Canaanite, the people again speak against God and Moses, complaining of the lack of food and water (Num 21:5). The Lord punishes the people with fiery serpents. When the people repent, they ask Moses to intercede for them, and Moses then makes the brazen serpent that brings healing to those who look upon it. The constant backsliding of Israel even as they progress and defeat their enemies teaches us that trials demanding great patience can come in the midst of our victories. These trials can be very difficult to bear, as it requires a strong faith to avoid despair and complaining when in a desert without water. When the Lord leads them to dig a well at Beer, the people joyfully sing to the waters (Num 21:17-18), showing the proper response of the Christian to the consolations of God that come in the midst of trials. After the repentance of the brazen serpent and the digging of the well, the people go on to conquer Sihon king of the Amorites and Og the king of Bashan. They then pitch their tents “in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho”(Num 22:1).

The Sin of Baalpeor

With these victories, the Lord brings his people to the verge of triumphantly entering the promised land, but here they again stumble, nearly succumbing to total apostasy and amalgamation. Balak the son of Zippor the king of the Moabites consults with the elders of Midian, and together these two peoples decide to counter the Israelite threat with spiritual means. They seek out Balaam, a pagan prophet, to curse Israel before they go to make war against them, understanding that they cannot defeat this enemy without a supernatural blessing. God intervenes and prevents Balaam from cursing Israel, even sending his Spirit upon Balaam to bless them instead (Num 24:2-9). The Lord protects his people from the spiritual weapons of the heathen. So long as the children of Israel guard their hearts and remain segregated, they have nothing to fear from the false religion of the nations around them.

Balaam himself understands this, and after the failure of the attempt to curse the Israelites outwardly, he counsels the Moabites and Midianites to subvert Israel by corrupting them from within, teaching them “to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication” (Rev 2:14). Rather than confronting them on the battlefield, these enemies of Israel invite them to participate in their pagan rites. These rites involve sexual activity, and it is therefore both a spiritual and physical fornication, a carnal mixing with a foreign people in the

worship of their god Baalpeor. This Baalpeor was “a Moabitish Priapus [a phallic fertility god], in honour of whom women and virgins prostituted themselves”(Keil and Delitzsch). This whoredom is committed with both “the daughters of Moab”(Num 25:1) and Midianite women, the Moabites and this group of Midianites being in close alliance at the time. Moabites were forbidden from entering the congregation of Israel even unto the tenth generation (Deut 23:3), while the Midianites were seen as a more kindred people, with Moses himself being married to a Midianite, one whose family apparently followed Jehovah. Although the Moabites and Midianites are closely joined here in religion and purpose, God deals with them very differently.

Moses commands the judges of Israel to slay all the men who were “joined unto Baalpeor”(Num 25:5). This command is followed with particular zeal by Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron. Phinehas thrusts a javelin through an Israelite man and a Midianite woman who has been brought into the camp. Through this zeal of Phinehas “the plague was stayed from the children of Israel”(Num 25:8). Executing judgment according to God’s command is for the sake of preserving the life of the entire community. The Lord rewards Phinehas for his deed, saying “Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of

Israel”(Num 25:12-13). This zeal for the Lord brings blessings to the seed of Phinehas.

As one of his last acts as the leader of his people, Moses brings destruction upon Midian to “avenge the children of Israel”(Num 31:2) and to “avenge the Lord”(Num 31:3). The Israelites slay all the males, but initially they take all of the women and children captive. Moses is angry with the army for saving alive the very women who have seduced the men of Israel, and he commands that they slay all the male children and all females who have known a man, keeping only the virgin females (Num 31:17-18). Without any surviving male line, the community will cease to exist as a distinct entity, which is a righteous judgment on a people who sought to corrupt the chosen seed of God. All of the women who have been contaminated with the temple prostitution of Baalpeor will be removed; the young females who have not yet been brought into this abominable practice will be saved and brought into the covenant community. Like Zipporah, these Midianite women are not racially objectionable as marriage partners, and thus these wayward daughters of Abraham are saved from the sin and indignity of pagan worship. The Moabites, however, are not racially compatible with the Israelites, and therefore they are not brought into Israel in the same way, although they are equally guilty in the sin of Baalpeor.

Tribal Distinctions

When all of the Israelites who refused to go forth and conquer Canaan are perished, Moses again takes a census of the nation, making preparations for the allotment of the land “according to the names of the tribes of their fathers”(Num 26:55). Another potential crisis arises when the children of Reuben and the children of Gad come to Moses and Eleazar asking to stay on the eastern side of Jordan, wishing to inhabit the territory conquered from Og and Sihon rather than entering into the promised land (Num 32:2-5). At first Moses is very angry with them, recounting the story of the spies sent into the land forty years ago, saying that if they settle east of Jordan and do not go up to fight with their brethren, they will be a discouragement and the Lord “will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people”(Num 32:15). Moses is concerned that allowing slackness and lack of faith to develop in one segment of the nation could corrupt the whole. The Reubenites and Gadites reply that they will leave their wives and children with their flocks on the east side of Jordan, but their fighting men “will go ready armed before the children of Israel” and will not return to their own land “until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance”(Num 32:18). Moses says that if they fulfill this pledge, they will be guiltless before the Lord and before Israel. Reuben and Gad, as well as the half tribe of Manasseh, are allowed to settle in the former kingdoms of Sihon and Og.

When Israel comes to enter the promised land, Moses is careful to avoid an indiscriminate mixing of tribes and families. All tribes of Israel are equally members of the covenant, but that does not mean that they ought to lose their separate identity. Equality before God does not imply or demand amalgamation. Individuals are to relate to their tribe through their particular family, and families are to relate to their nation through their particular tribe. “[Y]e shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families...every man’s inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit”(Num 33:54). When dividing the land, Eleazar and Joshua are to make the division by tribe, with one prince from each tribe representing his people (Num 34:17-29). The Levites do not inherit land in the same way as the rest of the tribes, and they are to be distributed geographically throughout Israel; however, they are still to maintain a distinct bloodline. Geographic separation can facilitate bloodline separation, but it is not indispensable. Sharing territory with an ethnic group does not mean that amalgamation is permissible, desirable, or inevitable.

The importance of retaining tribal distinctions is brought out in the narrative of the daughters of Zelophehad which closes the book of Numbers. In Numbers 27 the daughters of Zelophehad approached Moses and asked that their father’s inheritance pass to them, since he died without producing a son. Their request is granted, but in Numbers 36 the chief fathers of

their tribe bring to Moses the question of these daughters marrying into a different tribe within Israel. They are concerned that if this were to happen, their tribal inheritance would be divided, as the lot of Zelophehad would not be with that of his brethren. The Lord hears their concern and he commands that the daughters of Zelophehad should only marry “to the family of the tribe of their father”(Num 36:6). The Lord also establishes as a general rule that,

“every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.” (Num 36:8-9)

Enjoying one’s ancestral inheritance is a great blessing from God. This blessing is received when bloodlines are kept clear and distinct. The confusion of families, tribes, and nations threatens this blessing.

At the end of the forty years in the wilderness, Moses gathers Israel together to renew the covenant and to deliver the commandments of God found in Deuteronomy. Immediately preceding his own death, Moses, like Jacob, blesses all Israel tribe by tribe (Deut 33). These blessings are meant to teach the children of Israel to remember what God has done for their

ancestors and what he promises to the different tribes within his holy nation. At the same time, the blessing upon the tribe of Levi teaches them that loyalty to God must come before all else. In Deuteronomy 33:9 the Levites are praised for following the Lord above their brethren according to the flesh, for in times of rebellion, Levi “said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they [the Levites] have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant”.

In his final words to the nation for which he interceded and fell down before the Lord, Moses declares that the people of Israel are blessed by God’s favor and will conquer when they rely on his help: “Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places”(Deut 33:29). May we follow Moses in falling down before the Lord and interceding for our kinsmen. May our people be a people saved by the Lord.

Entering the Land

The Lord heard his people groaning in bondage in Egypt, and he brought them through the Red Sea. He led them for forty years through the wilderness to humble them and prove their hearts, and to teach them to rely on him alone (Deut 8:2-3). Now after the death of Moses, Joshua prepares to bring them into the promised

land. The conquest of the land and the sanctification of the people advance together. Joshua causes the priests to go with the ark into the Jordan, and God stops the flow of the river, allowing the children of Israel to cross on dry ground. This miracle is performed in order that “all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever”(Josh 4:24). To commemorate the crossing of the Jordan, the Lord commands Joshua to select a man out of every tribe to take a stone from the bed of the Jordan and to set them up as a memorial for future generations. Joshua then commands the circumcision of all males born in the wilderness. After being circumcised, the children of Israel eat the Passover, thereby renewing the covenant. The covenant is conceptually and temporally prior to the conquest.

The first city taken in the conquest is Jericho. Joshua pronounces the city to be accursed; that is, the entire city must be destroyed and “all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord”(Josh 6:19), for Jericho is the first fruits of the conquest of the land and must be totally devoted to the Lord. Any Israelite who disobeys and takes plunder from the city will himself become accursed.

The only inhabitants of Jericho to be spared are the harlot Rahab and her family. When Israelite spies previously entered Jericho, Rahab hid them, confessing her belief that “the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath”(Josh 2:11) and that the

Lord has given the land to the children of Israel. Her confession removes the curse of destruction from herself and her household. By contrast, the Israelite Achan brings the curse upon himself, his household, and the entire host of God's people when he takes of the spoil of Jericho and hides it in his tent. Although we are each responsible before God for our own personal sins, God judges us corporately in time. We may not directly bear the guilt of the sin of our kinsmen, but the pollution of their sin can bring a curse upon the whole community. This danger of corporate punishment should encourage us to root out the sin of our ethnic brethren with all the means prescribed in God's Word.

Before Achan's sin becomes known, the Israelites go on to attack the city of Ai, but because of the pollution in the camp they are defeated and flee from the city in terror. This defeat and cowardice pierce the heart of Joshua; like Moses, he falls on his face before the Lord, seeking in prayer to know why God has withheld his blessing from his people. The Lord reveals that the camp has become accursed because spoil was taken from the accursed city of Jericho. Although the sin was actually committed by one man, the Lord describes the entire nation as being responsible, saying "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing"(Josh 7:11). To remove this pollution, the Lord commands the people to sanctify themselves and gather together. They are then separated by tribe, family, and household until the transgressor is identified.

“Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man. And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath.” (Josh 7:13-15)

Through this process the Lord brings forth Achan of the tribe of Judah as the one responsible for making all Israel accursed. At the prompting of Joshua, Achan confesses his sin, and the congregation carries out God’s punishment upon him and his household, stoning them and burning them with fire. After this purification, “the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger”(Josh 7:26). Here we can see the same principle taught by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount: “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”(Matt 6:33). When conquering the land, the Israelites are not to rely upon external weapons or tactics; rather they are to seek to be obedient to the covenant, and then external victory is to be added to those who are righteous before God. We are to look upon our own nations and families in the same way that

Joshua looked upon Israel. We must be concerned not with the external state of our kin, but with the state of their hearts before God.

With the children of Israel purified from the sin of Achan, they are able to go forth and conquer Ai. After this victory, Joshua again directs the people to the Lord. Joshua builds an altar on mount Ebal as commanded by Moses and writes a copy of the law on the stones. He reads the whole law to the congregation, re-emphasizing the covenant after the sin of Achan and the redemption at the second assault on Ai. We must turn to the covenant of God both during times of chastisement and during times of victory. We must always possess a living faith.

The Destruction of Canaanite Power

The conquest of Jericho and Ai terrifies the inhabitants of the land, who gather themselves together to fight against Israel. The Hivites of Gibeon, however, seek to deceive Israel rather than fight openly. The Gibeonites send ambassadors to the princes of Israel. The ambassadors pretend to be from a far country and ask to make a covenant with the children of Israel and to be their servants, claiming to desire this because of the wonders that the Lord has performed. The princes fail to seek the Lord's counsel in the matter and instead make a decision based on their own reason, accepting the claims and external evidence produced by the Gibeonites. Having made a covenant with the Gibeonites, the Israelites feel compelled to spare their lives even after

discovering their deception at a later time, fearing that God's wrath will be upon them should they violate their oath. But although their lives are spared, the Gibeonites are not integrated into the nation of Israel. Speaking to the Gibeonites, Joshua says, "Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God"(Josh 9:23). Joshua ordains that the Gibeonites will have a perpetual and hereditary subservient position within Israel. The Gibeonites continue in this position for generations as a separate ethnic group. As we can see from the narrative in 2 Samuel 21, even after centuries of living alongside the Israelites, the Gibeonites are still seen as a separate nation, founded on a separate bloodline, and under a separate covenant.

With the exception of Rahab and the Gibeonites, the inhabitants of Canaan prove to be hardhearted and unwilling to submit to the Lord.

"There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses...So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to

their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.” (Josh 11:19-20,23)

The campaign of Joshua brings about the defeat of thirty-one kings in the land, thereby breaking the political rule of the Canaanites; but it does not result in a total removal of these peoples from amongst the Israelites. Various remnants of the Canaanites are still in the land, many of whom are eventually put under tribute. This failure to remove the Canaanites becomes a snare to the Israelites in future generations.

After completing the narrative of the conquest of Canaan, the book of Joshua records the allotment of the land according to the tribes and families of Israel. This inheritance is distributed by “Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel”(Josh 14:1). While an allotment is given to every tribe, some of the tribes are reluctant to complete the removal of the Canaanites from the land. In Joshua 17:14-18 the children of Joseph complain to Joshua that their portion is too small for such a great people as themselves, in part because the valleys in their allotment are still held by Canaanites who possess iron chariots; Joshua responds by saying that their lot will include the valleys, and that they will drive out the Canaanites “though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong”(Josh 17:18). This same reluctance to go forth and conquer is again recorded in the following chapter, where there are still seven tribes which have not yet received their inheritance. Joshua

asks them, “How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?”(Josh 18:3). This slackness is contrasted with the devotion of Caleb. Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the twelve spies who trusted in the Lord to defeat the enemies of Israel (Num 13-14). Even in his old age, Caleb is full of zeal not simply to conquer, but to conquer the most difficult territory and to leave a secure possession for his seed. Caleb speaks to Joshua in these words when asking for his inheritance.

“Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children’s for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were

great and fenced: if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.” (Josh 14:7-12)

Caleb wins an inheritance for himself and his children by wholly following the Lord. He clings to God even though the hearts of his brethren melt with the fear of man. Caleb trusts that God will complete the good work that he has begun in those who follow him; he trusts that his faith will not wane in his old age. The Lord desires to bless all of his people, but he blesses more richly those who are wholly obedient to him. Pursuing obedience and trusting in God to overcome all internal and external enemies provides our children with a precious inheritance; failure to obey leaves behind enemies that will assault and entice future generations.

A Monument to Unity

After Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh have faithfully fulfilled their promise to Moses to assist their brethren in the conquest, Joshua allows them to return to their own territory. Soon thereafter these three tribes build an altar by the Jordan, causing great alarm amongst the other Israelites, who see the altar as rebellion against God and therefore a threat to the well-being of the entire nation. The Israelites prepare to go to war over the supposed apostasy. They send Phinehas and “ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel”(Josh 22:14) to call the rebels to repentance.

When they address the three tribes on the other side of the Jordan, they compare the building of the altar to the sin of Baalpeor, upbraiding their brethren for bringing God's wrath upon them: "it will be, seeing ye rebel to day against the Lord, that to morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel"(Josh 22:18). The three tribes reply that the altar was not meant to be used for sacrifice,

"But that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us...that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the Lord. Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you." (Josh 22:27-28)

The tribes built the altar as an external symbol that would remind future generations of the spiritual and ethnic unity of the Israelites on both sides of the Jordan. This response pleases Phinehas, who says that they have "delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord"(Josh 22:31). Our public monuments and symbols ought to be designed to produce piety and racial solidarity. National unity is a great blessing that must be cultivated and strengthened.

Joshua's Final Words

After enjoying the peace that follows the conquest for some time, Joshua summons Israel to hear his words. In this final address Joshua exhorts his brethren to be faithful to the covenant and to be relentless in purifying the land of the pagan nations. He reminds the people that there are still remnants of the Canaanites in the land that need to be driven out. If the people remain obedient to the law of Moses, then God will bless them by expelling their enemies. They are to love the Lord and cleave unto him, rather than cleaving unto the Canaanites in marriage and friendship. Loving the Lord is contrasted with entering into mixed marriages.

“Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.”
(Josh 23:11-13)

Amalgamation with the Canaanites will bring God's wrath upon the Israelites and ultimately an end to their existence as a nation.

Joshua reminds the people that their ancestors were originally idolators before the call of Abraham, and that the danger of idolatry is ever present. God is under no obligation to bless those who worship idols, and he will treat the Israelites as enemies if they join themselves to the cursed pagan nations.

“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Josh 24:14-15)

The people answer Joshua that they will serve the Lord and obey his voice. Joshua renews the covenant with the children of Israel and sets up a great stone as a witness to them. The book of Joshua then ends with the death and burial of Joshua and Eleazar, the military and priestly rulers of the nation, and with the interment of the bones of Joseph in the promised land. This marks the completion of the exodus from Egypt and the establishment of Israel as a regional power. In his providential love for mankind God chose the bloodline

of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to bless all nations and families of the earth. Out of his goodness and mercy the Lord separated this seed to be a kingdom of priests. God set up a racially distinct political community as the earthly image of the heavenly kingdom that was to be brought in by the Messiah.

9. Bloodline and the Law

Thus far, we have looked at how the significance of bloodline is demonstrated in the narrative of God's chosen people from Genesis to Joshua. In this narrative we can see that sharing a common bloodline is the normative way of forming an ethnic and political identity. As we now examine the law delivered through Moses, we find that the importance of bloodline distinction is emphasized throughout, and in several places the law gives explicit commandments concerning it. From beginning to end, the law presupposes that racial purity and in-group loyalty are blessings.

The Ten Commandments

The law given at Sinai begins with a record of what God has done for a particular people: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt"(Exod 20:2). This was literally true of the Israelites originally addressed by Moses. When Moses repeats the law forty years later, the generation of the exodus from Egypt has perished in the wilderness, and yet here again it is said "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt"(Deut 5:6). The present generation is so connected with their ancestors that God can say that what happened to their ancestors

happened to them. This conflation of past and present generations appears very clearly in the following passage from Joshua: “I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. And I brought **your fathers out** of Egypt: and **ye came** unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after **your fathers** with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea”(Josh 24:5-6). The terms “you” and “your fathers” are used interchangeably. Samuel speaks to the Israelites in a similar way centuries later: “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up **Israel** out of Egypt, and delivered **you** out of the hand of the Egyptians”(1 Samuel 10:18). God’s Word reveals that we are deeply connected to and even identified with our ancestors; we must come to feel this reality. When considering what God has done for us, we must not consider merely our own personal experience, but what God has done for our bloodlines in past generations. Having ancestors in covenant with God certainly cannot directly cause our salvation, but the intergenerational covenant is one of the primary means by which God saves souls and preserves his Church. God has used nations as the bulwark of truth throughout the New Testament era, as self-identified Christian nations have frequently fought against paganism, Islam, and popery.

The first commandment given at Sinai forbids all manner of idolatry: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me”(Exod 20:3). The blessings and curses associated with this commandment show that our personal fidelity to the law of God impacts our entire

bloodline, as those who bow down to idols will bring judgment not just on themselves but on future generations as well: “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments”(Exod 20:5-6). This promise of intergenerational consequences assumes that men have a special affection for their own bloodlines, and that this warning will therefore motivate them to keep God’s law. The contemporary Church has largely embraced the false teaching that special bloodline affection is sinful; it is not surprising, therefore, that Christians have become so lax in their moral behavior. Men who do not care about the future of their specific bloodline will be much less zealous to obey God’s commandments.

The first table of the law concerns our relationship with God, the second table concerns our relationship with others. We have seen that the first table begins with an emphasis on bloodline; in like manner the second table begins with the commandment to honor father and mother. Just as loving God will bring mercy to our descendants, so honoring father and mother will cause our days to be “long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee”(Exod 20:12). The satanic spirit of our age promotes perpetual disrespect towards one’s ancestors and rebellion against the moral standards of previous generations. This is a direct inversion of God’s law and has brought about tremendous suffering and

spiritual death. By honoring, caring for, and fostering our bloodline according to God's Word, we can be instruments to bring blessing and healing to the fallen world.

From these passages in the Decalogue we can begin to see that the entire Christian approach to ethics is built on bloodline affection and obligation. *Our foremost moral duty is to those through whom our bloodline passes: to our parents, to our spouses, and to our children.* This truth is demonstrated by the special honor due to parents, by the special protections placed around marriage, and by the special care we are required to take for our children.

The Law of Exodus 21-23

After the initial revelation of the ten commandments, the judgments of the Lord continue in Exodus 21-23. These three chapters together with the ten commandments constitute the main moral teaching of the book of Exodus. The very first commandments in Exodus 21 make a distinction between Israelites and foreigners. These commandments concern the proper treatment of fellow Israelites who fall into economic hardship and can no longer care for themselves or their children. These unfortunates have the option to attach themselves and their unwed daughters to more prosperous families as bondservants. The law specifies that Israelites who enter into this state of servitude must still be viewed as racial kin by their masters: male

Israelite servants must be set free after six years of service, and female Israelite servants must not be sold “unto a strange nation”(Exod 21:8). The Lord gives further protections for poor Israelites in Exodus 22:25, where he forbids the charging of interest on loans made “to any of my people that is poor by thee”. God’s people must not exploit their poor ethnic brethren, and they must not despise them on account of their poverty. Shared ancestry and membership in the covenant, rather than economic competition or self-interest, are to be the foundation of community.

The commandment to honor father and mother is expanded in Exodus 21:15,17, where it is specified that those who strike or curse their parents are to be put to death. Striking any other person has a much lighter penalty, as can be seen from the verses immediately following. This teaches us the degree of reverence we are to have for father and mother. We must view them as having been set apart for special veneration. This same veneration should be given to previous generations in our bloodline, as the Scriptures frequently refer to distant ancestors as the “fathers” of living men. Even when we must confess with the idolatrous gentiles brought into the Church that “our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit”(Jer 16:19), this does not nullify the obligation we have to honor our parents and ancestors.

The law was ordained to establish an ethnically distinct nation, but this distinct identity does not imply that foreigners can be exploited or mistreated. “Thou

shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt”(Exod 22:21), “thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt”(Exod 23:9). When considering the laws that protect the rights of foreigners, we must not view them in isolation from the laws that set up various barriers between Israelites and non-Israelites. Egalitarians in the contemporary Church frequently cite the commandments that protect foreigners to support policies that are contrary to God’s design for national life. According to today’s egalitarians, all Western nations should indiscriminately accept an unlimited number of foreigners of various races and religions, and these foreigners should be given welfare benefits and the full rights of citizenship. This approach is clearly not commanded by God, and it was certainly not followed by the Israelites. Had the ancient Israelites followed the modern egalitarian model, they would have invited in every foreign pagan nation, allowed them to practice their idolatry, given them free land and houses at the expense of the Israelites, encouraged intermarriage, and allowed the newcomers (who were completely ignorant of God’s law) to serve immediately as judges and magistrates. Such a policy would have swiftly brought about the complete destruction of the nation. Even in the worst periods of Israelite history, God’s people did not sink so low as the modern Christian egalitarians. The laws about not oppressing foreigners simply command that the persons and property of these guests be

respected; the Israelites are not permitted to steal, cheat, or otherwise harass those who are visiting from foreign lands. The reference in these laws to remembering the sojourn in Egypt is instructive. During the beginning of the sojourn, the Israelites lived separately in Goshen and were not integrated into Egyptian society. This was the preferable arrangement for both the Egyptians and for Joseph and his brethren. This should be the model for incompatible foreign groups visiting our nations.

The giving of the law in Exodus 21-23 ends with a repetition of God's promise to drive out the original inhabitants of the land. Throughout Scripture it is assumed that the removal of hostile aliens from one's territory is a blessing. The Lord commands the Israelites to keep themselves completely separate from these peoples, emphasizing that they will be a snare to them if they are allowed to remain in the land: "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee"(Exod 23:32-33). In the case of ancient Israel, God clearly defined which nations posed a particular threat to the racial and religious purity of his people. Not all foreign groups were equal. Some foreigners were better suited to be integrated into Israel, as we will see in more detail when examining the citizenship laws of Deuteronomy. In our age, God has not explicitly defined which foreigners are a greater threat to Western, Christian nations, but this is something we can easily learn from experience. If the presence of a foreign group

poses a threat to our faith and way of life, their presence must be strongly resisted. If we fail to keep out such foreign threats, we do not follow the spirit of the law as revealed through Moses.

Corporate Purity

Throughout the books of Moses, the laws concerning moral purity, ritual purity, and civil administration are intertwined. As Christians, we have now been brought into a better covenant, where the laws concerning the outward purification of the body are no longer needed, although the laws governing the external worship of the Old Covenant can still direct our minds upward to contemplate God. All Scripture has been given for our edification, and everything delivered to Moses about right worship is an image of the eternal, heavenly reality. Ritual purity is an external sign teaching us about moral purity; and while we are not under the same rule of ritual purity as the ancient Israelites, the standard of moral purity is the same. The laws concerning civil administration also teach moral purity, as the penalties for crimes are viewed as a means of purging out the moral stain of sin.

When it comes to political organization and national life, we must consider the corporate nature of sin and purity. Although our eternal state is determined by our personal faith and its fruits, God views nations as corporate wholes, and he brings temporal blessings and judgments upon them accordingly.

“If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them...If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.” (Jer 18:8,10)

When the magistrate fails to restrain outward sin as commanded in God’s Word, an ever greater share of the population becomes vicious and is enslaved by carnal desires. Good ground for the reception of the seed of the Gospel becomes more scarce. Thus evangelism cannot be separated from public morality and the general purity of the nation.

The corporate, communal nature of sin and purity is seen in the offerings of the high priest in the holy of holies on behalf of the entire nation. God’s tabernacle dwells amidst the uncleanness of his chosen people, and this uncleanness must be covered with an atonement in order to shield the people from God’s wrath.

“Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: **And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel**, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the

congregation, **that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.**” (Lev 16:15-16)

The Church is a royal priesthood, making intercession and spiritual sacrifices on behalf of the entire world. In our prayers to God we must especially ask mercy and forgiveness for the uncleanness that remains in ourselves and our brethren according to the flesh.

The Sin of Idolatry

The first commandment given through Moses forbids idolatry. Deuteronomy 13 instructs us on how we are to respond to this sin when it is discovered within our nation. The strong response commanded in this chapter demonstrates the absolute obedience required by God: “Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him”(Deut 13:4). Hearing the voice of our shepherd is the source from which we receive the temporal and eternal blessings promised to God’s people. Anything that distracts us from this total focus on God and his commandment must be abhorred as the greatest threat to our souls and our ethnic community. We cannot claim to cleave unto the Lord while having a weak response to the sin of idolatry.

Deuteronomy 13 mentions three threats to our obedience to God: false prophets and teachers, friends or family members that secretly practice idolatry and seek to ensnare us, and entire communities/cities within the

nation that practice idolatry as a group. Any prophet, even one who can work miracles, must be put to death if he encourages going after other gods. The death penalty is necessary to “put the evil away from the midst of thee”(Deut 13:5). If any close friend or family member, even one “which is as thine own soul”, attempts to entice you to join in idolatry,

“Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die.” (Deut 13:8-10)

Anyone who detects the sin of idolatry within his own family must report it to the community and must be the first one to cast a stone. If an entire city consents to the sin of idolatry, the population of the city is to be put in the same category as the Canaanites.

“Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the Lord thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again.” (Deut 13:15-16)

This total intolerance of idolatry must be the standard, in order that “the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers”(Deut 13:17). If we do not respond to idolatry by using all means sanctioned by the Word of God, we risk becoming polluted and thereby losing the blessings promised to us.

All Christians must accept the spirit of the law of Deuteronomy 13. We must pursue this same intolerance for the same reason, to keep us and our people from the curse that comes from God upon idolators. We might wish to apply the law differently, depending on our view of the magistrate’s role in enforcing right worship, but we must embrace its spirit. At the very least we must view Deuteronomy 13 as both a warning about the moral pollution that idolatry brings upon the entire community and as a picture of the future punishment that will come upon idolators, and we must not flinch from preaching the law against this sin. Even this spiritual application of Deuteronomy 13 has largely disappeared from the Church today.

Innocent Blood

In the account of the murder of Abel, God tells Cain that “the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground”(Gen 4:10). In the covenant made with Noah, the death penalty is established as the proper

punishment for murder: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man”(Gen 9:6). The blood of the innocent pollutes the land and cries out to God for vengeance. This pollution is put away by the shedding of the blood of the guilty. Thus punishing those who shed innocent blood is one of the primary duties of the state. As in the case of idolatry, the failure to carry out God’s law concerning murder brings a stain on the entire nation.

The Mosaic law confirms that the death penalty is the only just punishment for murder, specifying that no fine or alternative penalty can be accepted.

“Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death...So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.” (Num 35:31,33-34)

One of the purposes of the death penalty is to remove the pollution caused by the shedding of innocent blood in order to avoid offending the Lord.

Even in the case of unsolved murders, the magistrate must still take special care to avoid pollution. When a body is found and the identity of the murderer cannot be determined, the elders of the city and the priests are to bring a heifer “unto a rough valley, which

is neither eared nor sown” and slay it, thereby making a symbolic offering of the blood of the murderer. The elders are then to declare: “Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel’s charge”(Deut 21:7-8). From this prayer of the elders it is apparent that when innocent blood is not properly avenged by the magistrate, the guilt falls upon the entire people of Israel.

Our nation today perpetually fails to avenge innocent blood. The slaughter of millions of unborn children in the name of sexual liberation is the most obvious example of our negligence. Our collective aversion to using capital punishment even for convicted murderers is also a source of tremendous guilt.

The Lust of the Flesh

In his exhortation to sexual purity, St. Paul puts the sin of fornication in a special category, saying “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body”(1 Corinthians 6:18). Experience teaches us that those who habitually practice fornication and sexual perversion become especially hardened against God’s Word. The sin that such people commit within their own bodies darkens their minds and leads to the specious rationalization of abominable practices that are clearly contrary to nature and destructive of society.

Sexual impurity also presents a distinct threat to bloodline continuity. Those who have engaged in premarital fornication have weaker marriages and are more likely to divorce; divorce in turn leads to the confusion of remarriage and blended families. When unwanted pregnancies do not end in murder, they produce bastard children who lack a proper bond with their fathers and their wider bloodline. Fornication drives our souls away from God and into the sinful flesh, and it breeds confusion and lawlessness. These negative consequences are guarded against in the Mosaic law. Men found guilty of seducing virgins are required to take them as wives, or, at the discretion of the father of the woman, be forced to pay a full dowry (Exod 22:16-17). If consistently enforced, this law would make premarital relations prohibitively expensive. A modern application of this law could be to require a man to pay alimony to every sexual partner. Such a law would swiftly reduce the problems of fornication, bastard children, and abortion.

More serious sexual sins than premarital fornication are punished more severely. Leviticus 18 gives a list of the worst sexual perversions and their consequences. Just as in the case of spilling innocent blood, these perversions defile the land and the nation, and they must be punished by death. After listing the sins of incest, adultery, sodomy, and bestiality, the text states that the inhabitants of Canaan have practiced these abominations and have thereby brought destruction upon themselves.

“Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.” (Lev 18:24-29)

Failure to prevent these sins from occurring both inside the covenant community and amongst resident aliens will cause the land to spue out the children of Israel.

One of the most serious errors of the Church today is the belief that sexual sins are “private” matters that should not concern the civil magistrate. This attitude goes against Scripture and against the laws of all Christian societies until the middle of the 20th century, when the great egalitarian apostasy fully came into view. The historically normal position within Christendom was that sexual sin should be punished by the magistrate. This is the only attitude that is in harmony with Scripture. Criminalizing sexual sin as defined in God’s

Word must become a test of Christian orthodoxy. In order to avoid God's judgment, the Church must encourage the magistrate to follow God's law and seek the death penalty for adulterers, rapists, sodomites, and other perverts.

Idolatry, murder, and sexual perversion are not private matters. They bring pollution upon the entire nation if proper atonement is not made. These three areas of sin are all contrary to God's eternal moral law, they are not merely part of the ceremonial law given solely to Israel. This can be seen from the fact that the law against murder was given to Noah, and that the sexual sins mentioned in Leviticus brought punishment upon the Canaanites. In cases such as ours today, where the magistrate completely fails to uphold God's law on these issues, we must cry out to our Lord for his mercy, acknowledging that our entire nation has been seriously defiled.

Governing the Nation

God requires corporate purity and he brings corporate judgment upon those who defile themselves. Therefore, in order to serve and glorify God properly, we must have a clear understanding of what the corporate unit is. This understanding must come from God's Word, not from the false egalitarian notions of the world. In his Word we learn that God evaluates and judges *nations* as corporate units. The Bible everywhere presupposes that

nations are defined by physical descent from common ancestors. Just as a man cannot properly fulfill his role as a father without recognizing his own children, so we cannot properly work for corporate purity without first recognizing our own people. The Lord “divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam”(Deut 32:8). We honor the Lord when we walk according to his law and pass down this inheritance to our seed. Through the preaching of the Word, all nations now have God’s law near to them. All men and all nations have good and evil, life and death set before them, and the command given to Israel to sanctify themselves as a nation applies to all.

“I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.” (Deut 30:16,19)

In God’s law we find clear instructions on how to define, preserve, and sanctify our own nation, in order that our seed may live. Obeying these instructions is life and blessing; despising these instructions is death and curse.

Marriage and Citizenship

Intermarriage with foreign groups is one of the most dangerous threats to national identity and cohesion. The children born to these unions have a diluted loyalty to one or both of their ancestral stocks when compared to those of pure lineage. In the case of ancient Israel, the worst danger was in intermarrying with the Canaanites, whom the Lord commanded to be driven out of the promised land. Marriages with these nations were strictly forbidden.

“Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.” (Deut 7:3-4)

The Lord repeatedly declares that these nations are under his curse of destruction and are to be driven from the land. Marrying the children of the Canaanites would therefore be a denial of God’s judgment, as these marriages join together that which is to be rejected from the land with the seed that is to inherit the land, creating great confusion. How could a mixed Canaanite-Israelite properly honor God’s decree about the inheritance of the land?

The prohibition on marriage with the Canaanites emphasizes the danger of idolatry that comes from

marrying those who are outside of the covenant. But we must not therefore conclude that this prohibition is solely against mixed-faith unions and not mixed-race unions. We observe first that there is no provision in the law itself for allowing marriage with Canaanites who repent of their idolatry. Marriages with the Canaanites are forbidden absolutely. Second, as we examine Deuteronomy 23 we can see that God's law undoubtedly makes distinctions based purely on ancestry, not just personal faith. All of the peoples surrounding the Israelites were idolators, whether Canaanites, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, or Egyptians; and yet the law does not treat these peoples equally.

“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever: Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.” (Deut 23:3-4)

“Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land. The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation.” (Deut 23:7-8)

Moabites are excluded from the full rights of citizenship within Israel for ten generations; the children of an

Edomite could enter the congregation after three generations. This difference has nothing whatsoever to do with the personal character or faith of the individuals involved, it is based solely on ancestry. Individuals were to be treated differently based on who their ancestors were and what their ancestors did.

Ancient Israel is unique in that its regulations on intermarriage and citizenship were given directly by God. We do not enjoy the same blessing today; however, we can use the general principles of these regulations to guide our policy in this area. With the absolute ban on marriage with the Canaanites and the specific regulations for Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Egyptians, Israel would be largely insulated from intermarriage with the surrounding nations. This insulation is the aim of the Mosaic law. It should therefore be the norm within Christian societies that the genetic makeup of the population be stable through the generations, and that large numbers of foreigners never be accepted. We must particularly avoid integration with those groups that have conflicting claims to our inheritance, or whose character is so foreign that their presence would threaten the stability of our inheritance in the future. Contrary to the egalitarian dogma rampant in the Church today, Biblical law gives no grounds for thinking that intermarriage is an indifferent matter without consequences for a nation. Any foreign group seeking to be integrated into the nation must be carefully scrutinized, and even when found to be unobjectionable, it must only be allowed to

assimilate in small, controlled numbers, lest the national character and inheritance be threatened.

One might inquire how God is said to have established the boundaries of all the nations and given them their inheritance (Deut 32:8, Acts 17:26) when specific instructions on proper ethnic boundaries were only revealed to his chosen people Israel. This general establishment of nations is best understood as being analogous to Christ's statement that men and women who are married have been joined together by God, and therefore men should not separate them (Mark 10:9). Even though God has not given us special revelation concerning whom we are to marry, he brings about marriage through his providence and according to his ordinance, and once a marriage has been contracted it can be said to have been made by God. Likewise in the case of nations, when through God's providence a genetically distinct people has been established in a certain territory, we must understand this people to be a nation and treat it as a corporate unit made by God. If we assert that mere "accidents of history" brought about the distinct identity of a nation, we deny the working of God's providence in human affairs. (This providential creation of national boundaries does not, however, mean that we cannot make war on foreign nations for the sake of political expansion, as directions for how to conduct these wars are given in Deuteronomy 20. These directions do not deny the validity or reality of distinct nations, rather they govern how these distinct nations are to interact in times of war.)

Kin Rule and In-Group Identity

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 instructs the Israelites on how they are to choose a king for themselves, and on how this king is to behave. They are commanded to select a king who is a racial brother, and not a foreigner: “one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother”(Deut 17:15). In addition to being selected from his own people, the king is to live in relative humility. He is not to multiply horses, wives, or silver and gold to himself; he is not to be conspicuously wealthy above his brethren. He is diligently to study the law of God, “That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment”(Deut 17:20). Taken together, these commandments require that the king be genetically similar to his people, and also that he remain close in wealth and experience to those whom he is to govern. The greater the separation between rulers and people, whether genetic or economic, the greater the risk of tyranny and disloyalty.

In addition to this positive commandment to select rulers from within the nation, the law of God also makes it clear that ruling over foreigners is a blessing, while being ruled by foreigners is a curse. The Lord promises that if the Israelites are obedient to his law, then he will put them in a position of dominance above foreigners: “And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt

not be beneath”(Deut 28:13). If the people of Israel disobey the Lord, then they will face various punishments, including the following:

“The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.” (Deut 28:28-29)

“Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in thine hand.” (Deut 28:32)

“The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up.” (Deut 28:33)

“The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.” (Deut 28:43-44)

“Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee.” (Deut 28:47-48)

We can see that these curses are upon apostate Christendom today. The formerly Christian nations have completely rejected God and his law in favor of the false doctrines of humanism and egalitarianism, and these nations are now being overrun by hostile foreigners. Even the supposedly conservative churches have largely embraced the same doctrines, insisting that having one's inheritance given to a foreign people and being ruled by racial aliens are in fact blessings, not curses. Those in the formerly Christian nations who instinctively feel an aversion to this foreign invasion grope about in blindness, having no might in their hands to resist, seeking political solutions rather than returning in repentance to God.

A common egalitarian objection to making racial distinctions is to claim that because there are borderline cases of mixed individuals who do not fit well into any particular pure racial group, therefore these groups lack a coherent definition and do not actually exist. In the case of the law of Deuteronomy 17 requiring that kings be selected "from among thy brethren", the egalitarian might demand to know exactly how much pure Israelite blood is needed in order for someone to be considered an ethnic brother. In response to this egalitarian argument, we point out first that the Bible distinguishes between ethnic brethren and foreigners, therefore this distinction must be real and comprehensible. Second, we point out that in making this objection the egalitarian is using fallacious reasoning; it is akin to arguing that because there is a period of twilight that cannot definitely be

classified as either day or night, therefore day and night do not really exist.

Finally, we can answer this egalitarian objection by exploring more fully the concept of in-group identity. Different in-groups have different interests, and these interests are almost always in competition with each other in some way. In-group identity is often defined by ethnicity, which includes bloodline, physical appearance, language, and culture. In times of crisis such as war, membership in an in-group can become a matter of life and death. Crucially, in such a crisis one must never trust one's life to someone who is likely to switch sides. For example, were Israel to select an Assyrian as their king, and war broke out between Israel and Assyria, this king would be able to switch his loyalty to Assyria much more easily than a normal Israelite. This Assyrian king would have different options for ethnic identification than the people he is ruling. As a modern example, we can consider an ethnic Arab living in France. Were France to face a serious economic or political crisis, the Arab could return to his country of origin and be received as a full member of that in-group; a native Frenchman, however, would not have that option. Were a Frenchman to travel to an Arab country, he would be considered a foreigner and not a member of the dominant in-group.

As Europeans explored and settled the globe, physical appearance became an increasingly important factor in ethnic identification. By simply looking at someone for a brief moment, one can usually determine

which continent the majority of that individual's ancestors comes from. Non-European admixture, even admixture that occurred generations back, can also often be detected by a quick glance. In diverse colonial societies composed of Europeans, Africans, Amerindians, and Asians, the broad racial groups (white, black, brown, etc.) take on much greater significance. Recognizing and understanding these racial differences is key to defining who one's ethnic brother is for the purposes of political organization or for mere survival in times of crisis. For example, it would be foolish, and a violation of the spirit of the law found in Deuteronomy 17, to allow a quadroon to be a full member of a European political community, because in the time of an uprising or other disturbance carried out by Africans, the quadroon could easily switch identification and side with the Africans. Full-blooded Europeans, of course, would not have the same option. *This ultimately is to be the test for ethnic brotherhood: could someone, based on his ancestry, be welcomed onto an opposing team in a way that you could not.*

The greatest level of trust within a political community can only exist amongst people who share the same options for ethnic identification. Large-scale immigration and interracial marriage destroy this trust. The more divergent the races are in character and appearance, the worse the mistrust will become.

Land and Debt

Following the conquest of Canaan, the land was distributed by lot to the tribes and families of Israel. This allotment was a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham to inherit the land, and it was also the basis for the economic and political life of the nation. Biblical law allows for the temporal reward of economic prosperity to come to those who diligently care for the land that God has given them; it also allows for the temporal penalty of poverty to come to those who mismanage their property. However, this poverty is not to be permanent and intergenerational.

Those who fall into such poverty that they are forced to sell their ancestral land are not forever estranged from their inheritance. At the year of jubilee, every fifty years, the land that has been sold will return to the original owner or his descendants (Lev 25:13). Thus when making a sale of land, the price is to be set “according to the number of years after the jubilee”(Lev 25:15). Likewise, a fellow Israelite who has waxen poor and sold himself as a servant is to be set free at the jubilee in order to return “unto the possession of his fathers”(Lev 25:41). By contrast, bondslaves purchased from the neighboring foreign nations are to be the perpetual possession of their Israelite masters. The foreign slaves “shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour”(Lev 25:46). The restoration of freedom and property at the jubilee applies only to

Israelites, not to foreigners living within Israel. Here we can note that if it were possible for racial aliens to “become Israelites” legally, they surely would have done so in order to avoid this perpetual servitude. The case of the Gibeonites in Joshua 9 considered above shows that foreigners serving as slaves could hold this position in society for centuries without being integrated with racial Israel.

The laws concerning debt and usury make a similar distinction between racial brothers and foreigners. Every seven years creditors are required to release debts owed by fellow Israelites, while they can retain debts owed by foreigners: “Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother...of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again”(Deut 15:2-3). Similarly, an Israelite could charge interest on loans to foreigners, but when lending to a poor brother the loan must be interest-free: “Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother...Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury”(Deut 23:19-20). Throughout the law, being in debt is understood as a form of bondage, rather than as a normal economic practice that prosperous nations willingly take part in. Israelites should never be in bondage to each other. There is provision in the law for the bondage of debt and servitude in unfortunate cases where individuals become severely impoverished and are incapable of supporting themselves, but this bondage is only meant to be temporary. The nation should see itself

as an organic whole. Every member of the nation should desire all of his brothers to be healthy and thriving. We must not seek to advance ourselves economically by bringing our ethnic brothers into bondage, just as we should not make war upon our brothers.

Under the Mosaic law, ownership of the land would never pass to foreigners, nor would it ever become concentrated in the hands of the few; lending money within Israel would be for the sake of relieving the poor, not controlling or enslaving them. The law demands that the members of the nation see each other as racial brothers who share a common inheritance.

The law of God presents a shocking contrast to the assumptions of contemporary society. Even many Christians would be scandalized by an honest reading of the books of Moses and the implications for how the nation should be organized. This is largely because Christians have become incredibly ignorant not just of their own Scriptures but of their own history as well. The vision of what a Christian nation should look like that we have seen in this chapter is in fact the historical norm. It is historically normal within Christendom for the state to honor and promote the worship of Christ, it is normal for the state to execute convicted murderers, it is normal for the state to punish sexual immorality, it is normal for the state to limit the entry of foreigners, it is normal for the nation to consist of genetically similar people across the centuries, it is normal for parents to assume that their children will marry within their own ethnic group and

receive the faith and customs of their ancestors, it is normal for the members of a nation to expect that the land in their community will be owned by people like them. We live in an incredibly abnormal and perverted age. Scripture, tradition, and nature all condemn the folly that has captured the minds of our people.

10. The Office of the Prophet

In Moses we see the model for the subsequent prophets sent by God to his people. Moses possessed a deep love for his brethren according to the flesh, and he was grieved beyond measure by their rebellion and apostasy. He was willing to give up all, even his place in the book of life, for the sake of his beloved kin. Before his death, God declared to Moses that he would send a great prophet like unto him.

“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” (Deut 18:18-19)

This great prophet was Jesus (Acts 3:22), the mediator of the New Covenant who was willing to die and to become a curse for his people.

From the time of Moses to Christ, the prophets of Israel performed the same office, calling their people to repentance and reminding them of the covenant that God made with their fathers. Throughout the same period, false prophets excused the sins of the people and denied that the nation was under God’s wrath. The purpose of

the true prophet was to expose and display the iniquity of the people, for this was the only way to avert punishment (Lam 2:14). God spoke through men who had a surpassing love for their own bloodline and desired to see this bloodline wholly sanctified to the Lord; the office of the prophet cannot be properly understood without recognizing this love. The prophet clearly saw the sin and guilt of his own people, and his heart was broken by the fact that the nation that was supposed to be the pure bride of the Lord was perpetually defiled. The prophet makes no excuses for his people, nor does he favorably compare them with foreign nations. He simply and directly pleads guilty on behalf of his people, acknowledging that they are breakers of the covenant, but at the same time he never wearies in asking God for his mercy.

“Therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth...O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our

supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.” (Dan 9:11-13,18)

God continued sending these inspired men during the worst rebellion and chastisement of his people, both warning them of the approaching judgment and consoling them with the promises of restoration and of the reign of the Messiah.

While we cannot directly apply all of the specific prophecies concerning ancient Israel to apostate Christendom today, taken as a whole, the message and ministry of the prophets should guide our thinking on how God deals with his Church in history and on how our hearts should be oriented towards our own rebellious kin. In response to the wickedness of his own people and the lies spoken by the false prophets condoning the manifold transgressions of the law, Jeremiah declares,

“Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness. For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right. For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord.” (Jer 23:9-11)

May we have such a heart for our own people and for the false teachers in the Church who mingle humanistic egalitarianism with the Word of God. May we never become hardened in the face of their pervasive sin, but continue in mourning and speaking the truth, blessing and praying for those who curse us.

The Rebellion of God's People

In Isaiah the rebellious nation is presented as a body that is sick from its princes and priests down to the common people. The whole nation is considered as an organic whole. Every Israelite is impacted by the general rebellion of the nation, and every Israelite has a personal responsibility to work against the evil that has infected the body.

“Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” (Isa 1:4-6)

The prophets depict the rebellious nation as being in complete depravity. Instead of being the holy seed, they

have become a seed of evildoers. Because they do not seek the forgiveness of sin in the promises of the Lord, they are burdened with their own iniquity. The warnings of the prophets are never halfhearted. The prophets pour out everything within them while using the strongest language to provide their people with a mirror to see how defiled they have become.

While the whole nation is responsible for its rebellion, the prophets place special emphasis on the sins of the secular and religious rulers, just as Jesus issues his strongest condemnations against the false spiritual leaders and teachers of his day. When the head of the body is corrupted, the whole body suffers and cannot heal itself. The rulers who were raised up by God to protect their people have led them into sin. “My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray...All that found them have devoured them”(Jer 50:6-7).

The apostolic teaching that the love of money is the root of all evil is illustrated in the wicked behavior condemned by the prophets. “They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money”(Mic 3:10-11). The apostate rulers love money more than God and more than their own people, violating the greatest commandments. They oppress the poor by refusing to protect the orphans and widows (Isa 1:23), by using false weights and measures (Mic 6:11), and by not letting the

indentured poor go free in the year of release (Jer 34:13-16).

The priests were established by God to keep the nation holy unto the Lord by following and teaching the divine law. Israel was meant to be a distinct nation, shunning the ways of the pagans around them; but this distinction is denied by a careless and disobedient priesthood that fails to observe the righteous standards demanded by God: “Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean”(Ezek 22:26).

Perhaps the most dangerous corrupt leaders of the nation are the false prophets. These men give the false assurance that God does not hate sin and will not punish it. They encourage the rebellious people to trust in their own strength and to put off repentance until it is too late. They declare that the rebellious have peace with God.

These failures of leadership can all be easily seen in our own day in both Church government and secular government. Even though it is possible for individual believers or families to remain faithful in these circumstances, we must not minimize the threat that living under apostate rulers can have on our spiritual and physical welfare. When the rulers are morally diseased, the infection will always be pressing to enter into every member of the body.

This infection of sin is not superficial. When a people and their rulers begin to tolerate the spread of shameless evil in society, this is evidence that they have become corrupted in their very depths. Their sin is written on their hearts: “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars”(Jer 17:1). God intended that his people write his law upon their hearts, but instead they engraved their own sin. The inner condition of their hearts is manifested by their idolatrous altars, where they take the good gifts of the Lord and put them to evil use.

“Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them, And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them. My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord God. Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured.” (Ezek 16:17-20)

The beauty of creation speaks of the glory of God, and every chaste delight of the senses in this creation is meant to bring us closer to the creator. When we fashion idols for ourselves, the heart falls from its proper place

into total darkness. In this darkness we fail to uphold the most basic law of love, and when the pure worship of the one true God declines, there is a rise in parents murdering their own children.

As the apostate people of God use his created gifts to serve their idols, so God promises to remove these same gifts as a form of punishment.

“she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand.” (Hos 2:8-10)

The people sought their protection, their covering, in their idols or in their alliances with idolatrous foreign nations. Once this false covering is removed, the people are exposed and defenseless. The Israelites ought to be in a state of mourning and voluntary repentance, but when the nation refuses to humble itself voluntarily, God humbles it using external means. The Lord uses foreign enemies to bring a state of mourning to the nation, desolating the entire body (Isa 7:20).

God’s punishment of his people is for the sake of bringing them to repentance. This is spoken of as refining them, removing the dross in order to bring forth a pure metal: “I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely

purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin”(Isa 1:25). But although God’s chastisement of his people is out of love, that does not mean that it will not be severe. We have earned God’s wrath through our evil and backsliding, and although God is slow to anger, there are times in history when his full fury does come upon the rebellious: “because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee”(Ezek 24:13). This is a warning to all those who do not respond in faith to the purification that comes from the Lord.

The Faithful Remnant

The prophets declare God’s judgment upon his rebellious people, and they also give voice to the faithful remnant within Israel that detests the wickedness in the society around them. We can have confidence that God will be faithful in his promise of eternal life to those who trust in him, and this should always give us courage and confidence when the culture around us persists in wickedness. While we pray for the repentance of others, we must accept that God sometimes hardens those who have rejected him and brings an external punishment for the sins they have committed corporately.

“Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart,

and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.” (Isa 6:10-12)

When the external judgment does come upon the land, it can come upon all, both the righteous and the wicked.

“And say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked. Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh from the south to the north: That all flesh may know that I the Lord have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath: it shall not return any more.” (Ezek 21:3-5)

The faithful response to the corporate judgment upon a nation is to confess that this judgment comes from the Lord and is a manifestation of his power. The purpose of the judgment is to show all flesh that the Lord repays wickedness with his sword. We must not expect that believers will always be spared from the temporal consequences of general apostasy within a nation.

In these times of judgment, the entire nation will suffer external punishment and darkness, while the godly remnant will retain the inner light of faith and will in fact

grow in faith as long as they stay pure from the moral corruption of the wider society.

“the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people...Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel.” (Isa 8:11,13-14)

The Lord is a protection for the faithful and a stumbling stone for the faithless. The faithful will emerge triumphant after passing through every external chastisement, while the wicked will go from external, temporal judgment into eternal judgment.

There are many expressions of sorrow and loneliness from the prophets as they grow increasingly isolated while watching their kindred going to destruction. God designed us to have hearts that are bound to our racial brethren, and it is therefore a heavy burden when we bear the knowledge that our brethren have forsaken the Lord and view us as the enemy for refusing to join them. The remnant must be willing to sit alone and be content with God’s Word when growing increasingly isolated from the wider community.

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. I sat

not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand.” (Jer 15:16-17)

The pain of isolation does not outweigh the joy of knowing God and walking in his truth.

The isolation of the remnant, however, is not total, and the experience of the remnant is not necessarily individualistic. Even in times of general rebellion, the faithful can find communion with those who hold fast to God. Most importantly for our present consideration, we must observe that intergenerational faithfulness within a bloodline can exist in the midst of an apostate nation. We find an example of this faithfulness in the Rechabites mentioned in Jeremiah 35. The Rechabites were not Israelites but descendants of the father-in-law of Moses. They dwelt in the land and apparently worshiped the one true God. Jonadab, the ancient ancestor of the Rechabites, commanded his posterity to drink no wine and to dwell in tents rather than houses. The Rechabites remained faithful to this ancestral command, and their obedience is contrasted favorably with the faithlessness of the Israelites. God declares that the Rechabites will receive a blessing for their obedience and their willingness to forgo worldly pleasures while living in the midst of a prosperous but corrupt nation. The faithfulness of the Rechabites was not individual but corporate. They remained distinct and pure by passing down a way of life from generation to generation within a particular bloodline. The inherent

loyalty and sympathy that God has ordained to exist within a bloodline must be put to sanctified purposes.

The Promised Seed

In previous chapters we have traced the history of the promised seed from Eden to the conquest of Canaan under Joshua. This promised seed in which all nations of the earth are to be blessed is central to the teaching of the prophets throughout the centuries, and it is often the focus of the visions of healing and restoration found in their writings. Over the course of Israelite history, this promise is revealed to belong specifically to the line of David. As David is the archetypal good king, the promised seed is understood to be an heir to the throne of Israel and comes to be known as the Messiah or Christ, the anointed one. The prophets describe the coming restoration of Israel as a time when David will reign, referring to the rule of his seed who will fulfill the promise of salvation.

“they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” (Jer 30:9)

“I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.” (Ezek 34:23)

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the

spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.” (Isa 11:1-5)

These passages about a coming king who was to defeat the wicked were a great comfort to the Israelites during times of judgment. But this victory and restoration was not to be understood as primarily external. The promised restoration of the Israelites must include a thorough conversion and purification from all evil. God will make a New Covenant with his people, writing his law in their inward parts; God will give believers a new heart, which signifies a complete inner transformation.

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (Jer 31:33)

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” (Ezek 36:25-27)

Through the coming of his Spirit into the hearts of believers, God will create for himself a holy people to serve him and keep his law. When the promised seed comes, he will cleanse sinners from their guilt. This cleansing leads to fellowship with God and eternal life in the new creation, which is the blessing that was promised to Abraham.

Not all Israelites according to the flesh, however, will receive this cleansing. In addition to purifying the penitent, God will also remove the proud and rebellious from his covenant people, leaving only the humble and poor in spirit.

“then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.” (Zeph 3:11-12)

“I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was

broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.” (Ezek 34:16)

These passages speak to the new nature of the messianic age. Those who trust in the name of the Lord will be satisfied with the internal blessing of salvation that comes through faith, and they will not boast in the outer splendor of the earthly Jerusalem. The Messiah himself, likewise, will not rule with earthly pomp, but will come as a suffering servant, bearing the sins of his people.

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” (Isa 53:4-5)

Thus when consoling the Israelites with promises of their restoration, God is also preparing them for an age when his covenant will no longer exactly align with the existence of a physical nation upon the earth. The changed nature of the future covenant is also evident from the numerous statements about the incorporation of the gentiles into God’s kingdom.

The Conversion of the Gentiles

From the beginning of God's dealings with fallen man, the promise of salvation was made to all nations. God chose one specific man, Abraham, through whom one specific nation, Israel, brought forth one specific royal line, that of David, through which one specific man, the Christ, was to bring salvation to all men. This salvation that was to be offered to all is pictured in the prophets as the nations streaming into Jerusalem to learn God's Word, or as the nations offering pure sacrifices to God throughout the entire world.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isa 2:2-3)

“At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.” (Jer 3:17)

“For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Mal 1:11)

During the reign of the Messiah, the same law and knowledge of the Lord that is present with his people Israel will be shared with all, and the worship of God will no longer be centered on the physical Jerusalem in the same way. Isaiah speaks of an altar being established in Egypt, at which the Egyptians will make offerings to the Lord (Isa 19:19-21). Even the ethnic enemies of Israel will worship the Lord in spirit and in truth at the spiritual altars established throughout the world through the preaching of the Gospel.

The blessing to the nations is centered on the promised seed, the Christ who is to receive all power and to rule as the king of kings. The Christ is not to be the king of Israel only, but of the whole world.

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” (Dan 7:13-14)

As Christ's resurrected body is incorruptible, so is his kingdom. Unlike the kingdoms of the earth that are subject to growth and decay, this kingdom transcends the limitations of the fallen world. The faithful Israelites of the first century patiently waited for this kingdom, although they frequently misunderstood its true nature.

The concept of inheritance was central to the establishment and governance of the nation of Israel, as it is to any healthy nation. One's inheritance marks one's share in the intergenerational collective of a nation, and where there is no conscious understanding of receiving an inheritance from one's ancestors, the nation begins to wither. In the earthly nation of Israel established according to the Mosaic law, inheritance within the nation was strictly preserved for ethnic Israelites. However, in the visions of Ezekiel concerning the new temple and the newly constituted Jerusalem, foreigners are given an inheritance. "And it shall come to pass, that ye shall divide [the land] by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel"(Ezek 47:22). The temple vision of Ezekiel does not refer to a physical temple and community to be set up in the future, but to the spiritual temple, the Church, that is to be established after the coming of the Messiah. All followers of Jesus have "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven"(1 Peter 1:4) in the Jerusalem that is above. The

statement that foreigners shall have an equal inheritance with the children of Israel teaches that in the Messianic age, the manifestation of God's kingdom on earth will no longer be national and exclusive, but spiritual and universal.

11. The Restoration of Israel

The constant rebellion of the people of Israel brings forth the condemnation and warnings of the prophets; when these warnings are ignored, God chastises his people with foreign invasion and servitude. This chastisement culminates in the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC by Nebuchadnezzar and the exile of the Israelites in Babylon. After a period of seventy years, God gradually brings his people back from captivity to the holy city. Through the agency of the Persian kings, who overthrow and replace the Babylonian empire, God allows the temple to be rebuilt and the laws of Moses to be reinstated. The narrative of the restoration of Israel during this period is decisive in teaching us how we are to interpret and apply the divine law in the area of national life and ethnic identity. We have seen that by this time the prophets have already taught about the coming conversion of the gentiles and the establishment of the spiritual kingdom during the reign of the Messiah; but this future conversion does not imply that the earthly nation of Israel is encouraged or even allowed to engage in miscegenation. The coming of the gentiles into the kingdom of God is spiritual and is by faith. God's plan for salvation does not include the abolition of ethnic distinctions in this life.

The Initial Return

The order in which God restores his people is instructive both for the life of the believer and the nation. It begins with the conquest of the Babylonians by the Persians (c. 538 BC), an event that is completely outside of the control of the Israelites. God directs this conquest that is to bring about the end of the Babylonian captivity, and God then directs the spirit of the Persian king Cyrus to decree the return of the Israelite captives and the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 1:1ff). The returning captives are led by Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest. Upon entering Jerusalem, they construct an altar to the Lord and begin offering the prescribed sacrifices and celebrating the feasts and new moons according to the law (Ezra 3:1-6). In the second year of their return, the foundation of the new temple is laid, which is the cause of great rejoicing amongst the people: “And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid”(Ezra 3:11).

After this good beginning, the construction of the temple is hindered by inner and outer circumstances. The inner impediments are recorded in Haggai (c. 520 BC), who prophesies around fifteen years after the laying of the foundation, when little more has been done towards the construction of the temple. In the rebuke of Israel

delivered by Haggai, the Lord says that the Israelites have focused on building their own houses rather than the house of their God, looking upon their own carnal security rather than the divine law that demands that God be sanctified amongst them (Hag 1:4-6). In so doing the Israelites demonstrate the anxiety over worldly cares condemned by Jesus as the worship of mammon (Matt 6:24ff). The Lord tells his people that their worldly-mindedness will be counterproductive, for he will send drought on the land until his house is built.

The outer impediment to the construction of the temple comes from the Samaritans. After the destruction of the northern kingdom and the removal of the Israelites from the land (c. 720 BC), the king of Assyria brought in a mixed foreign population to inhabit the territory, which was known as Samaria. The newly imported Samaritans felt that they suffered in the land because they were not properly worshiping the local god. In response to their request, the king of Assyria sent an Israelite priest back to Samaria to teach the new inhabitants about the Lord. In this way the Samaritans gained some external knowledge of God's revelation to his people, but they continued to serve their former idols as well (2 Kings 17:24-41). The Samaritans came to believe that although they were not Israelites by blood nor obedient to God's law, they ought to have a share in the rebuilding of the temple. When the Israelites had begun to work on the new temple,

“[the Samaritans] came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel.” (Ezra 4:2-3)

The Israelite leadership instantly and correctly rejects the assistance of the Samaritans, for they understand that the holy nation that is commanded to build and maintain the temple is defined by bloodline, not simply by faith. The rejection of the Samaritans is based on ethnicity, not on their insufficient theological understanding. During the return from Babylon, great care was taken to record the genealogical information of those claiming to have a part in the holy nation or in the priesthood. In Ezra 2:62-63 we read of priestly families who could not provide adequate proof of their descent. These families were to be excluded from eating “the most holy things” until a high priest with Urim and Thummim should be able to establish from God that they truly were of priestly lineage. With such care being taken to prevent any hint of indecent admixture amongst the children of Israel, it is inconceivable that the Samaritans should have any share in the rebuilding of the temple.

The Samaritans are not ethnic Israelites. They are aping the Israelites, living in their land and trying to

follow their ways, thinking that this outward behavior grants something that can only come through physical descent. As is often the case with ethnic outsiders aspiring to be accepted as part of the in-group, once the Samaritans are rejected, they come to hate and envy the in-group they supposedly desired to assist. The Samaritans hire counselors to lobby the kings of Persia to turn against the Israelites and frustrate the rebuilding of Jerusalem. This hostility begins in the reign of Cyrus when the captives first return and continues into the reign of Artaxerxes several decades later. After failing to prevent the rebuilding of the temple, the Samaritans continue their campaign against the Israelites, telling the king of Persia that the “rebellious city” of Jerusalem must not be allowed to rebuild its walls.

Despite these inner and outer impediments, the temple is eventually constructed and rededicated in 515 BC, around twenty years after laying the foundation. During the dedication they offer “for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel”(Ezra 6:17). Both the returned captives and the other Israelites who remained in the land but have “separated themselves...from the filthiness of the heathen” eat the Passover together (Ezra 6:21). This represents a reconstitution of the nation as a whole.

The Return of Ezra

After the initial return of the exiles during the reign of Cyrus, some of the Israelites remain in Babylon.

God uses certain of these remaining Israelites to further purify his holy nation in the coming years. With the construction of the temple under Zerubbabel and Joshua, the proper external worship according to the law has been established, but there is still much work to be done to reform the manners and behavior of the people. This great work of reform begins with the return of Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem in the mid fifth century BC. Ezra is introduced in the narrative with a genealogy showing his descent from Aaron, and he is repeatedly described as a man who is an expert in the law of God. He is “a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given”(Ezra 7:6), “the good hand of his God [is] upon him”(Ezra 7:9), he “prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments”(Ezra 7:10), he is “the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel”(Ezra 7:11), and the king of Persia addresses Ezra as “a scribe of the law of the God of heaven”(Ezra 7:12) and gives him authority to enforce the law of Moses amongst his people. The Bible emphatically tells us that Ezra understands the law of God and its proper application.

Upon his arrival at Jerusalem with a company of Israelite exiles, Ezra is deeply shocked and saddened that many of his kindred have violated the Mosaic laws against mixed marriages. Before examining how Ezra deals with this problem, we must review the most fundamental principles of Biblical interpretation. This review is necessary because of the efforts of egalitarian

Christians to evade the obvious teaching of the Bible against mixed marriages. As Evangelical Christians we hold to the interpretive principle known as the analogy of faith. This means that we must allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, that we must allow the clearer passages of Scripture to interpret the less clear, and that we must allow those passages that address a doctrine directly to interpret those passages that only mention it indirectly. When it comes to the question of mixed marriages, egalitarian Christians often invert this principle. They cite alleged examples of mixed marriages, such as Ruth and Boaz or the incorporation of Rahab into Israel, and use the fact of these mixed marriages to interpret the clear commandments against mixed marriages. They reason thus: because a mixed marriage occurred and God brought something good out of it, therefore the law against mixed marriage is not valid. This is clearly backwards. We cannot overturn a law of God just because a Biblical saint violated that law. This would be like saying that because Jephthah is listed as a hero of the faith in Hebrews 11, therefore his rash vow was actually wise. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah contain the passages of the Bible that address the question of mixed marriages most directly. In these passages we are presented with a courageous and wise scribe of the law of God applying the commandments against mixed marriages to a practical problem. They are the clearest, most unambiguous passages of the Bible on the topic of mixed marriage, and therefore they are

decisive for determining what the Bible as a whole teaches on this subject.

With this in mind, let us closely examine the problem that Ezra encountered, how he interpreted the problem, and how he dealt with the problem. Upon his arrival at Jerusalem, the princes of the people come to Ezra and inform him that many in Israel, including the priests and Levites, have not separated themselves from the heathen, saying: “they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands”(Ezra 9:2). Neither Ezra nor the princes of the people consider if these foreign spouses have adopted Israelite culture or religion. The question is one of race, of physical bloodline descent, not religion. The enormity of this sin leaves Ezra shocked and unable to speak until the evening sacrifice: “when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished”(Ezra 9:3). When Ezra is finally able to speak, he cries out to God in prayer, expressing his extreme shame over the mixed marriages, and begging that the Lord have mercy on his people and forgive their transgression. The spirit of Ezra shown in this prayer should be our guide for how we react to the rampant mixing and apostasy amongst our own people.

“And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the

Lord my God, And said, O my God, **I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God:** for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day. And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for **we have forsaken thy commandments, Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.** And after all that is come upon

us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; **Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?** O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.” (Ezra 9:5-15)

In this passage, Ezra the scribe, who has the hand of his God upon him, is so full of shame that he can barely lift up his face in prayer. He understands that his people have broken the clear commandment of God in taking these foreign wives. This commandment is not arbitrary. It is for the sake of keeping God’s people pure and *ensuring that their posterity receive their inheritance*. Racial mixing damages the integrity of the national inheritance that each generation is expected to leave to future generations, and ultimately this mixing will destroy a nation and leave no recognizable remnant.

Ezra’s lament and deep sorrow over this sin brings about repentance amongst the people. As Ezra weeps and casts himself down before the temple, a large group of Israelite men, women, and children gather together around him and join him in weeping (Ezra 10:1). One of the Israelite men then comes forward and offers Ezra a solution to the problem. He says, “let us

make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law”(Ezra 10:3). Ezra approves of this suggestion, and he makes all of the Israelites who have gathered together swear to follow this course of action. The Scripture tells us that putting away both the foreign wives and the mixed-race children is done in obedience to the law of God. There is no consideration that some of the mixed-race children born to Israelite men might follow the one true God and therefore deserve an inheritance in Israel. This is a racial separation, not a religious or cultural separation. Those who let the law of God determine their standard of right and wrong must accept the justice of Ezra’s reforms. Those who are offended by Ezra’s actions must repent of their worldly, egalitarian beliefs.

The rulers of the people summon all of the children of the captivity to Jerusalem for the sake of reaffirming their corporate commitment to racial purity. Those who refuse to come will be separated from the congregation (Ezra 10:8). Once assembled together, Ezra addresses the people and they agree to follow God’s law.

“Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation

answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.” (Ezra 10:10-12)

The people commit to carrying out this work of racial purification diligently. All those who have taken foreign wives are to come at their appointed time together with the elders and judges of every city to ensure that a complete separation is made, in order that the fierce wrath of God be turned from them (Ezra 10:14).

The Return of Nehemiah

The narrative of the restoration of Jerusalem then continues with the book of Nehemiah. Like Ezra, Nehemiah is an Israelite who has remained in Babylon and has great favor with the Persian king. Around ten years after the beginning of Ezra’s work, Nehemiah receives news from one of his kinsmen concerning the captives who have returned to Israel. He learns that the Israelites are in “great affliction and reproach” because “the wall of Jerusalem...is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire”(Neh 1:3). Just as Ezra was greatly saddened by the threat posed by racial mixing, so Nehemiah laments over Jerusalem being unfortified and open to physical attack. Like Ezra, Nehemiah weeps, mourns, and fasts, and he then prays to God to have mercy on his rebellious people. He confesses the corporate sins that have led to Israel’s punishment, saying “I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the

children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned”(Neh 1:6).

The king of Persia grants Nehemiah leave to return to Jerusalem, “the place of my fathers’ sepulchres”(Neh 2:3), and rebuild it. When he arrives, he finds certain foreigners, “Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian”(Neh 2:19) to be in positions of authority in the land. These men are “exceedingly grieved” that Nehemiah has come to rebuild Jerusalem, and they mock his intentions. Nehemiah rebukes them by pointing out their foreign origin, saying, “ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem”(Neh 2:20). Once these men learn that the work of rebuilding has commenced, they become “very wroth” and conspire to come upon Jerusalem with violence (Neh 4:7-8). The case of Tobiah is particularly instructive. We learn later on in the book that Tobiah has a certain status in Israel because of mixed marriages. He himself is married to an Israelite woman, as is his son. Due to these mixed marriages there are “many in Judah sworn unto him”(Neh 6:18). These familial alliances cause some of the Israelites to betray Nehemiah. As is often the case, Tobiah is hostile to the in-group even after marrying a member of it. He uses his marriage to further his own position at the expense of the welfare of Israel. Mixed marriages weaken the in-group by introducing conflicting alliances and interests where there should be unity of purpose. Of all the foreign threats encountered by Nehemiah, Tobiah presents the most persistent and

serious problem. Even many years after his first return to Jerusalem, Nehemiah finds that Eliashib the priest is allied to Tobiah and has given Tobiah “a chamber in the courts of the house of God”(Neh 13:7). This hostile foreigner who has sought to use violence to prevent the rebuilding of Jerusalem has a private apartment in the precincts of the temple, all because of the alliances that come from his mixed marriage. Upon learning of this apartment, Nehemiah casts out Tobiah’s possessions and commands that the chambers be cleansed (Neh 13:8-9).

Despite the threats from their enemies, Nehemiah successfully rallies his people and inspires them to proceed with the construction of the city walls. In this work we see a beautiful picture of ethnic cohesion and national unity. When under threat of violent attack, Nehemiah sets the people upon the walls “after their families”, armed with sword and spear. He exhorts the Israelites to remember their God and to fight for their kin: “Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses”(Neh 4:14). The people work diligently, simultaneously defending the city and building the wall: “every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon”(Neh 4:17).

In addition to building the city walls, Nehemiah also leads the people in moral reform. Nehemiah learns that at this time many of the poor Israelites have been enslaved by their ethnic brethren through the practice of usury, which is forbidden in the law of Moses. The poor

have lost their lands and vineyards to the rich, which greatly angers Nehemiah.

“Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer.” (Neh 5:7-8)

Nehemiah appeals to the law of God and to ethnic unity to condemn the rich. They ought to work to redeem their ethnic brethren rather than enslave them. The nobles agree to cease from their sinful practice and to restore the houses and hereditary lands of their poor brethren.

Before the completion and dedication of the city walls, Nehemiah and Ezra bring the people together to hear the reading of the Mosaic law. Here we can see the Biblical model for the moral restoration of a nation and the renewal of the covenant with God.

“And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that

could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.” (Neh 8:2-3)

The reading of the law pierces the consciences of the people, as they recognize their own sinfulness and failure to walk according to God’s will. Yet Ezra and Nehemiah encourage them, teaching them that the restoration of the law is a cause for rejoicing.

“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah...and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Neh 8:8-10)

The people are now possessed with a zeal for God’s law, listening to the law with open ears and strongly desiring to do all that is commanded therein. This close attention to the law causes the people to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in the way commanded by Moses. This involves gathering tree branches and making tabernacles to dwell in during the feast. This is the first time since the days of Joshua the son of Nun that the feast was celebrated in the proper manner. There are times

throughout Church history when God removes the veil that is over the hearts and minds of his people preventing them from accepting the clear sense of his Word. This of course occurred during the Reformation, when the Biblical teaching of the free forgiveness of sin through faith in Christ was restored. We pray that in our own day this veil would again be removed, and God's people would see what his Word plainly teaches about ethnic distinction and national life.

Following the initial rejoicing at the restoration of the law, the people then focus on repentance. They recognize their own sinfulness and come before God with prayer, fasting, and the putting on of sackcloth and ashes. This time of repentance is also a time of separation of the holy seed from the foreign races surrounding them.

“[T]he children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. **And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers**, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God.”
(Neh 9:1-3)

During this time, the hearts and minds of the people are steeped in the Mosaic law and its blessings and cursings, and they are able to see that God has been just in sending

foreign nations to punish Israel (Neh 9:33), making them servants of foreigners in their own land. This deep and genuine repentance of the children of Israel leads to a renewal of the covenant. The princes and the leading priests and Levites write out the covenant and put their seal to it in order to show their formal consent and commitment (Neh 9:38). The rest of the people who have gathered for corporate repentance also affirm their allegiance to the covenant.

“And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding; They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God’s law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, not take their daughters for our sons.” (Neh 10:28-30)

The restored covenant nation is made up of all those who have “separated themselves from the people of the lands”. Rather than cleaving to the foreigner, they now cleave to their ethnic brethren. They commit to following the law of Moses and accept that they will be liable to its curses. The very first law that is specifically

mentioned is the prohibition on mixed marriages, as this law guards the very existence of the nation. This priority can guide us in our own day. Like the Israelites in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, we are incapable of changing the global power structure. However, God always calls us to repentance and provides us with the necessary grace to turn to him. We can always focus on obedience to the covenant and on keeping our bloodlines clean, whether at the level of the individual, family, congregation, or wider community.

After this formal corporate renewal of the covenant, the final dedication of the walls takes place. This dedication of the walls is a sacred act. The Levites are summoned from throughout the land to purify both the nation and the walls themselves.

“[A]t the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps...And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall...Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.”
(Neh 12:27,30,43)

The walls thus form a seal upon the restoration of the covenant. They guard the holy seed and the sanctuary from foreign defilement.

After the dedication of the walls, Nehemiah travels back to the court of the Persian king, and he is absent from Jerusalem for around twelve years. When he does return to Jerusalem, he finds that the people have begun to stray from the law. Again the issue of mixed marriages is foremost. The final chapter of Nehemiah records the reemergence of these problems and Nehemiah's reaction to them. This chapter begins by reminding us of the righteous application of the law concerning mixed marriages that occurred at the renewal of the covenant.

“On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever...Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.” (Neh 13:1,3)

The text then records the issue of Tobiah the Ammonite and the defilement of the temple precincts that we examined above. Sadly, the priest Eliashib was not the only member of the holy nation that Nehemiah finds to have sinned in this way. Nehemiah's violent reaction to their sin and his disgust at their mongrelized households emphasize to us the tremendous threat that mixed marriages pose to national integrity.

“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?” (Neh 13:23-27)

Nehemiah points out that even Solomon, to whom God gave a special gift of divine wisdom, failed in this area. Solomon’s sin ultimately resulted in the destruction of the unified kingdom. Entering into forbidden marriages is a most dangerous sin that has lasting consequences for generations.

Nehemiah then ends his book by asking that the priests and Levites who have entered into mixed marriages be cursed for defiling the covenant, and by asking that God remember him for cleansing the priesthood from foreigners. Thus the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah begin and end with condemnations of race-

mixing. Throughout the narrative, race-mixing is presented as being emblematic of Israel's disobedience, and as a threat to the inheritance of God's chosen people.

12. The Kingdom of God and the Nations

At the time of the fall of man, God promised that a seed of the woman would come to overthrow the work of the devil. When Abraham was called, he was told that he would become the father of a great nation and that in his seed all the nations of the world would be blessed. Through Moses this nation was given laws to keep itself morally pure and separate from the nations. God chose racial, national exclusivity as the means of preserving the seed that would bring salvation to the world. Through the prophets God taught that when this salvation did come, it would extend the covenant beyond ethnic Israel. Through Ezra and Nehemiah God restored and reinforced the Mosaic laws against race-mixing, ensuring that the holy seed would remain pure until the coming of the Messiah. The promise of the extension of the covenant to the nations given in the Prophets did not imply racial amalgamation. The Messiah was to be the king of Israel, but not just physical Israel. His was to be a spiritual kingdom, and this kingdom is referred to throughout the Gospels as the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God was not to be a physical, political entity, nor was the conversion of the nations to be a process of physical, political amalgamation. The kingdom of God was to be righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom

14:17). Sinners enter into this kingdom when the Holy Spirit works faith in them and they come to trust in the righteousness of Christ as the atonement for their sins. At the moment a repentant sinner enters the kingdom, he does not undergo any change to his external, national identity. When Christian egalitarians claim that the coming of the kingdom of God implies that national and racial distinctions must be physically erased, they deny the spiritual nature of this kingdom. The kingdom of God does not bring about carnal, physical unity as understood by the world; it brings about an inner, spiritual unity that leaves physical distinctions intact. Just like the Jews who rejected Jesus and hoped for a Messiah who would be a worldly conqueror, the egalitarians want a physical kingdom, not a spiritual one.

The spiritual nature of the kingdom cannot be fully understood until one accepts that it can coexist with racial segregation in this life. It is possible to be jealous for one's own race while also having a fervent love for racial aliens and a desire for their salvation. The nineteenth century saw the greatest level of racial awareness amongst Europeans, and this was also the time that saw the greatest expansion of missionary activity around the world. White Christians, who would have recoiled at the idea of bringing millions of Africans to Europe and intermarrying with them, risked their lives to bring the Gospel to these very heathens. This simultaneous racial solidarity and spiritual love for the foreigner is truly incomprehensible to the egalitarian mind.

Jesus and John the Baptist

The transition from the earthly kingdom of Israel to the spiritual kingdom of heaven can perhaps most clearly be seen in the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. Jesus tells us that John came to “restore all things”(Matt 17:11), and he also tells us that “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he”(Matt 11:11). John came to restore the purity of the faith that had been revealed in the law and the prophets, but he lived and preached before the completed work of the Messiah.

When the angel Gabriel comes to John’s father Zacharias, he prophecies concerning John that: “many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord”(Luke 1:16-17). After the birth of John, Zacharias himself prophecies, saying to John: “thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins”(Luke 1:76-77). Thus John is the last of the prophets of the Old Covenant, the final reminder to the Israelites that they must repent and prepare themselves to receive the Messiah.

When the angel appears to Mary, he tells her:

“thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” (Luke 1:31-33)

And when the angel appears to Joseph, he says that his wife “shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins”(Matt 1:21). John is to give the people knowledge of salvation from sin by pointing to Jesus, while Jesus actively saves his people from their sin by dying for them. John is to preach that the kingdom of heaven is near, while Jesus is to be enthroned in heaven and thereby bring in the everlasting kingdom.

In his public ministry, John comes “into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins”(Luke 3:3). This is not a baptism into the New Covenant, but is an ordinance within the Old Covenant for the remission of sins. Although the final propitiation for sin has not yet been offered on the cross, by faith the members of the Old Covenant receive the remission of sin. This baptism of John is part of his work to “restore all things” prior to the coming of the kingdom of heaven. John warns the people of the necessity of a genuine repentance that brings forth good fruit, and that every tree that fails to

bear good fruit will be cast into the fire. He also attacks the presumptuous racial pride that has developed amongst the Jews, telling them, “think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham”(Matt 3:9). God chose Abraham for the sake of bringing forth the promised seed, which is Christ. This free choice of God ought to inspire humility and obedience in the children of Abraham, not pride. By saying that God does not need the ethnic Jews, John is pointing to the coming of the gentiles into the kingdom.

John distinguishes his baptism from the baptism that will mark the true inauguration of the kingdom, saying “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire”(Matt 3:11). The Holy Spirit is God Almighty and he has been active amongst God’s people from the beginning. He came upon the saints of the Old Testament and he guided the authors of the Scriptures. But in the days of John, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given to the Church in his outward manifestation. In the Gospel of John we read that at the time of the earthly ministry of Jesus, “the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified”(John 7:39). Jesus is fully glorified after his resurrection and ascension to the throne of God. Following his enthronement, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit in a visible manifestation at the feast of Pentecost, revealing the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Jesus and the Law

With the coming of the kingdom of heaven, many aspects of the ceremonial law were altered. The Old Covenant, which was to pass away, had a physical tabernacle and a great variety of external sacrifices and purifications. These all pointed to the work of Christ, our high priest who made one perfect offering of himself for the sins of the whole world. The worship of the Old Covenant was from God, and it was to be kept zealously until the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. The relationship between the Old and New Covenants is explained by Jesus during his conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4. After confessing that Jesus is a prophet, the Samaritan woman asks him if it is proper to worship God at Jerusalem or at Mount Gerizim, the holy place of the Samaritans. Jesus replies,

“Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:21-24)

Jesus unambiguously states that the worship of God at the temple in Jerusalem is according to right knowledge

and therefore is the source of salvation, while the Samaritans worship in ignorance. He does not affirm the false Samaritan belief that they have a share in the Old Covenant, as this covenant was for the children of Israel, not for all nations. In doing this, Jesus is echoing the attitude of Zerubbabel towards the Samaritans seen in the book of Ezra. However, all nations are called to enter the New Covenant. This covenant is spiritual and universal, and it is not tied to a particular location or ethnicity. There is a universal call to all mankind to enter the New Covenant and to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, but there is no universal call to enter the physical temple and worship there. In fact, the Old Covenant worship of the Father at the temple in Jerusalem will completely pass away.

While the ceremonial law was to undergo a significant change, the same cannot be said for the moral law. The Old Testament law clearly explains the moral duties that we owe our neighbors, and Jesus nowhere states that these duties have been done away with or even diminished in the slightest. We are still bound to love our neighbor by upholding the purity of his marriage, by defending his private property, and by protecting his life. Thus murderers, thieves, and adulterers are to be punished as the Lord commands in the Mosaic law, for this is the only God-revealed means of loving our neighbor in these areas. When asked which commandment is the greatest, Jesus replies,

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**”
(Matt 22:37-40)

All of the moral laws in the Old Testament depend on, or flow from, the love of God and love of neighbor. This of course includes the laws about national distinction and the preservation of national inheritance. These laws are founded on the love of God and neighbor, and therefore the moral principles behind these laws are still binding. God uses the distinct nation of Israel to bring salvation to fallen humanity, and in the writings of the prophets he uses the nation as a type or symbol of the universal Church. God uses things that he blesses and sanctifies, such as marriage, paternity, and national distinction, to explain his love for us and our covenant relationship with him. As members of the Church we are all part of the same spiritual family, but this does not mean that our earthly families are to be dissolved or denigrated. The moral laws protecting the earthly family are still in force. Likewise, even though we are all members of the same spiritual nation, this does not mean that our distinct earthly nations are to be destroyed or merged together. The Old Testament laws concerning national distinction and inheritance are still to be our guide for governing our earthly nations.

The Rejection of the Messiah By the Jews

The unmerited love that the Lord showed to his chosen nation was repeatedly repaid with scorn and rebellion. This rebellion culminated in the general rejection of the Messiah by the Jews: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not”(John 1:11). Not only did the Jews not receive him, but they plotted to murder the son of God, and thereby as a group they became guilty of the blood of Christ in a unique way. They ceased to be children of God and became children of the devil (John 8:44).

At various points in the Gospel narrative, we are told that the Jews plotted to destroy Jesus after specific incidents which they found to be particularly offensive to their pride and contrary to the false traditions based on their incorrect interpretation of the Law. One such tradition was their prohibition of healing on the Sabbath day. When Jesus heals the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, he asks the Jews if it is lawful to do good and save life on the Sabbath. His question silences his opponents, but they are so enraged that “the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him”(Mark 3:6). The false interpretations that the Pharisees added to the law of God formed the basis of the Talmud. The Talmud, not the Old Testament Scriptures, became the authoritative text within Judaism. Jesus condemned and intentionally violated these false human interpretations.

Another instance of violent Jewish rage comes when Jesus reads from the book of Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth. This passage from Isaiah 61 is full of Gospel comfort, announcing the coming of the Messiah who will “heal the brokenhearted” and “preach deliverance to the captives”, and Jesus declares that “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears”(Luke 4:21). The Jewish audience is intrigued, but they respond with incredulity to the claim that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus then points out various examples from the Old Testament where non-Israelites received a greater blessing than the rebellious people of God. Here Jesus is warning them that the grace of God will go to those who have faith, not to the stiff-necked physical descendants of Abraham who reject the Messiah. The Jews cannot stand the indignity of being compared unfavorably with gentiles, and the mere mention of God’s mercy being offered to non-Israelites drives them into a murderous fury: “And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong”(Luke 4:28-29).

This instinctive, collective reaction to the Gospel is also seen when Jesus openly declares that he is the son of God. This truth, that the man Jesus is also very God from all eternity, is the center of our faith and the foundation of our hope. The Jews, however, are so hardened that this message of God’s lovingkindness towards men elicits rage. When discoursing to the Jews

about the continuity between the faith of Abraham and his own teaching, Jesus says, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad”(John 8:56). The Jews scoff at this claim and say that Abraham could not have known of Jesus. Our Lord replies by affirming that he himself is the great “I am”, the Jehovah revealed to Moses at the burning bush: “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him”(John 8:58-59). This same immediate, instinctive reaction that caused the Jews to take up stones without any top-down coordination still characterizes Jewish behavior today. This is what allows the Jews to work so effectively against Christians and Christian interests. While there certainly are many formal Jewish organizations that assist Jews in achieving their goals, these organizations are a natural outgrowth of the inbred Jewish hatred of God and his Gospel. Therefore when pointing out the negative influence of Jews on society, it is not necessary to find any evidence of self-conscious coordination. When a crowd of Jews picks up stones to cast at Christ or his disciples, it is not necessary to demonstrate how or when they coordinated their actions; simply showing that the Jews did pick up stones with murderous intent proves that they are a hostile threat.

The whole history of Jewish rebellion and its culmination in the rejection of the Messiah is explained by Jesus in the parable of the wicked husbandmen. In this parable a householder plants a vineyard and hires

husbandmen to care for it. When the time of harvest comes, the householder sends his servants to receive the fruit of the vineyard from the husbandmen. Rather than rendering what is due to the owner of the vineyard, the husbandmen beat and kill the servants. Finally the householder sends his son, but the wicked husbandmen kill him as well, thinking to themselves that they will gain the inheritance that belongs to him and become the owners of the vineyard. The vineyard is God's kingdom, the husbandmen are the Jews, the servants are the prophets sent by God, and the son is the Messiah. The parable shows that the Jews have seized upon the external blessings given by God while refusing to render proper thanks and obedience. The Jews seek to kill all those who point out their sin and call them to repentance. They demonstrate a blind, satanic hubris by thinking that by killing the son of God they themselves can be like God, becoming the rightful heirs of what has been prepared for the Messiah. Jesus makes the message of the parable clear, telling the Jews, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"(Matt 21:43). The chief priests and Pharisees understand the message, and again they plot to kill Jesus.

Up until the arrest of Jesus by night, there are large numbers of Jews in the crowds at Jerusalem who view him as the Messiah or as a great prophet. This causes the chief priests and Pharisees to use some caution in plotting against the son of God. However, once Jesus allows himself to be taken and humiliated by

his enemies, the Jewish masses, who are expecting a glorious, triumphant Messiah, abandon him. Christ's voluntary suffering at the hands of the wicked teaches us the spiritual nature of his kingdom. When explaining to Pilate in what sense he is the king of Israel, Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence"(John 18:36). In turning against Jesus at his time of suffering, the Jews as a corporate unit reject the Messiah and the kingdom of heaven. This rejection is made formal and intergenerational in the horrible self-malediction spoken by the Jews to Pilate when the Roman governor attempts to set Jesus free.

"Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, **His blood be on us, and on our children.**" (Matt 27:22-25)

At the time of the Crucifixion, the Jews became the satanic inversion of the Church. The Church is made up of all those who have been washed from their sins by the blood of the lamb. The righteous blood of Christ is upon

the Christian as his justification. The Jews are also covered by the blood of Christ, but they are covered by its guilt. The standing of the Christian and the Jew before God is equally determined by the blood of Christ. For the Christian, the blood of Christ removes all guilt; for the Jew, the blood of Christ burdens him with the greatest guilt imaginable. The Jews have passed from being God's special people to being the devil's special people, and they are henceforth the synagogue of Satan. The crucified Christ is to us the greatest demonstration of God's love for the world and his desire to redeem sinners, while to the Jew the crucified Christ is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

We observed above that the Holy Spirit was not given during Christ's earthly ministry because he was not yet glorified (John 7:39). In his prayer at the last supper, Jesus says, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee... I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was"(John 17:1,4-5). In the crucifixion, Jesus fulfills his role as the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. The veil of the physical temple is rent in twain, showing that through the blood of Christ man has direct access to the throne of grace. After his death, Christ is raised from the dead by the glory of the

Father (Rom 6:4). Jesus then spends forty days on earth, speaking to his disciples “of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God”(Acts 1:3). Before ascending into heaven and being seated at God’s right hand, Jesus commands his apostles “that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence”(Acts 1:4-5). At the ascension into heaven, the man Jesus is fully glorified with all the glory he possessed as the eternal, uncreated Word of God. The Father and the Son together send their Holy Spirit to be visibly manifested on earth and glorify the Church.

When the Holy Spirit comes upon the Church on the Day of Pentecost, he gives the apostles the miraculous power of speaking in unknown tongues. The Galilean followers of Jesus are able to speak the native languages of the visiting Jews and proselytes from throughout the Roman empire and beyond who are in Jerusalem for the feast. This miracle certainly appears to allude to the confusion of tongues at Babel. As the confusion of tongues was connected with the separation and distribution of the nations, egalitarians have sometimes sought to use the gift of tongues given at Pentecost as an argument for the abolition of national distinction under the New Covenant. This is another example of confusing the spiritual kingdom of God with an earthly kingdom. The purpose of this miracle is not to bring about any political change. It is not teaching the audience of Jews and proselytes to change their ethnic or

political identity. It does not even teach that there should be an abolition of distinct languages, as the Holy Spirit does not make the Galileans and their audience speak one language, but makes the Galileans capable of speaking various foreign languages. This reinforces the existing diversity of language, and by extension the diversity of ethnic groups. Accepting the Gospel does not imply any need to learn the Hebrew tongue; the Gospel will be translated into the great variety of languages that God has produced. Accepting the Gospel does not imply any change in ethnic identity, but a sanctification of the existing ethnic identities that God has established and preserved through natural and revealed law.

Once they have been struck by the miracle of tongues, many of the Jews gathered at Jerusalem for Pentecost are open to hearing the message of the Gospel. Peter stands up and preaches to all those present, announcing that the people are witnessing the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, that in the last days God will pour forth his Spirit upon his servants and handmaids. He concludes his sermon by affirming that Jesus is the Christ, that he is risen from the dead and reigning with the Father, and that the Jews as a collective are guilty of putting him to death.

“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now

see and hear...Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:32-33,36)

Peter connects the heavenly coronation of Jesus—his ascension and session at the right hand of the Father—with the sending of the Holy Spirit. The Jews are “pricked in their heart” by the words of Peter, and three thousand of them follow Peter’s command to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

Peter and the other apostles continue in this manner, rebuking the Jews for the murder of the Messiah and offering them the forgiveness of sins in the Gospel. This raises the anger of the Jewish leaders, who command the apostles to cease from their preaching. In response to this demand Peter and the other apostles answer,

“We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.” (Acts 5:29-33)

While many of the Jews do repent and join the Church, the preponderance of racial Israel becomes increasingly

hardened, seeking to put to death the followers of Christ. Their program of persecution includes the murder of the deacon Stephen following his inspired sermon bearing witness to Christ and rebuking the Jews for their rebellion and unbelief. Near the end of his sermon, Stephen says to the Jews: “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers”(Acts 7:51-52). The words of Stephen elicit the same instinctive, collective rage of the Jews that we noted in the life of Jesus; the Jews gnash their teeth, stop up their ears, and rush upon Stephen with one accord to stone him. Stephen plainly states that the Jews are enemies of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. This puts them outside of the kingdom of heaven that is being brought into the world.

Thus far in the narrative of Acts, the preaching of the Gospel has been to the Jews and proselytes (gentiles who seek to worship the God of Israel according to the Old Covenant), showing that the Gospel is to be offered first to ethnic Israel. Following the death of Stephen and the subsequent persecution of the Church in Jerusalem, we see the first instance of those outside of the Mosaic covenant entering the kingdom.

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one

accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did...[And] when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:5-6,12)

At this point the Samaritans have been given saving faith and have received water baptism in the name of Jesus, but there is not yet an external manifestation of the Holy Spirit. After hearing of the conversion of the Samaritans, Peter and John travel from Jerusalem to visit them. The apostles pray for the new Christians and lay hands upon them, and they then receive the Holy Spirit. The first outward manifestation of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost confirmed that the kingdom of heaven has come upon the children of Israel; here we see that the kingdom of heaven has come upon the Samaritans, a foreign people with a flawed understanding of the worship required by God under the Old Covenant. The kingdom of heaven has extended beyond national Israel, but there is no indication that the converted Samaritans are to leave their ancestral homes and move to Jerusalem or Judea, or become politically connected with the children of Israel. The physical amalgamation that the Samaritans desired in the time of Zerubbabel was denied them. Here they have the much better spiritual engrafting promised in the Gospel.

Although certainly a foreign people, the Samaritans claimed to follow the Mosaic covenant, and

therefore they kept certain customs similar to those in Israel, perhaps most notably circumcision. Before his ascension, Jesus clearly told his apostles that they were to preach the Gospel to all nations, but at this stage in the book of Acts, the apostles are apparently unsure what this conversion of the gentiles will look like. The apostles still have an aversion to the uncircumcised pagans who eat and handle unclean things, and it is only through a special vision to Peter and the action of the Holy Spirit that they are convinced that the pagans can receive the Gospel without any external adherence to Old Testament practice. When praying on a housetop, Peter falls into a trance, and he sees “a great sheet knit at the four corners” full of “all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air”(Acts 10:11-12). A voice tells him to “kill and eat”, to which Peter responds, “Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean”. The voice then says, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common”. While Peter is trying to understand the meaning of the vision, men sent from the God-fearing Roman centurion Cornelius arrive at the house. Cornelius has been prompted by an angel to seek out Peter in order to hear his preaching. We then see one of the very few instances in Scripture of the Holy Spirit speaking directly: “While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them”(Acts 10:19-20). Upon arriving at the house of Cornelius, Peter

explains the meaning of the vision to his pagan hosts: “Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean”(Acts 10:28). Without this special vision and the direction of the Holy Spirit, Peter would have been reluctant to preach to this audience. After hearing Cornelius relate his angelic visitation, Peter preaches the Gospel to them, declaring the remission of sins through faith in the name of Jesus.

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” (Acts 10:44-48)

The Samaritans first received water baptism and then the Holy Spirit; in the case of these uncircumcised Romans, they first receive the Holy Spirit and then they are baptized. This seems to be the first time Christian baptism is administered to uncircumcised men, and this produces controversy in the Church. When Peter returns to Jerusalem, he is rebuked by certain men “of the circumcision” for associating with “uncircumcised

men”(Acts 11:2-3). Peter defends himself by recounting his vision and the reception of the Holy Spirit by the gentiles. This convinces those in Jerusalem that Peter acted properly and that God has “also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”(Acts 11:18).

The question of circumcision and other ritual laws comes up again in Acts 15, where certain men in the Church who were “of the sect of the Pharisees” (i.e., former Pharisees who have accepted Jesus as Messiah) teach that gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. This controversy is settled by a Church council in Jerusalem, which declares that circumcision and the Mosaic purity laws are not binding on Christians. Notably, the decision of the council is attributed to the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28). The visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous gifts given through him show that the New Covenant has come. The Holy Spirit directly prompts Peter and the leadership of the Church in Jerusalem to bring the gentiles into the kingdom of God without circumcision and the ritual law. The kingdom of God is not an earthly, political entity, nor is it to be tied to the ritual law that was given exclusively to national Israel through Moses. Membership in the kingdom is spiritual, not carnal.

The Apostle to the Gentiles

Peter is the first to bring uncircumcised pagans into the Church, but his primary calling remains preaching the Gospel to Israel. God chooses Paul to be

the special apostle to the gentiles. Paul begins as a fierce, persecuting Pharisee, zealous for the false traditions of his ancestors. He consents to the murder of Stephen, and he subsequently brings many Christian men and women to prison. While traveling to Damascus to persecute the Church there, Jesus himself appears to Paul and works his conversion. Immediately Paul contends publicly for the faith, refuting the Jews and their doctrines. When traveling to a new city, Paul first goes to the synagogue, attempting to convince his fellow Jews from the Old Testament Scriptures that the Messiah has come and that they must obey him. Only after the Jews reject this offer of salvation does Paul turn to the gentiles. When his message is refused by the Jews in Pisidian Antioch, Paul makes it known to them that they have put themselves outside of the kingdom.

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” (Acts 13:46-47)

Paul puts loyalty to the truth of the Gospel above loyalty to his ethnic group. However, this does not imply that ethnic loyalty or affection are sinful. This is made clear by Paul himself. When discussing the rejection of the

Gospel by the Jews, Paul gives voice to the astounding sentiment that he so desires the salvation of his brethren according to the flesh that he could wish to be accursed from God if it might save them.

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” (Romans 9:1-3)

This of course reminds us of the prayer of Moses in Exodus 32 that he be blotted from the book of life for the sake of his nation. Paul thus puts himself in the same company as Moses as a great lover of his own people. Paul also reinforces the teaching of Moses on the origin and purpose of ethnic distinction. Moses tells us that the Lord “divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam”(Deut 32:8), showing that national distinction is ordained by God for the purpose of different bloodlines preserving their separate inheritance. When addressing the Athenians, Paul confirms that God separated the nations of the earth. While Moses emphasizes that this separation is for the sake of our earthly inheritance, Paul shows that this separation is also for the sake of laying hold of God, our heavenly and eternal inheritance.

“[God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.” (Acts 17:26-27)

The ethnic distinctions that have been providentially brought about by God and reinforced by his revealed law help to bring us both temporal and eternal blessing.

In Paul we see that under the New Covenant, bloodline affection is still just as strong as under the Old, and that national distinction is still part of God’s design for humanity. Paul repented of his pharisaism, but he never repented of his love for his own ethnic group, and no Christian is called to do so. He understands that the converted gentiles are spiritual children of Abraham, and co-heirs of the promise; however, these new Christians do not replace or supplant the emotional attachment and special loyalty that he has towards his apostate brethren according to the flesh.

The Heavenly Jerusalem

Paul teaches that in Jesus we have a full revelation of what was presented under types and shadows in the Old Covenant. The apostate Jews and the Judaizing Christians fail to recognize this, which is why they cling to external ordinances such as circumcision, temple worship, and the keeping of holy days. They are

blind and carnal, hating the true light and the children of the light. Paul compares the apostate Jews to Ishmael, and the Church to Isaac, showing that only the Church is the heir of the promise.

“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all...Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.” (Gal 4:22-26,28-31)

The coming of the kingdom of God in the first century involves a shift from the earthly Jerusalem to the heavenly Jerusalem. After the work of Christ and the giving of the Holy Spirit, the faithful are to worship God in spirit and in truth, not in a particular physical place or building. The people of God are those who have been

born of the Spirit, not those who belong to a certain nation. Any effort to restrict Christian faith to a particular nation, church hierarchy, or program of globalist amalgamation denies the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. The carnal apostates are attached to the outer marks of the Old Covenant and to the human traditions that have been added to what was originally established by God. They look only to these externals, not to the heart, and therefore they persecute the Church that preaches that these externals have been replaced by the clear revelation of Jesus; but it is these persecutors who will ultimately be cast out like Ishmael.

Hebrews 8 explains the relationship between the two covenants and what the faithful of the first century should expect to happen to the Old Covenant system of worship. This epistle identifies Jesus as the high priest who enters the true, heavenly tabernacle, being seated at the right hand of God: “We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb 8:1-2). The worship of God as commanded by Moses reveals the heavenly throne room and instructs the people concerning the nature of God and his relationship with his creation. Thus the earthly priests “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, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount”(Heb 8:5). The priests of the Old Covenant

minister in the tabernacle that is a type and shadow, while Jesus ministers in the true throne room. Because the priestly service of Jesus is better, therefore “he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises”(Heb 8:6); and because this is a new and better covenant, therefore the Old Covenant “decayeth and waxeth old [and] is ready to vanish away”(Heb 8:13).

Prior to his passion, Jesus speaks about the fate of the earthly temple at Jerusalem. When his disciples comment on the magnificence of the structure, Jesus foretells that within a generation they “shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies”(Luke 21:20) and the temple will be completely destroyed. These will be “the days of vengeance”(Luke 21:22), when the apostate Jews will suffer temporal punishment for the murder of the Messiah and the persecution of the Church. The destruction of the temple marks the end of the Old Testament system of worship, and Jesus connects these events with the coming of his kingdom: “when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled” (Luke 21:31-32). The words of Jesus were fulfilled in 70 AD, when the Roman armies destroyed the earthly Jerusalem and its temple made by human hands. Since that time, the only true worship performed according to the command of God has been within the Church.

This transition from the earthly to the heavenly Jerusalem is also explained in detail in the book of

Revelation. Here the earthly Jerusalem that put Jesus to death is called Sodom and Egypt (Rev 11:8), showing that those who reject the spiritual kingdom are like the carnal idolators from Old Testament history. The earthly Jerusalem is also referred to as “Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth”(Rev 17:5), and as the city that is “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus”(Rev 17:6). The martyred saints in heaven cry out for God to avenge their innocent blood (Rev 6:10), and God answers these prayers by sending the Roman armies upon the Jews. Apostate Jerusalem has used the power of Rome against Christ and his Church, but she herself will be destroyed by this same power.

The rebellious city is described as a whore, while the heavenly Jerusalem is described as a pure bride, a city composed of the saints who have been given the white garments of righteousness.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more

death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”
(Rev 21:1-4)

The Old Covenant has vanished away, while the kingdom of heaven continues to advance throughout the world through the preaching of the Gospel. We live in the age when the invitation to the marriage of the Lamb is being proclaimed to all nations. God desires to sanctify all of the distinct nations and families that he has created by bringing them into the New Covenant and teaching them to live according to his immutable moral law. We pray that the Gospel of the Kingdom of God would be proclaimed in spirit and in truth, not bound to the elements of this world, not compromised by human traditions or philosophies. We wait for the time when death and pain will be abolished, and when those who have been washed by the blood of the promised seed will shine like the sun and dwell forever with their heavenly bridegroom.