

# The ECONOMY of GOD in EXODUS

This article consists of two distinct yet related parts. The first part is an overview of God's economy in Exodus which considers briefly the revelation of God in Exodus and the crucial matters of

salvation, provision, revelation, and building. The second part is composed of two portions from *Life-study of Exodus* by Witness Lee which, in light of God's economy, speak compellingly about the kind of worship God desires. If we have a view of God's economy, we will also realize that the Father is seeking true worshippers, those who worship God not in a way of natural and religious worship but in a way that corresponds to His eternal economy.

God's eternal economy is His plan and administrative arrangement, according to the desire of His heart, to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity into His chosen and redeemed people as their life, their life supply, and their everything in order to make them His corporate expression, initially as the Body of Christ in this age and ultimately as the New Jerusalem in eternity in the new heaven and new earth. This profound thought is the central line of the divine revelation that runs through the Bible from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. For the most part, in the Old Testament we have a picture of God's economy, whereas in the New Testament we have the definition of God's economy. We may say that in the Old Testament we have the photographs and that in the New Testament we have the captions. If we put together these photographs and captions, we will have a full and complete view of God's economy. This is true particularly of the book of Exodus, in which we have a marvelous revelation of God and of four major aspects of God's economy—salvation, provision, revelation, and building.

## God as Revealed in Exodus

God is revealed in Exodus in a remarkable way and in many aspects. In Exodus God is the God of the Hebrews (3:18; 5:3;

7:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3); the God of Israel (5:1; 24:10; 32:27; 34:23); the speaking God (4:10, 30; 9:35; 20:1); the living and active God (2:24-25; 3:7-8, 20; 7:4-5; 10:2; 12:51; 19:4); the God of Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob (3:6, 15-16; 4:5); the God of the covenant (2:24; 6:4-5; 24:8; 13:5); the self-existing and ever-existing God (3:14); the fulfilling God (3:10-17; 6:1-8); the God burning within the thornbush (3:1-4); the sovereign God (3:20-21; 4:21; 7:3-5; 8:10; 9:16); the redeeming and saving God (6:6; 15:2, 13; 14:30, 13); the blessing God (23:25; 32:29); the healing God (15:26); the victorious God (14:14, 25; 15:1-13; 17:15); the holy and righteous God, the God of love and light (20:1-17); the infusing God (34:29-35); the jealous God (20:5; 34:14); the courting God (19:4-5);

the processed and consummated God (17:6); and the God who dwells in the tabernacle (40:34-35). At present it is possible to comment only on certain aspects of the unveiling of God in this book.



# An OVERVIEW

by Ron Kangas

*The God in Exodus Is the God of the Hebrews. Hebrew*

is derived from a root that means "to pass over." Specifically, it can refer to one who crosses, or passes over, a river, to one who crosses over from one side of a river to the other side. Thus, spiritually speaking, a Hebrew is a river crosser, and the God of the Hebrews is the God of the river crossers, the God of those who cross over from one realm (Egypt in the book of Exodus) into another realm (the wilderness and ultimately the good land of Canaan). Although the people of God in Exodus 1 had been born in Egypt and had lived in Egypt, God regarded them not as Egyptians but as Hebrews, and Moses confronted Pharaoh in the name of the God of the Hebrews, demanding their release from bondage.

*The God in Exodus Is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* In Exodus this title, or designation, of God has a twofold significance. First, for God to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob implies a spiritual genealogy. Our God is the God of our fathers; thus, we have a spiritual family

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history, a spiritual genealogy, of which we are the continuation. In God's economy we should never be ashamed of our "family tree," our genealogy, and we should never isolate ourselves from it. Second, for God to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob implies that He is the God of resurrection (Matt. 22:31-32). As the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God is the God not of the dead but of the living. This indicates that He is the God of resurrection, and we need to know and experience Him as such a One.

*The God in Exodus Is the God of the Covenant.* As the God of the covenant, He is the covenanting God. He has not only spoken and made promises; He has also made a covenant with His chosen and redeemed people, and He acts according to His covenant. In 2:24 we are told, "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." He established His covenant with them "to give them...the land of their sojournings, in which they sojourned" (6:4). In 24:8 God enacted another covenant, ratified by blood. This covenant-making God is the covenant-keeping God. This truth should be a source of rest and confidence to every believer.

*The God in Exodus Is the I Am.* When Moses asked God to disclose His name, God replied, "I AM WHO I AM" (3:14), and He said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you." As I Am, God is the self-existing and ever-existing One. God is, and only He has the ground to declare, "I Am." As those who would come forward to God, we must believe that He is (Heb. 11:6) and that, as dependent beings, we are not. As the Gospel of John discloses, for God to be the I Am also means that He is the reality of every positive thing. He is life; He is bread; He is light; He is the way; He is the true vine.

*The God in Exodus Is the Sovereign God.* It is crucial for God's people to know God in His sovereignty, which refers to His unlimited authority and power. As the sovereign One, God is above everything, behind everything, and in everything. As the sovereign One, God has the full right and capacity to carry out whatever He wants according to the desire of His heart and according to His eternal economy (Dan. 4:35). Through Moses the sovereign God said to Pharaoh (who typifies Satan), "Indeed for this cause I have made you stand, to show you My power and to have My name proclaimed throughout all the earth" (Exo. 9:16). After quoting this verse in Romans 9:17, Paul goes on to say, "So then He has mercy on whom He wills, and He hardens whom He wills" (v. 18). The sovereign Lord had mercy on Moses, but He hardened Pharaoh. Nevertheless, Pharaoh, whose heart was hardened by God, hardened his own heart and thus bore responsibility for his hardness against God. If we see God as the sovereign God in Exodus, we will surely worship Him for His sovereignty and thank Him for His mercy.

*The God in Exodus Is the Redeeming, Saving, and Healing God.* To be redeemed by God means that we were lost but that God has bought us and brought us back to Himself, and now we belong to Him. The redeeming God declared, "I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment" (Exo. 6:6). As the saving God, the Lord, based upon His judicial redemption, will bring His people through all the steps of His organic salvation from regeneration to glorification. As the healing God, the Lord heals us through the application of the cross of Christ, typified by the tree cast into the bitter waters at Marah (15:22-26).

*The God in Exodus Is the Courting God.* If we study 19:4-5 in light of Jeremiah 2:2 and 31:32, we will see that as God was bearing His people to Himself He was actually wooing them, courting them. Then, at the mountain of God and through the law as an engagement covenant, God betrothed His chosen and redeemed people to Himself, taking a crucial step to carry out the divine romance between God and His people revealed in the Bible (Rev. 22:17a).

*The God in Exodus Is the Infusing God.* Moses experienced the infusing God during the forty days he spent with God in glory on the top of the mountain (24:15-18). Moses was infused with God to such an extent that he glowed with God. However, "Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone by reason of His speaking with him" (34:29). God desires and intends that, in Christ, all His redeemed people behold His glorious face and then shine Him forth (2 Cor. 3:18; Rev. 22:4). The desire of the infusing God is, through the Word, to infuse His substance into His loving seekers to make them His corporate expression. This is God's economy.

*The God in Exodus Is the Processed and Consummated God.* *Processed* refers to the steps through which God passed in the divine economy to become the Spirit (John 7:39; Gal. 3:14), and *consummated* indicates that the process, the procedure, has been completed. Although God is eternal and unchanging, immutable in His essence, nature, and attributes, He has nevertheless passed through a process in His economy to become the all-inclusive Spirit. Before the incarnation of Christ, God was unprocessed, having the divine nature but not the human nature; however, through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, God has been processed and consummated, and now the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19). Actually, in Exodus there is only a hint of this tremendous revelation. The rock in 17:6 typifies the Christ who was smitten in His crucifixion, and the water signifies the water of life in resurrection—the pneumatic Christ, Christ as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b)—as the living water for His redeemed people to drink. This water is

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the processed and consummated Triune God dispensed into us for the accomplishment of the divine economy.

*The God in Exodus Is the God who Dwells in the Tabernacle.* This is the God who desires a tabernacle, a habitation, a building, in which to dwell (Exo. 25:9). This is the God who dwells not in heaven but in the church, which to Christ is the Body of Christ and to God is the household of God and the temple of God. This God is the building and builded God—the God who is building Himself in Christ into His chosen and redeemed people (Eph. 3:17) and the God who has been built, wrought, into His people to become their intrinsic constituent to make them His corporate expression—the Body, the New Jerusalem.

**T**he proper response to such a revelation of God may be summarized in five words: believe, enjoy, behold, love, and build. *Believe:* “The people believed” (Exo. 4:31), and we also should believe in our wonderful God, receiving all that He is and has for us. *Enjoy:* This is implied by the word *feast* in 5:1: “Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me.” To hold a feast to the Lord is to enjoy Him with His redeemed ones. Regrettably, not many of today’s believers know what it means to enjoy the Lord by feasting with Him. *Behold:* Like Moses on the top of the mountain, we all, with an unveiled face, can behold and reflect the glory of the Lord, being infused with His substance and being transformed into His image. *Love:* To love the Lord is to set our entire being absolutely on Him, that is, “to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life” (Recovery Version, 1 Cor. 2:9, note 3). *Build:* We should not assume that we can build something for God; rather, in keeping with His economy, we should allow God in Christ to build Himself into us and to build us into Him for the building up of the Body of Christ.

If we know the truth concerning the God in Exodus and if we have the genuine experience of believing, enjoying, beholding, loving, and building, we will increasingly appreciate four crucial aspects of God’s economy as portrayed in Exodus: salvation, provision, revelation, and building.

### Salvation

With respect to the book of Exodus, the word *salvation* can be applied in both a limited sense and an inclusive sense. Applied in a limited sense, salvation involves redemption,

the exodus, and the crossing of the Red Sea. Applied in an inclusive way, salvation involves everything from the Passover in chapter twelve to the building of the tabernacle in chapter forty, that is, everything from God’s redemption to God’s building. In this article, we will speak of salvation mainly in its limited sense and application.

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The Passover signifies redemption, the exodus signifies going out of the world, and the crossing of the Red Sea signifies baptism. The Passover is actually a type of Christ, who is the reality not only of the Passover lamb but also of every aspect of the Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), including the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, and the house, whose lintel and doorposts

were sprinkled with the redeeming blood. Furthermore, by God’s subduing hand we are saved from Satan’s usurpation and make our exodus from the world (the satanic system) and are thereby sanctified to the Lord for His economy, employing the wealth of the world for the building up of God’s dwelling place. In addition, through baptism, signified by the children of Israel’s passing through the Red Sea, we are saved from Satan’s tyranny and from the world’s usurpation.

### Provision

In the wilderness the children of Israel experienced God’s provision—the heavenly manna and the living water out of the cleft rock (Exo. 16:14-15; 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:3-4). To partake of the manna is to have a heavenly diet and to be reconstituted with a heavenly element. This is intimately related to God’s intention in His salvation, which is to work Himself into us and to change our constitution by feeding us with Christ as the heavenly food (John 6:27, 32, 35). Food is anything we take into us for our satisfaction, and the food we eat enters into us organically and becomes our constitution. Whatever we desire and hunger after is the diet according to which our being will be constituted. For the carrying out of His economy, God intends to change our diet, causing us to hunger for Him and to feed on Him through His word. Actually, as John 6 indicates, Christ as the One who came from God should be our unique diet. As the bread that came down from heaven, Christ is the heavenly bread (vv. 41, 50-51, 58). As the bread of God, Christ is of God and with God (v. 33). As the bread of life, Christ is the bread with eternal life (vv. 35, 48). As the living bread, Christ is living (v. 51). As the true bread, Christ is the bread of truth or reality (v. 32). The more we feed on this bread, the more God in Christ works Himself into us and becomes life and everything to us so that we can be built up as His dwelling place on

earth. Only those who have been reconstituted with Christ by feeding on Him are qualified to be the material built into the church as God's dwelling place today.

**A**s Exodus 17:6 indicates, Christ was the rock smitten for us so that living water could flow out of Him to quench our thirst (John 19:34; 7:37-39). The Triune God is a flowing God, with the Father as the fountain, the Son as the spring, and the Spirit as the river. Christ as the living, spiritual rock was smitten by the authority of God's law so that the water of life in resurrection could flow out of Him and into His redeemed people for them to drink. Out of His pierced side came blood and water: the blood for our judicial redemption and the water of life in resurrection for our organic salvation, salvation in life (Rom. 5:10). Now as believers in Christ we need to drink this water by drinking the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), joyously drawing water from the springs of salvation (Isa. 12:3-6). Then as a result of eating Christ and drinking the Spirit, we will have God's provision in and for His economy.


### Revelation

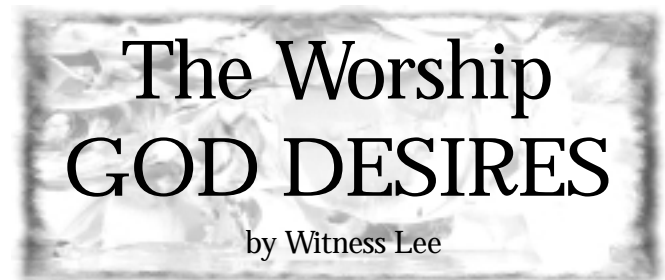
At the mountain of God (Mount Horeb), the children of Israel received a revelation concerning God and the tabernacle (Exo. 3:1; 24:13; 19:1-7; 20:1-3; 25:8-9). The mountain of God is the place where God's seekers meet with God and with one another, where they serve God, and where they receive God's revelation. The spiritual significance of the mountain of God is that it is the place of God's speaking with God's vision. At the mountain of God, God's people see a heavenly vision by which they come to know God Himself and the kind of living that is in accordance with God. Moreover, at the mountain of God, God's people see the revelation of the desire of God's heart—to have a dwelling place on earth. It is of vital importance, therefore, that in our spiritual seeking and experience we come to the genuine mountain of God today. Actually, we should not be content to remain at the foot of the mountain (the outer court) or satisfied to remain somewhere on the mountain (the Holy Place); rather, we should aspire to be on the mountaintop (the Holy of Holies), dwelling with God under His glory and receiving the revelation concerning the desire of His heart.

### Building

God's goal is the building—the corporate expression of Himself in Christ, the firstborn Son of God, with all the regenerated, transformed, and glorified believers in Christ as the many sons of God. Because the building is God's goal, the direction of the book of Exodus is toward the building of the tabernacle (25:8-9; 40:1-2, 34-35). This indicates that what God desires to have is a corporate expression of Himself through His called and redeemed people. The Passover, the exodus, the passing through the

Red Sea, the experiences at Marah and Elim, the provision of the heavenly manna and the living water, the warfare with Amalek (a type of the flesh), the establishing of the kingdom, the revelation at Mount Horeb, and the enactment of the covenant—all are for the tabernacle, God's building. From this we can see that the book of Exodus is an account of how God saved His chosen people and gave them a heavenly vision so that they could build His dwelling place on earth. Thus, the purpose of Exodus is to reveal God's full salvation for the building up of His dwelling place. In keeping with this marvelous revelation, God's chosen people are saved all the way from their fallen condition to God's dwelling place (cf. Eph. 2:1-22).

**E**xodus begins with slavery in Egypt and ends with the tabernacle, which, based on God's redemption, is covered by the glory of God and filled with the glory of God for His expression. As a miniature of the Bible, the book of Exodus consummates in God's tabernacle, His dwelling place, filled with His glory. As the conclusion of the entire Bible, the book of Revelation consummates in the New Jerusalem, the eternal tabernacle filled with God's glory for His eternal, corporate expression (21:2-3, 10-11). This is God's economy portrayed in Exodus, defined in the New Testament, and carried out through God's complete salvation. In the midst of today's confused religious situation, it is crucial that God's people see the vision of God's economy portrayed in Exodus and serve Him and worship Him according to this glorious vision. 



### Not Recognizing Man's Wisdom and Power

At this juncture I am burdened to give a word concerning the worship of God from 20:24-26. Worship is a very crucial matter in man's relationship with God. Throughout the thousands of years of human history, thoughtful people have considered the matter of the worship of God. When such people ponder the universe with the sun, moon, and stars, and the earth with all the plants, living creatures, and mankind, they realize that there must be a God, an almighty Being. Then they begin to wonder how this God is to be worshipped. Considerations such as these have given rise to different religions. The religions invented by man have their source in the considerations of thoughtful people. By studying nature man has discovered certain things.

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Furthermore, as a result of his observations and discoveries, he has made inferences. Religion is the result of a thoughtful study of nature with man's philosophical inferences.

According to the Bible, however, God does not allow man to devise his own way to worship Him. God does not give any ground to man's natural concept or thought. He does not permit fallen man to worship Him according to inferences drawn from the study of nature. God condemns man's natural inferences as related to worship. On the contrary, in the Bible God reveals how man is to worship Him.

**I**n Genesis we do not have a clear revelation concerning the way to worship God. Exodus contains a much fuller revelation of this. After God brought His chosen and redeemed people to His mountain, He came to have fellowship with them. We have pointed out that the decree of the law on the mountain was given in an atmosphere of courtship. This means that at Mount Sinai God was courting His people. After giving them the Ten Commandments, the governing principles of the entire law of God, God went on to issue a number of ordinances. Between the giving of the Ten Commandments and the decreeing of the ordinances, God spoke to the people concerning the way they should worship Him (20:22-26). In the short span of five verses, the main points related to the worship of God are covered. As we shall see, in 20:24-26 both man's work and man's way are utterly rejected by God.

According to the history of civilization, man likes to build towers and skyscrapers. Those who live in New York, Paris, and Tokyo may boast respectively of the Empire State Building, the Eiffel Tower, and the Tokyo Tower. The thought of fallen man is to build up something high. The first occurrence of this was at Babel (Gen. 11), where the people sought to build not only a city, but also a tower of which they could boast. This indicates that tall buildings are constructed so that man is able to boast. The more cultured people are, the more tall buildings they build. But God's way is to have an altar without steps. Man's way is to build up something with as many steps as possible. As far as the worship of God is concerned, God gives no room for man's skill, ability, inventiveness, wisdom, labor, or power. On the contrary, the altar God requires must be something which, in the eyes of man, is primitive and uncultured.

Concerning the worship of God, the tendency of the natural

man is to use his own power and wisdom. People use their wisdom to make plans and use their power, including whatever skills and abilities they possess, to carry out their plans. But according to 20:24-26, God does not recognize man's wisdom and power. Even though Moses had been educated in Egypt and was familiar with all the aspects of Egyptian culture, being "educated in all the wisdom of the

Egyptians" (Acts 7:22), God did not allow him to use his wisdom to build an altar for the worship of God. Moses was not the only one among God's people familiar with Egyptian culture. All those who came out of Egypt with him had been born there and knew the Egyptian way of doing things. All of them had received a strong infusion of

Egyptian culture. In 20:24-26 God gave them a clear word concerning worship, telling them to make an altar either of earth or of stones. They were not to use hewn stones, and they were not to build an altar so high that it required steps in order to reach it. God seemed to be saying to the people, "I do not care for human work or invention, and I do not care for man's way or concept. For the altar, you must use the materials created by Me. I care only for what I have created, not for man's work or man's way."

**I**n theology a distinction is often made between natural religion and revealed religion. Many regard Christianity as a revealed religion, a religion which has its source in God's revelation, and regard all other religions as natural. However, it is very sad that even in Christianity today there is a great emphasis on man's work and man's way. In any Christian group it is easy to detect man's work and way, but it is difficult to find something which is purely according to God's revelation. Consider the situation in Catholicism and Protestantism. How much there is of man's invention, skill, ability, plans, ways, power, and wisdom! Even the sermons given are filled with such things. Where can you hear a sermon that is pure and limited to the revelation of the Bible? Most sermons have many elements of culture, often mixed with the truth of the Word. A few years ago some of us heard a message given by the pope. This message was a mixture of biblical truth and human thought. Man's work, way, power, and wisdom have thoroughly saturated today's Christianity. As a result, it has become a mixture of God's revelation and natural religion.

If we read carefully 20:24-26, we shall see that God's revelation leaves no room for man's work or way. God does not give even the slightest amount of space to man's power, ability, skill, strength, wisdom, or plans. In today's Christianity it is easy to see man's work and way. This can

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be observed even without studying things closely. Among most Christians, man's work and man's way are very evident. In today's Christianity much attention is given to human power, ability, skill, and wisdom. The consequence of this is that God is actually set aside. People may claim to worship God, but in their worship the work and way of man have actually caused them to put God aside. When the Roman Empire embraced Christianity, many elements of culture were brought into the so-called Catholic Church. Constantine the Great opened the way for many pagan things to be brought in. This caused Christianity to become a melting pot of different elements of man's culture. Furthermore, the Catholic Church introduced many such things into their worship. For this reason, in the worship practiced in Catholicism there are many human inventions. Catholicism is filled with human ways, works, power, and wisdom. However, it is abominable in the eyes of God to bring anything manmade into the worship of God.

#### *Fallen Man Being Sin in the Eyes of God*

Exodus 20:25 says, "And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones; for if you lift up your tool upon it, you have polluted it." Here we see that God does not allow man's work to have a part in the worship of God. The entire fallen man is sin—pollution—in the eyes of God. Whether we are cultured or uncultured, educated or uneducated, we are sin before God. For this reason, no work of man is acceptable to God. Man's work can do nothing other than pollute the worship of God, for man himself is pollution. Do not add anything of man to God's worship. To add man's work to the cross is abominable to God.

**A** prerequisite to the worship of God is having an altar. The Bible clearly shows that if there is no altar, there can be no worship of God. Fallen man cannot worship God directly. In order to worship Him, we must pass through the altar. Many Christians realize that at the altar redemption is provided by means of sacrifices. Although this is true, the altar does more than this. The altar also terminates us. Everyone who worships God is terminated at the altar. Because we are a totality of sin, pollution, we should say when we come to worship God, "Lord, cleanse me with the precious blood and cover me with Yourself. Lord, in myself I dare not do anything. I come to worship You through Your cross. Wash me with Your redeeming blood and cover me with Yourself as my righteousness. Because I am a fallen person, I dare not do anything, plan anything, or bring anything of my own." We all need to have such a realization whenever we worship God.

Although I have the boldness to preach the word of the Bible, I do not have the boldness to make proposals concerning

matters in the church life. Whenever brothers come to me with a proposal, I encourage them to pray to learn whether or not this is truly of the Lord. Anything that is of us is pollution. Nothing of fallen man, therefore, should have a part in the worship of God.

#### *No Work of Man Being Acceptable to God*

Because fallen man is pollution in the eyes of God, no work of man is acceptable to Him. Cain was condemned because he brought his own work into the worship of God. He thought that he could bring something to God of what he had acquired through his labor. But Cain did not realize that he was totally pollution in God's sight and that whatever came from him was also pollution. Therefore, what he offered to God was not acceptable to Him. On the contrary, it was altogether abominable. Anything that originates with us, anything which comes from our labor, is pollution and is not acceptable to God.

#### *The Addition of Man's Work to the Cross Being Abominable to God*

It is an abomination to add man's work to the cross. The cross is wholly the work of God, and no human work is allowed to be added to it.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18 Paul says that "the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." Why is the cross foolishness to those who perish? It is foolishness because it is something crude, primitive, and altogether without culture, beauty, or human craftsmanship. In Paul's time the cross was an instrument used to execute criminals. Nevertheless, God used such a means to save us. Hence, this was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks.

**I**n 1 Corinthians 1:23 Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified." It is significant that here Paul does not say that he preached Christ resurrected, ascended, glorified, or enthroned. In the past I sometimes wondered why Paul did not tell the Greeks that he preached Christ ascended and exalted. Instead, Paul preached Christ crucified; he preached One who was put to death on the cross, executed as if He were a criminal. To Jews the preaching of Christ crucified is a stumbling block, and to Greeks it is foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, this Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (v. 24). Praise the Lord that we have been called to receive a crucified Christ! The decision to receive such a Christ did not originate with us; we have received Him because God has called us. God has predestined us to receive this Christ.

However, after receiving Christ crucified, many Christians

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try to beautify Him. Some have also attempted to make the church beautiful in the eyes of man. Instead of beautifying things, we should remain in what man would consider a primitive, uncultured situation. Instead of hewn stones, we should have an altar of stones or earth created by God. Such an altar is acceptable to Him.

*The Altar—the Cross—  
Being the Termination  
of Fallen Man with  
All His Works and Ways*

Whenever we come to worship God in a proper way, we must go to the altar. The altar will terminate us with all our works and ways. As fallen people, we must pass through the altar, the cross, if we are to worship God. As we have pointed out, the cross not only provides man with Christ's redemption; it also terminates fallen man with his ability and wisdom. Fallen man cannot please God with his ability to work and his wisdom to plan. Therefore, we must identify ourselves with the sacrifice on the altar and be terminated. In the Old Testament one who offered a sacrifice placed his hand upon it when it was slain. This indicates that the one who offered the sacrifice identified himself with the sacrifice. When the sacrifice was terminated, the one who offered it was terminated in the sacrifice. Therefore, in the worship of God we must be identified with Christ as our sacrifice on the cross and be terminated.

*The Virtue of Christ as the Burnt Offering  
and the Peace Offering in the Worship of God*

Exodus 20:24 says, "An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen." This verse mentions the burnt offering and the peace offering. After we have been terminated by identifying ourselves with the sacrifice on the altar, we shall worship God in the virtue of Christ as the burnt offering and the peace offering. On the one hand, a person terminated by the cross worships God in the virtue of Christ as the burnt offering for God's satisfaction. On the other hand, such a person worships God in the virtue of Christ as the peace offering for a mutual satisfaction with God and with his fellow worshippers. This is the worship God desires, the worship He has ordained, the worship that is acceptable to Him. Therefore, let us learn not to bring our work and our way, our power and our wisdom, our ability and our plans, into the worship of God. Instead, we must reject all these things. A true worshipper of God is one who is terminated on the cross with his power and wisdom and who worships God in the virtue of Christ.

In 20:22-26 we see that the worship God desires is worship through the cross and with Christ, through the altar and with the sacrifices. The altar, typifying the cross, terminates all those who would worship God, and the sacrifices, typifying Christ, satisfy God and give us mutual satisfaction with God and other worshippers. In this we see the vital essence of the worship which is acceptable to God.

We must worship God through the cross which terminates us and with Christ who brings God and all the worshippers into a mutual satisfaction.

**Not Sparing the Flesh—  
the Type of Amalek**

A basic principle in the Bible is that the spiritual things revealed in the New Testament

are portrayed by the pictures, or types, in the Old Testament. This is true in the case of the flesh, typified by Amalek. In his writings, Paul dealt with the flesh in a thorough way. In the entire Bible there are no stronger words concerning the flesh than those used by Paul in Romans 8. In verse 7 Paul says that "the mind set on the flesh is enmity against God" and that it is "not subject to the law of God, for neither can it be." In the following verse he goes on to say that "those who are in the flesh cannot please God." In Galatians 5 Paul also speaks strongly and emphatically about the flesh. However, if we had only Romans 8 and Galatians 5, we would still find it difficult to have an adequate understanding of what the flesh is, because in the Bible the term *flesh* is used in several different ways with many different meanings. Thus, it is difficult to know the flesh and to deal with it.

**W**e thank the Lord for the pictures of the flesh provided in the Old Testament. One such picture is Amalek in the book of Exodus. If we would deal with the flesh, typified by Amalek, we must be identified with the interceding Christ in the heavens and join ourselves to the fighting Spirit within us. The flesh is versus kingship. For this reason, the flesh must be thoroughly dealt with before the kingdom of God can come. Where the flesh is, there can be no kingdom of God. Only when the flesh is dealt with is it possible for the kingdom to come.

In Romans 8:7 Paul says that it is not possible for the flesh to be subject to God. The kingdom of God denotes the authority of God by which all things are made subject to God. But it is not possible for the flesh to be subject to God. It is utterly opposed to God's throne.

*A Hand against the Throne of Jehovah*

In Exodus 17:16 we see that Amalek is a hand against the

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throne of Jehovah. In the eyes of God, Amalek was considered a hand against God's throne. This indicates that Amalek tried to overthrow God's throne, just as Satan once tried to do. Exodus 17:16 says that because there is such a hand against the throne of Jehovah, God will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. By this we see that Amalek is versus God's authority.

Every aspect of our flesh, whether good or evil, is an enemy of God's authority. The flesh does not care for God or for His authority. Whenever we are in the flesh, we regard ourselves as individuals who are not obligated to submit to God's throne. We think that we have a position and rights of our own. Such a rebellious attitude has its source in Satan. Satan, however, is one with our flesh. Satan's principle is not to come to us directly, but to come through others or through something in ourselves. For example, Satan came to Eve in the form of a serpent. In Matthew 16, Peter, a disciple who loved the Lord Jesus very much, was utilized by Satan. Satan came to the Lord in Peter and through him. Often our flesh serves as a cloak for Satan. Whenever we exercise our flesh, Satan is hidden within us. Therefore, like Satan himself, the flesh is against God's authority. According to the portrait in Exodus 17, Amalek is a hand against the throne of God.

In Exodus 18 we have a type, a portrait, of the kingdom of God. The fact that this portrait is presented after the war against Amalek indicates that when Amalek is dealt with, the kingdom with the kingship immediately comes in. This also indicates that Amalek is versus kingship.

### *King Saul Losing His Kingship*

In 1 Samuel 15, another portion of the Word concerning Amalek, we see how King Saul lost his kingship. Although Saul was properly anointed to be king, he lost the kingship because of the way he dealt with Amalek. From this we should learn to be careful in dealing with the flesh. We may deal with it in such a way that we shall lose our kingship.

**S**aul lost the kingship because he did not utterly destroy Amalek. According to 1 Samuel 15:3, Saul had been charged to go and "strike the Amalekites; and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, oxen and sheep, camel and donkey." Whatever belonged to Amalek was to be destroyed utterly. Nothing was to be spared. Although Saul did destroy the Amalekites, he did not do so in an absolute way.

First Samuel 15:9 says, "But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and the lambs and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but everything that was

despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed." Saul spared the best of the sheep and the "chief of these things devoted to destruction" (v. 21). This portrays the fact that, experientially, we treasure the good aspects of our natural life, our natural virtue, for example, and do not wish to destroy them. We all treasure the good points of our flesh. All of us are Sauls. When we are charged by God to destroy the flesh, we destroy the negative things, such as our temper. But few are willing to destroy the good aspects of the natural life. No matter what kind of persons we may be, we all treasure the choice parts of our natural being. However, we should be encouraged by the fact that the Lord is still working on us and within us. From the New Testament we can see that Paul and John were delivered from their flesh. They utterly destroyed Amalek.

We need an intense light to shine upon us to show us that whatever we are in the natural life is Amalek. The Amalek within us must be utterly destroyed. We should not take any excuse for sparing any aspect of the Amalek within us.

**S**paring the good aspects of the flesh causes a definite shortage of spiritual authority. Many believers lack the weight of spiritual authority simply because they have not utterly dealt with their peculiarities. Culture, opinions, peculiarities, and habits are all hiding places of the flesh, and these damage our spiritual life. Because we spare the good aspects of the flesh, these aspects consume our kingship, our authority. As those who have been in the Lord for many years and who love Him and seek Him, we should have considerable spiritual weight. We should be filled with the kingship, with divine authority. But in many cases the opposite is true. Because they have not destroyed the "Agag" within them and the best cattle of Amalek, many saints are lacking in authority, in kingship, in spiritual weight.

God would not accept Saul's excuse that the people had spared the best of the cattle and oxen to offer as a sacrifice unto the Lord. God had commanded Saul to utterly destroy everything belonging to Amalek, and Saul was without excuse. God did not want the best of the cattle to be used as a sacrifice for Him. In His eyes, such a thing was evil (1 Sam. 15:19). This indicates that we may regard a certain thing as suitable to be offered to the Lord. But to Him it is evil to present that thing as a sacrifice. Consider as an illustration the case of Cain, whose sacrifice was evil in God's eyes. Many of today's Christians are offering things which God regards as evil. They claim to be engaged in spiritual service, but God says that their offering is evil because it has its source in the flesh. Anything presented and sacrificed to God that has its source in the flesh is evil in His sight.

By offering sacrifices to God according to man's will,



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Saul committed a presumptuous sin. Samuel said to him, "Does Jehovah delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices / As much as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? / Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, / And to heed, than the fat of rams" (1Sam. 15:22). To offer something to God according to our own will is presumptuous. Even if we present something good, we are still committing a presumptuous sin. God did not command Saul to spare the choice cattle and present them to Him as a sacrifice. Saul was presumptuous to do this. This is sinful.

**I**n 1 Samuel 15:23 Samuel went on to say, "For rebellion is like the sin of divination / And insubordination is like idolatry and teraphim."

Witchcraft involves contact with demons. Samuel's word to Saul indicates that sparing our flesh is an act of rebellion which brings us into contact with demons. To offer sacrifice in the way Saul did is not actually to offer sacrifice to God; it is to come in contact with demons. Such rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft.

Furthermore, Saul's stubbornness was like idolatry and teraphim. The Hebrew word rendered *idolatry* in 1 Samuel 15:23 means idols of vanity. Saul's insubordination was like the worship of a vain idol. He was not truly worshipping the Lord, but was worshipping an idol of vanity. Saul may have thought that he was worshipping the true God, but actually he was serving an idol. Samuel's word to Saul means that, because of his rebellion, Saul had become involved with demons and with the idols of vanity.

If instead of utterly destroying our flesh, we spare certain good aspects of the flesh, we also shall become involved with demons. Sparing the good flesh and then offering it to God is hateful to Him because in such a practice demons are involved. The idols of vanity are involved also. If we would follow the Lord's word to utterly destroy the flesh, we shall have the kingship and shall be in God's kingdom. But if we fail to carry out His word to destroy Amalek, we shall cut ourselves off from God's authority and become joined to the demons and to the idols of vanity.

It is crucial for us to see what the flesh is and how the flesh is versus grace and God's kingship. If we are careless in dealing with the flesh, we, like Saul, shall lose our kingship. Then we shall spontaneously join ourselves to the power of darkness. Apparently we are God's people, but actually we shall be worshipping the idol of vanity. How serious this is! Rebellion is like the sin of divination, and insubordination is like the idol of vanity. May the

Lord have mercy on us that we learn what the flesh is and how to deal with it utterly.

The record in the Bible concerning Amalek teaches us that we must be in fear and trembling before God in doing good things. We all are afraid of doing evil. But we may not have any fear in doing good. The portrait of

Amalek in the Old Testament shows us that to do good according to our own choices is even worse than doing evil because it is against the very throne of God. Cain's sacrifice seemed good, but it was actually an act of rebellion against God's throne and against His economy. Likewise, Saul spared the choice of the cattle of Amalek with the intention of

offering it to God as a sacrifice. This was rebellion, which is related to divination, to the contact with demons. Much of what is done by today's Christians supposedly for God is actually rebellion against God's economy and involves contact with demons.

**W**ithout 1 Samuel 15:22 and 23, we would not realize that Saul's deed was an act of rebellion related to demons. But Samuel's word exposed the nature of what Saul had done. Apparently Saul intended to offer sacrifice to God. Actually his sacrifice was related to demons. This reveals the importance of realizing that whatever we do apart from God's grace and apart from depending on Him and trusting in Him is of the flesh. And whatever is of the flesh is against God's throne. It will be used by the subtle one, the enemy of God, to hinder God's purpose.

Many of today's Christians spare the best aspects of the flesh and offer them to God. Believers are even encouraged to offer the best of the natural life to God. In presenting such offerings, God's redeemed people do not reject the flesh, and they do not depend on God. On the contrary, among many Christians today, the activities of the flesh are encouraged. Only the Lord knows how much of Christian activity today is related to demons and is thus a hindrance to God's purpose.

Under the light of God's Word, we must learn that in serving God we need to be in fear and trembling lest we fail to trust in God or to depend on His grace. We should be fearful of doing even the best things in ourselves or according to our own will. We need to trust in the Lord and depend on His grace. We should be even more fearful in doing good than in doing evil. We all know that God condemns evil. Now we must learn that even in doing good, we may give opportunity to the flesh to produce an Ishmael. We may also give ground to Agag, king of Amalek. **LC**