



STUDIES IN BAPTISM

by Ray R. Sutton

No. 4: The Ordeal of Jealousy (1)

And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causes the curse. . . . (Numbers 5:18)

Baptism and the jealousy ordeal have an important relationship. Once this is understood, both take on a sharper meaning. Very little has been said, however, about the jealousy ordeal in Scripture. Most commentators note the few times it is mentioned explicitly, and generally say little about it for that reason (see G. B. Gray in *The International Critics/Commentary: Numbers* [T. & T. Clark], pp. 43-49). A more careful reading of Scripture, however, discloses that the ordeal of jealousy is basic to much of Biblical theology. For one thing, it involves a manifestation of one of God's attributes, jealousy. In fact, God's very Name is Jealous (Ex. 34:14). And since God is still a jealous God, an ordeal is still connected with His character. As we shall see, the jealousy ordeal is related to the New Covenant sacraments.

In this essay, we are concerned with the locus classicus of the ordeal of jealousy, Numbers 5. Once we correctly understand its many aspects, we will begin to see the ordeal throughout the Bible. To obtain this understanding, the present essay focuses on the ordeal in the Old Testament. Part II will deal (D. V.) with the subject as it relates to the New Covenant sacraments.

First, the jealousy ordeal occurred in conjunction with a *meal-offering*. From Leviticus 2 we see that the meal-offering was a *communion* meal: After the offering of the whole burnt sacrifice which brought atonement (Lev. 1), the grain-offering was presented as a consecration of one's works. Grain or bread presented in open hands indicates such a vocational consecration, as in Numbers 5:18. The priest, after offering up the grain, ate the remainder before God. Since the priest represented the people (the bride of God), his eating the bread represented their communion with God. Thus, the ordeal of jealousy was set up as part of a communion meal, and the grain in the woman's hand was said to be a *memorial* (Num. 5:15, 18), a memorial of iniquity.

Second, the woman ingested what the priest would normally have sprinkled on her. The water is called "holy" (Num. 5:17), thus part of the purification system (Num.

9:1ff.). This water contained the ashes of the heifer; that is, it contained the sacrifice. The sacrifice was applied by sprinkling, which the writer to the Hebrews calls "baptisms" (Heb. 6:2; 9:10), but in this case the sacrifice was drunk. (The analogy to drinking the blood of Christ is obvious.)

Third, dust from the floor of the tabernacle was added to the water. When man sinned, the earth was cursed, and dust became the serpent's food (Gen. 3:14, 17). The dust of the tabernacle, however, had been sprinkled with blood (Lev. 16), and thus was *redeemed ground*. Thus, curse and redemption are made part of what the woman drinks.

Fourth, a handwriting of curse-ordinances was washed into the water she drank, so that she ingested the very Law of God.

Each of these four elements would either accept or reject her. The holy bread, the sacrificed heifer, the redeemed earth, and the Law of God would reject her if she had been faithless to her marriage covenant. On the other hand, if she had been faithful, then the fact that she had drunk the written curses would mean that there was no longer any handwriting of curse-ordinances against her, for these had been "blotted out" when they had been washed into the water. (We may anticipate ourselves again and point out that when Christ drank God's curses, they were blotted out for all those baptized into Him — Col. 2:14.)

What was the judgment of the ordeal? Some expositors have argued that the swelling of the abdomen and the falling of the thigh (Num. 5:27) mean that the woman was pregnant by another man, and this is made visibly obvious, and then there is a miscarriage ("thigh fall" can be rendered "loins abort"). This is a tempting interpretation, for it would mean God's judgment is against both the woman and her seed. It is safer, however, simply to note that a physical ailment was the manifestation of the curse. (Again, this must be connected to the Lord's Supper.)

The most prominent feature of the whole occasion, however, is the jealousy of the husband. In the Bible, envy is a sin, for it is covetousness; but jealousy, the guarding of what is properly one's own, is not a sin but a virtue. God is Jealous. Wherever the Bible mentions the jealousy of the Divine husband, one will find an ordeal of jealousy for the church, the bride. Of many illustrations we select two.

First, the Apostle Paul says that God was provoked to jealousy in the Exodus because the people *communed* with Egyptian gods while Moses was on the mount (1 Cor. 10). Instead of eating with their God after passing through the atonement (Ex. 24), they ate with a false god (Ex. 32:6). God became jealous, and they came upon Moses to take them through a jealousy ordeal. Moses broke the covenant

document, which contained the Law and which now functioned as a handwriting of curse-ordinances. He broke it at the foot of the mountain, where the covenant had been made, He ground up the idol, and mixed it into water from the mount (holy water from the holy mountain). Comparing Ex. 32:19 with Deut. 9:21, we may conclude that the Law was shattered into the same water. Since the false god was made, as all false gods are, out of earth, its dust corresponds to the dust of the ground. All were made to drink it, and those who became visibly sick (presumably) were put to death (Ex. 32:25-35).

Note that the people drank the same basic elements as they had been baptized with: water (baptism at the Red Sea, 1 Cor. 10:1ff.) and the law (covenant making, Ex. 24).

Second, the whole book of Malachi is concerned with the jealousy ordeal. The apostasy of the people, marrying a foreign god, was paralleled by the priests' divorcing their covenant wives and marrying foreign, pagan girls (Mal. 2:1-11). As a result, the grain-offering presented before YHWH simply provoked Him to jealousy (Mal. 2:12, 13). Consequently, God's Table had become a curse to them (Mal. 2:2) and His judgment was realized by a curse on their seed (2:3). (Notice how this strengthens the miscarriage interpretation of Numbers 5.)

(A concordance study of jealousy will provide the reader with more examples of the ordeal. Note especially Numbers 25:1-13, which is the background of Malachi 2:5 and 12.)

In conclusion, God's jealousy is accompanied by ordeal. He uses the signs and seals of the covenant itself to bring about eventual judgment, if the person involved is guilty. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that a consistent pattern has been observed: The signs and seals of redemption are placed upon, and then taken within, the person. In the New Covenant the signs and seals change, but the pattern of effusion/ingestion-remains.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CALENDAR "

by James B. Jordan

No. 10: The Sacramental Sabbath

Matthew 12:1. At that time Jesus went on the sabbath through the grain fields, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the ears and eat.

2. *But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a sabbath."*

3. *But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions;*

4. *"How he entered the house of God, and they ate the leaves of presentation, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?"*

5. *"Or have you not read in the Law, that on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath and are innocent?"*

6. *"But I say to you, that something greater than the temple is here." (NASV)*

What is it that makes the sabbath special? Is it simply that it is a designated time, or is there more to it than that? This passage shows us that what makes the sabbath a special time is the special sacramental presence of Jesus Christ. In order to understand the passage, we have to familiarize ourselves with the Old Testament background concerning the temple and the showbread, or loaves of presentation.

According to Leviticus 24:5-9, the showbread was a memorial before God. Incense was placed upon it, and it was offered to YHWH. Each week, on the sabbath, new bread was placed on the Table, and the priests ate the old bread in a holy place.

This corresponds to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper today. One of the more obvious and glaring errors of much modern discussion of the Lord's Supper is the assumption that the sacrament corresponds *only* to Passover. This is not the case, as a simple glance at 1 Cor. 10:3, 4 will indicate. Rather, we must say that our sacraments correspond to the entire Old Covenant sacramental (sacrificial) system. The various holy breads eaten in the Old Covenant (meal offering, Pentecostal "loaves, showbread, manna, etc.) are seen as memorials, and the Lord's Supper is also a memorial. The connections are clear and obvious. Malachi 1:7 connects the food of the Table with the sacrifices of the altar.

This communion bread was to be eaten only by the priests and only in a holy environment, in the tabernacle or temple. What made the environment holy was the presence of God. Now, how was that Presence manifest? It was manifest in the light of the golden lampstand. The seven-fold light of the lamp signified the presence of the seven-fold Spirit of God (cf. Rev. 1:4,3:1,4:5, 5:6). It is the eternal light of God (perpetual, Lev. 24:3), which causes the heavenly Temple of God to be in continual Day-of-the-LORD-time. The Old Covenant, with the Old Creation, has the sun and moon for lights, and alternates between daytime and nighttime (see essays #2 and 3 in this series for elaboration). In the New Covenant, and ultimately in the New Creation, however, the sun and moon are removed and replaced by the light of the Lamb, which is perpetual (Rev. 22:5). Since the New Covenant has already arrived, there is a sense in which Christians are in perpetual Day-Time now, and a sense in which the sun and moon have already been removed as rulers of time (Gen. 1:14, 16; Matt. 24:29 – which is speaking of the first advent of Christ; cf. Acts 2:15-21).

Notice two things. First, in the tabernacle/temple there was a continual sabbath because of the light of the lampstand. The priests entered Day-Time when they entered the Presence of God, regardless of the day of the week. All the same, second, there was still an appointed duty on the seventh day, which was to swap and eat the bread. Thus, although the sabbath was continual, yet there were specific sabbath tasks, which included *eating the communion bread*.

Thus, what made the sabbath special was not simply the special presence of God, but His sacramental Self-ministry to His priests. In the New Covenant, all are priests, all may go into the sanctuary, and all eat the holy bread on the Lord's Day.

David arrived at Nob on a sabbath day (1 Sam. 21:6), and was given the newly-removed communion bread to eat. Since David was not a priest, for him to go into the tabernacle Day-Time and eat the communion bread was a

breaking of the sabbath. The priests had the privilege of engaging in the *labor of worship* on the sabbath, while for David the sabbath was only a day of *rest*. David, however, was the Lord's anointed, His messiah, and Jesus tells us that it was *typologically* appropriate for him to have done what he did. By calling attention to David, Jesus claims to be great David's greater Son.

Now, let us notice the structure of Matthew 12:1-8. The grainfield (world) corresponds to the temple, which is a microcosm of the world. The grain corresponds to the communion bread. The presence of Jesus in the field with His men corresponds to the lampstand-light Presence in the temple. To be in Jesus' presence is to be in the temple, and the labor of baking sabbath bread is proper labor (cp. the disciples rubbing the ears, Luke 6:1).

In the New-Covenant we are with Jesus all the time, as His priests. Thus, we are in continual Day-Time. Yet, we do not eat communion bread daily, but according to the sabbath pattern, which is not abolished but affirmed by this passage. Let us briefly draw some conclusions.

First, apparently the bread of communion was ground, kneaded, and baked on the sabbath, for in I Sam. 21:6 the new bread was "hot" (the Hebrew implies "freshly baked"). Thus, it is best if communion bread for the evening service is baked on Sunday afternoon.

Second, the Old Covenant sabbath was distinctively a cessation from labor. Only the priests engaged in the labor of worship; the people just watched, for they were not permitted to go into the holy places. In the New Covenant, however, all are priests. Thus, for instance, any Christian may join the Levitical choir, any Christian may eat the communion bread, any Christian may bake and even serve the bread (under the oversight of the elders/bishops, however). In other words, while the Old Covenant sabbath implied a mere rest from labor, the New Covenant sabbath implies active engagement in worship, for at least part of the day.

This is not to say that the whole day must be taken up with the labor of worship, for as we shall see in future essays (D.V.), men still need rest and the sabbath is still the time of rest for the First Creation. Nevertheless, there is a definite shift in the New Covenant from a merely-rest orientation to an active-worship orientation. In the consummation, rest and active worship will wholly coincide.

(A note on Levitical choirs. In the Old Covenant, only the Levites might sing in the choir, because they alone might enter the temple. Since all Christians are Levites, and all enter the temple under the New Covenant, some have thought that all Christians must be included in the choir; in other words, that there must be no separate choir, only congregational singing. The influence of egalitarianism seems to lie behind this. The obvious reply is that not all Levites were in the Levitical choir. Some were door-keepers, others were judges, etc. [1 Chron. 23:3, 4]). There is no theological or exegetical reason why the same cannot be true today. All are Levites, and all engage in worship in the temple, but some are specially gifted at singing and playing instruments, and these should form a special group to present worship before God. If our view of worship were more objective [presented before God] and less subjective [everybody has to participate the same way], there would be less confusion in this area. Obviously, I am not speaking of the modern church choir, which exists simply to entertain the congregation.)

AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

by Gary North

No. 4: The Paths of Righteous Judgment

For the LORD *giveth* wisdom: out of his mouth *cqmeth* knowledge and understanding. *Helayeth* up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a *buckler* [shield] to them that walk uprightly. He *keepeth* the paths of judgment, and *preserveth* the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path (Prov. 2:6-9).

The early sections of the Book of Proverbs deal with man's gaining wisdom from God: "To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding" (1 :2). *Wisdom is seen as the most important asset a man can possess.* "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then thou shalt understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God" (2:4-5). "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (1:7).

As is true of all assets, *wisdom comes from God.* All good gifts come from God (Deut. 8:18; James 1:17). The humanistic economist ignores this. He begins his analysis by arguing that the two primary economic resources are */and* and *labor*. "Land" refers to what Christians call the creation — every resource found under man's dominion. "Labor" refers to both physical and mental labor. It is the combining of land and labor *over time* which produces capital goods and consumer goods. Since *scarcity* is basic to the post-Fall world (Gen. 3:15-17), both land and labor command a *price* if they can be used in the production of consumer goods. Ultimately, *payments by consumers* to gain access to consumer goods can be classified as payments for specific combinations of */and*, *labor*, and *time*, or as these payments are called, *rent*, *wages*, and *interest*. Expected consumer demand — expected by future-predicting entrepreneurs, who buy the assets that are subsequently used in the production of consumer goods — sets the prices of the various production goods.

The familiar tripartite classification of *production goods* into theoretically separate classes — land, labor, and capital — is incorrect, since capital is simply the product of land and labor over time. Capital is a "produced good." Land and human labor are "original goods." Furthermore, the equally familiar tripartite classification of *income* — rent, wages, and interest — is misapplied, if the economist tries to define interest as a exclusive return to capital, in the way that rent goes exclusively to land, and wages go exclusively to labor inputs. Interest is a payment for the use of *any scarce economic resource over time*. Men's *discount of future goods as against present goods* (other things being equal) — a universal phenomenon of human action — is why lenders of any asset ask for extra future goods (or money) as compensation for doing without the present use of their asset. An interest payment is part of the cost of creating capital — land plus labor over time; it is *not* a unique, exclusive *payment* to existing capital as such. Capital does not uniquely "earn" an exclusive interest payment. The *income accruing to capital* can be broken down theoretically (though not always in practice) into three precise components. These are payments for: 1) its physical inputs (rent), 2) its labor inputs (wages), and 3) its

time (or time preference) factor (interest) — the cost of 'tying up' land and labor factors over time.

It is also incorrect to explain *profit* as a return to capital. A profit or a loss stems from men's ability to predict future economic conditions — supply and demand — and from their ability to make plans and execute them in order to supply that future demand. Profits or losses stem from *economic uncertainty*. Profit is therefore an *economic residual* which remains after all the factors of production have been paid for: rent, wages, and interest. Problem: Are land, labor, and interest the only primary economic factors in the production process — factors that must be paid for, in any economic system?

Libertarian free market economists generally answer in the affirmative, especially members of the school of thought called "the Austrian school." But this humanistic economic analysis has a flaw: it does not deem it necessary to identify the ultimate source of land, labor, and time. It does not acknowledge God as *the owner of the universe* (Ps. 50:10), meaning: 1) the One who supplied the raw materials (nature) in His act of creation; 2) the source of man's knowledge (wisdom) concerning 3) the ordering principles of both nature and human society ("laws" or regularities that are associated with His decree or providence); 4) the source of time (grace). Modern economic analysis rests on a fundamental, universally shared humanistic assumption: *cosmic impersonalism*. God is irrelevant for economic analysis.

The classification of economic production into three original components — land, labor, and time — is technically precise, yet ultimately misleading because it is incomplete. Such an analysis is true for man's economic life only because it is true primarily about God's *Creator-creature relationship* to man. What is regarded by economists as primary economic analysis for capital theory is really only secondary (analogous) analysis. We need to begin with *God's ownership* when we discuss the economic returns to factors of production.

God demands a payment for the use of His resources: *land, wisdom, and time*. He is the owner of the universe. This is a neglected aspect of the *tithe*. This is why a refusal to pay the tithe constitutes *theft* (Mal. 3:8-9). This is also why the tithe is not voluntary. All men are users of His resources. First, He grants to men the use of His creation, which includes His continuing providential service in sustaining the creation. The creation sprang out of nothing in response to His fiat word. *God, as the Creator, is entitled to a return on this investment from those creatures who continue to use His capital*. Second, He gives all men an innate, though incomplete, knowledge of the paths of righteousness (Rem. 2:14-15). Third, He also grants them time (Matt. 13:28-30), for He is long-suffering toward us (II Pet. 3:9). The tithe is mandatory. Men owe payment to God as resource-users.

This is confirmed by Jesus' parable of the householder who planted a vineyard, made capital improvements, rented it out to husbandmen, and departed to a far country. He subsequently sent his servants, and finally his son, to collect his share of the fruits, but they killed both the servants and the son. "When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do to these husbandmen?"

(Matt. 21:40). He was speaking of God's relationship to Israel specifically, but also of the final judgment, of which the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. 24; Lk. 21) is a type.

A *society* which refuses to *tithe* to God **will be judged by God**. One of the forms of God's judgment is to allow the advent of a State which will compel the payment of a tithe (1 Sam. 8:17) — or more than a tithe (Gen. 47:26) — into the State's treasury. **We cannot escape the payment of a tithe**. The question is: To whom will we pay it? Another question: How much of our productivity will we be compelled to pay? Finally, what kind of social order will it finance?

The *preservation of man's social order*, long-term, is made possible by obedience to God: adherence to His law-order by grace through faith, both individually (Eph. 2:8-10) and socially (Deut. 28). This is why *taxes as such are not a form of theft*; only taxes in excess of those established by God should be regarded as theft (however, such excess taxes *must* be so regarded). The same is true of other biblically sanctioned regulations by the civil government. These *social costs* are legitimate and *theoretically inescapable factors* in the costs of private production, as basic to man's God-ordained economic environment as the costs of land, labor, and time. We need social order. *Social order is not a free resource. It must be paid for*.

The tithe allows us to finance the social order designed by God for His people. This requires us to acknowledge the binding nature of His revealed social and economic laws. It demands wisdom on our part. We must involve ourselves in a long-term quest for wisdom. The alternative: financing the society of Satan, even in ignorance.

There are paths of righteousness. These paths are revealed in the Bible. *It is basic for long-term success that men walk in these paths*. Those who leave these paths of righteousness thereby choose the ways of darkness (Pr. 2:13), the paths to death (Pr. 2:18). God calls the paths of righteousness, "the paths of life" (Pr. 2:19). To follow these paths is to acknowledge and observe as morally and economically binding the biblically revealed foundations of long-term economic success: "For the upright shall swell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it" (Pr. 2:21-22).

The Book of Proverbs makes it clear that *the search for wisdom is the most important of all of men's investments*. We need a more complete wisdom than that which is innate to us (Rem. 2:14-15), for sin has distorted our judgment and our ability to follow what we know to be morally binding (Rem. 1:18-22). *This wisdom must be paid for: search costs and self-discipline*. This was Christ's point in His parable of the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:44-46). While men are given *some* wisdom through common grace — sufficient to keep them alive for a time on earth, and sufficient to condemn them on judgment day (Rem. 1:18-22) — this unmerited gift (the meaning of the word "grace") is nevertheless incomplete. Men must search for wisdom. Men's *knowledge* of the paths of righteous judgment, and their subsequent willingness to *walk* in them — to become doers of the word and not hearers only (Rem. 2:13; James 1:22) — is the source of their long-term prosperity.