



STUDIES IN BAPTISM

by Ray R. Sutton

No. 5: The Ordeal of Jealousy (II)

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized.

(Mark 10:38-39)

God is a jealous God who manifests His jealousy through objective ordeals. These constitute a process of judgment whereby an individual is acquitted or convicted. Part 1 surveyed some of these ordeals in the Old Covenant, beginning with the ordeal of jealousy in Numbers 5. This was done to establish the basic features of the ordeal so that it could be seen elsewhere, particularly when not explicitly called an "ordeal of jealousy." The specific concern is to establish that the sacraments of the *New* Covenant can be viewed, in part, as jealousy ordeals.

Having developed the Old Covenant pattern, attention must now be turned to the New Covenant. Since Jesus is the culmination of all the sacrifices and ordeals of the Bible, He is central in understanding the subject at hand. It is the contention of this essay that *the death of Jesus was the ultimate ordeal of jealousy*. So it stands to reason that any development of the sacraments in relation to the Old Testament jealousy ordeal must be preceded by this study. The next essay will deal specifically with the relationship of baptism and communion to such an ordeal. Thus, it must be proved that indeed the cross of Christ is an ordeal of jealousy.

First, the Apostle Paul says, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; *Blotting out* the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:13-14). One of the unique features of the ordeal of jealousy in Numbers 5 was the "blotting out" of the curses associated with the covenant (Nu. 5:23). This parallel is confirmed by the fact that the LXX translates the "blot out" of Numbers 5:23 with the same Greek word which Paul uses in Colossians. So both events blotted out the curse of sin, one typologically and the other definitively.

Second, as the Scripture at the beginning of this essay says, the death of Jesus was something *He drank*. In other places reference to His mission's being a "cup" is made. Jesus drank of the guilt and the death which the Father had¹ foreordained (Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:20). In the same

way, the woman suspected of adultery drank the bitter water. Thus, *both drank unto judgment!*

The *cup* in Scripture often speaks of some sort of judgment ordeal (*Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 1, pp. 748-749). The wicked partake of the wine cup of the wrath of God (Pss. 11:6; 75:8; Isa. 51:17,22; Jer. 25:15). All the nations were to drink of Babylon, pictured as a golden wine cup in the hand of the Lord (Jer. 51:7). Likewise, Jerusalem is a cup of judgment before its enemies (Zech. 12:2). Again, Jerusalem was to drink of the cup of horror and desolation which belonged to Samaria (Ezek. 23:31-33). And of course, the cup of Jesus was one of suffering (Matt. 20:22-23). Thus, in every case an ordeal of judgment was taking place, and Numbers 5 provides explanation for the meaning of drinking unto this type of judgment which Jesus drank. It was an ordeal of jealousy.

Third, the *effect* of Jesus' judgment specifies another connection to the ordeal of jealousy. Luke says, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division" (Lk. 12:49-51). First, the "baptism" yet to come is the death of Jesus, and Mark calls this also the "cup" that he must drink. Second, the effect of this judgment is division. A great sorting out began to take place which would be culminated at the Judgment-Seat of Christ (Matt. 25). The guilty are divided from the innocent through this judgment in other words. In the ordeal of jealousy, the same thing occurred. If the woman was innocent, then she was released. If not, she was *divided* from the people of God. Therefore, the greatest jealousy ordeal brought about the ultimate division of the world, but in the New Covenant it is unto its resurrection.

Fourth, the effusion/ingestion pattern observed in the ordeals of jealousy in the Old Testament is present in the death of Jesus. It was pointed out that the priest took what the accused had been sprinkled with (Hebrews 9:19-21) and caused her to ingest it. Jesus' death is simultaneously a baptism and something He drinks. His baptism came from God and was poured out on Him just as the cups of judgment in the Old Testament were poured out on Israel and the nations associated with her. The moment He drank of the vinegar sop (Matt. 27:48; Mk. 15:36; Jn. 19:28-30), the fulfillment of His mission to drink the bitter water of judgment was marked, and He died immediately. (Note that Jesus' drinking the sour wine fulfills Ps. 69:21-23, which connects the feast of the Covenant with judgment, and the collapse of the loins [cf. similar conception in Nu. 5:22], and the ordeal of jealousy.)

Finally, the cup which Jesus drank provoked the jealousy of God because He was counted guilty from the sin of the world placed on Him. Jealousy is the most important

aspect of the ordeal in Numbers 5. Thus, everywhere such an ordeal is found the main cause is the jealousy of God. But it is the jealousy of a husband concerned that his bride has become one with another. At the cross, God the Father is the husband and Jesus bears the sin of the bride. His jealousy must be satisfied, for she has drunk of the cup of devils (1 Cor. 10:21-22). Fellowship between the church and demons, symbolized by the drinking of this cup, has been established. There can be no questioning the fact that the jealousy of God was vented on the Son, and thus existed at the cross.

Therefore, these parallels between the other ordeals of jealousy and the death of Jesus indicate that it was a jealousy ordeal. Jesus drank, however, the bitter cup which rightfully belonged to His people. They had adulterated, so the obligation to face judgment was with them. But this is where the relationship of Jesus' ordeal with Christian baptism begins. *Baptism unites the believer to Jesus' ordeal*, and delivers him from the certain eventuality, death. The ordeal is finished and that is why the nature of Christian suffering differs. For one thing, the church applies, not accomplishes, redemption through its suffering. For another, since the ordeal is over, the *character* of the church's suffering evolves into glory. She struggles and suffers to apply redemption to the whole world to see that day when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11 :9). This is a different kind of suffering, for it is the suffering of Kings and Priests (Rev. 1 :6; Isa. 61 :6) who reign in the glory of their Father in heaven as adopted sons of glory on earth (Romans 8:15-18). Thus, being baptized unto His baptism, which was *the* ordeal of jealousy of all time, the church passes from death to life and is numbered among His sheep at the last great judgment-division in history.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CALENDAR

by James B. Jordan

No. 11: Dimensions of the Sabbath

The question of sabbath observance has always been a thorny one in the history of the Church, and the present writer only hopes to advance the discussion, not to say the final word. It seems a good idea, however, at this point to drop back and try to take a larger view of the whole sabbath question. Hopefully this will help us do justice to the concerns of churchmen of earlier times, as well as to our understanding of the Bible and our own times.

I should like to suggest that we distinguish among three dimensions of the sabbath. There maybe more, but let us isolate the *typological*, the *liturgical*, and the *laborial*. Most of the essays in this series thus far (referred to by number in this article) have dealt with the *typological* aspect of the sabbath. We have seen that the sabbath typified the consummation of man's labor in a condition of transfigured rest in the presence of God (Nos. 7 & 8). Adam's rebellion prevented man from attaining such rest, but the fulfillment of the Old Covenant by Jesus Christ fulfilled the topological aspect of the sabbath. In Christ, the transfigured (resurrected) condition of humanity has been achieved, and the outcome of history is assured. The sabbath no longer typifies the end of the Old Covenant probation, for the New Covenant has arrived, and in the New (Resurrection) Covenant, there is perpetual sabbath. All the same, we as individuals have not yet reached the

resurrection in the fullest sense, so that we are still Individuality on probation, and the sabbath may still have that symbolic meaning for us (No. 9). The *binding obligation of the typological dimension* of the weekly sabbath, however, is apparently dropped in the New Covenant era. We may choose to regard certain days special, but we may also choose to regard every day the same (No. 6).

In its *liturgical* dimension, the sabbath is the time of special sacramental worship in the special presence of God. Holy convocations for worship were part of the sabbath from the very beginning (Lev. 23:3). This pattern is not broken in the New Covenant era, but reestablished in connection with the weekly Lord's Day. The New Covenant does not eliminate man's Adamic cultural task, but reestablishes it in power. Thus, in the New Covenant era, men still must alternate between cultural labor and liturgical worship. The pattern for that alternation is found in the Bible, and embraces the weekly sabbath, as well as a cycle of seasonal festivals (No. 3). In the Old Covenant, though all were to worship on the sabbath, only the priests might engage in liturgical labor; in the New Covenant all are priests, and all may labor in worship, not merely stand by and observe and listen (No. 10).

We must say that, concerning the liturgical dimension of the sabbath, men are not free to regard every day, or every time, alike. We are not to forsake assembling together, at times setup by the special officers (overseers) of the Church in the interests of decency and order (1 Cor. 14:40). The Reformers, holding this view, argued that the elders might set up worship every five days or every ten days, including seasonal festivals. The Puritans emphasized the need to conform to the Biblical pattern, but eliminated seasonal festivals. The present writer believes that both are important, but that the weekly sabbath worship has a degree of primacy, command-performance worship as it were, which is not present in seasonal festivals. The latter, I believe, maybe regarded as optional by the general officers of the Church (the members). My reason for holding this view is simply that the *weekly* sabbath occupies a central position in the sabbatical legislation of the Old Testament, and it is the *weekly* pattern which receives *explicit* mention in the New Testament (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

At the same time, the special time for worship in the Old Covenant was a time of God's appointment, the sabbath. We might say that heaven was only open at such times. In the New Covenant, however, heaven is always open, so that the time of special worship in the New Covenant is by the appointment of the overseers of the Church. God has revealed a pattern, but He has also stated that certain days are no longer to be regarded as special to Him in the Old Covenant sense (No. 6). We may summarize as follows:

1. In both covenants man is commanded to worship God.
2. In the Old Covenant, special worship was to be offered only at times designated by God, and was not acceptable at any other times.
3. In the New Covenant, special worship is acceptable at any time, but the overseers of the Church must establish set times in the interests of decency and order. God backs them in this, and the individual Christian may not defy this ordering of time without defying God.

To draw an analogy, God set up one place where He might be rendered formal special worship in the Old Covenant, at set times. In the New Covenant, we still need places to worship, and God has told the special officers of

the Church to determine them, but God has not determined them directly. Similarly, we need times to worship, but God has not determined them *directly* either. . .

(To anticipate a future essay on "The Sabbath and Authority," we may say at this point that this flexibility of the New Covenant serves the interest of evangelism in heathen nations.)

Finally, as to its *laborial* dimensions, the sabbath of necessity continues in force. God is both eternally active and also eternally at rest. We, as temporal creatures, cannot be both at once, and so we alternate between work and rest according to the pattern God Himself set for us. Man needs both work and rest, and for optimal life, he needs them according to the proportion (1 to 7) and cyclic pattern given him, for his own good, by God. This includes sabbath years for the land as well as sabbath days for men and beasts.

The laborial dimension of the sabbath is a concern of civil law in Scripture, and should be such in Christian society. It will be up to the civil officers to determine at what time the sabbath begins and ends (there is debate on this; cf. No. 2), and what kinds of shopping and activities are to be regarded as works of necessity or mercy. Apart from strong sabbath laws, however, the poor become the slaves of the wealthy. Those who oppose all blue laws are guilty of treading down the poor, the widow, and the fatherless.

The laborial dimension of the sabbath will be the topic of the next installment in this series.

AN ECONOMIC COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE

by Gary North

No. 5: Visible Success

My son, do not forget my teaching, but guard my commands in your heart; for long life and years in plenty will they bring you, and prosperity as well. Let your good faith and loyalty never fail, but bind them about your neck. Thus will you win favour and success in the sight of God and man (Prov. 3:1-4, NEB).

Normally, I use the King James Version to introduce each chapter, but in this case, the New English Bible brings out the substance of the passage far more graphically. It has a weakness, however: its translation of the Hebrew word, *torah*, as "teaching," rather than "law." It should read, "do not forget my law." The link between *biblical law* and *visible prosperity* is made clear by the author of the Proverbs. It is the same link which is established by Deuteronomy 28:1-14. Adherence to God's laws brings visible, external benefits.

The promise of long life is found in Exodus 20:12: "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." Paul writes that this is the first commandment with a promise (Eph. 6:2). Long life is a *universally recognized benefit*. When a culture adheres to the tenets of biblical law, this passage in the Proverbs informs us, its inhabitants will be blessed by longer life spans. A law-abiding civilization will be able to be differentiated from law-transgressing civilizations by means of statistically measurable life expectancies.

One economically relevant effect of this would be *less expensive life insurance policies*. The risks associated with insuring the life of a man (or woman) within a given age group will be lower than the risks of insuring the life of a man (or woman) within the same age group in a law-transgressing culture. In other words, a company which attempted to charge the same annual premium (fee) for both societies would experience financial losses. In the law-abiding society, the attempt to charge a fee schedule appropriate in a law-transgressing society would result in loss-producing competition from companies that charged lower fees — fees that would be high enough to cover losses from the payment of death benefits to the heirs of those insured. Similarly, any attempt to charge the lower fees of the law-abiding society in a law-transgressing society would also produce losses; the fees would not cover losses from the payment of death benefits to the heirs. There would be too many deaths per thousand, compared with the number of deaths per thousand within the same age group in the law-abiding culture. This is what I mean by the phrase "statistically measurable." The differences would be statistically relevant, meaning *financially relevant* in this example.

This is a very specific promise. It is not something that can be relegated to the realm of the "exclusively spiritual." The Bible is not speaking merely of a "better outlook on life," or a "deeper spiritual life," but a statistically longer life expectancy for members of a given age group. While good men can die young, more of them will survive into old age than in law-transgressing societies. If the Bible is true, then certain predictions concerning life expectancy will be verifiable, and verifiable in economically relevant ways, namely, life insurance fee schedules. (I am speaking here of annual renewable term insurance - death-benefit insurance — and not insurance policies that provide some sort of savings program.)

The life expectancy of those living in the West, and in nations that have adopted Western attitudes toward life, is higher than that which prevails in Third World cultures that are openly demonic or animistic, and also higher than in Third World cultures that have adopted Eastern monism as their philosophical foundation (which always includes mysticism as a way to escape the burdens of material existence). We have seen a steady increase in life expectancy in the West, especially since the Protestant Reformation. Western industrialism and Western agriculture combined with Western medical techniques to create a culture in which men have a legitimate hope for longer life. This culture was the product of Protestant religion.

If the benefits of adhering to God's law are visible in the area of life expectancy, as promised, then the *economic benefits* described in verse two should also be visible. The promise of "plenty" and "prosperity" is not to be understood as applying exclusively to the inner realm of the converted man's spirit. This promise must also apply to the external, measurable realm.

This is crucially important for a proper understanding of economic growth in the West, especially since 1780, but also during the Middle Ages (as described by Prof. Lynn White, Jr. in his book, *Medieval Technology and Social Change* [1966]). Biblical attitudes toward thrift, diligence in one's occupation, the legitimacy of wealth (anti-envy), and a faith in progress in time and on earth (eschatological optimism) all combined to produce rapid economic growth, especially in the two societies most influenced by Puritanism, England and New England, and

In the Netherlands and Switzerland, which had been heavily influenced by Continental Calvinism. Even in Japan, an essentially Protestant attitude toward the future and toward the possibility of long-term progress has prevailed since the late nineteenth century.

Men will win favor in the eyes of men and God if they show mercy and loyalty. They will be acknowledged as successful. *This testifies to the existence of a/most universally recognized signs of personal and national prosperity.* There is sufficient revelation to men through nature and through their own hearts to convince most men of the benefits of economic growth. Without this revelation, and without men's ability to respond to it, we could devise no statistically measurable indices of wealth. We could not even define wealth. Men are made in the *image* of God; they recognize the external tokens of His favor when they see it. The *economic success* of a society which is governed by God's law is, in fact, *a means of international evangelism*: "Keep therefore and do them [My commandments]: for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who bath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all the things that we call upon him for?" (Deut. 4:6-7). If men did not see before them the tokens of God's favor and success, and if

there were no universally recognized standards of success, including economic success, then *the testimony of God to pagan cultures would be drastically weakened.* The common ground among men - the Image of God - brings a degree of agreement concerning the general benefits of life that are worth pursuing. Such agreement is not perfect, for the image of God is twisted by sin, but there is at least a working agreement.

There should be no guilt associated with wealth gained through adherence to biblical law. Such wealth is, in fact, *a legitimate reward for honoring God*, and a testimony of the faithfulness of God to His covenant promises, as the words of Proverbs explicitly state. Wealth earned in this fashion is a means of evangelism: not just money to finance missions, but wealth to display before pagans whose demonic economic philosophies — socialism, Marxism, and Keynesianism - have produced poverty. The hostile attitude toward private, personal wealth — but not wealth controlled by State bureaucrats — displayed by Ronald Sider in his book, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (1977), is in flagrant opposition to these verses. David Chilton is correct: in today's increasingly anti-capitalistic culture — an attitude which is deeply entrenched inside the seminaries and editorial boards of Christian publications — we are *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt-Manipulators*.

The Geneva Papers are published every month by Geneva Divinity School. They are mailed free of charge to those who ask to be put on the mailing list. Address: 708 Hamvassy Drive, Tyler, TX 75701. Donations are tax deductible; checks should be made out to Geneva Divinity School.