

In a previous sermon, we looked at the need for personal responsibility with regards to our thoughts, words, and actions. God made it clear to Israel that each person would have to pay the penalty for their own sins. We are personally responsible and accountable for our choices. And that's the outcome of what God told Israel, which was that if another person sins, you can't transfer the penalty of that sin to somebody else, because "the wages of sin is death," and the wages of sin that we will suffer, the consequence for our choices.

So today, more than ever, as spiritual Israel, we are personally responsible and accountable for our choices. Now, whether those choices are physical choices or spiritual choices, there still is an accountability that will take place and there is a personal responsibility connected to those choices.

The title of this sermon is *Personal Responsibility* and this will be *Part 1*.

The intent of this sermon is to highlight the need for everyone in God's Church that is called into a personal relationship with God to take personal responsibility for their choices, our physical and spiritual decisions in life.

We know that in the Millennium and the Hundred-years that God has promised to fulfil His word, His promise to mankind. Now, the purpose of this promise is, in one way, the enabler of mankind to take personal responsibility and to be held accountable for those choices that they make. And the only way that that can happen is that God pour out His holy spirit.

If you'd like to turn to **Acts 2:16—But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My spirit on all flesh.** This is the process of how God creates Elohim, and it's through this provision of God's thinking, God's holy spirit to somebody so that they can then make right choices. Because the natural carnal mind cannot make right choices on a spiritual level because it doesn't have the power to think spiritually, to think like God, which is to think righteousness. It starts with a calling to think differently. Then by the power of God's holy spirit in a person, they can then begin to follow God. They can do the following that is required of them.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and that is relating to spiritual understanding, spiritual speaking, or inspired speaking, speaking with understanding on spiritual matters. **...your young men shall see visions...** They will see the truth in their thinking (just as we do today, because we see the truth, all powered by God's holy spirit). Well, they're going to have that same ability. **Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.** So this promise of God's holy spirit is the enabler for personal responsibility. Because without God's holy spirit, we cannot make spiritual decisions in life, we can only make physical ones. And there is a consequence for those physical decisions. By human nature we don't

tend to want to take responsibility for physical decisions, but God says here that He will pour out His spirit, and because of that mankind will then be able to be held accountable for their choices.

So these people will be able to speak with spiritual understanding. They'll be able to come to know God. They'll be able to come to know God's plan of salvation for them and for all mankind. Yet today, brethren, we are the evidence, we are the evidence of the promise of God being fulfilled, because God has poured out His holy spirit on the Church, within the Church, with those that He has called into a relationship with Him.

Today, by the power of God's holy spirit, we can sacrifice our selfishness, our own selfish desires. Today we can give offerings based on the spiritual intent of the law. Now, all of these things are powered by God's holy spirit, so it is because of God's holy spirit that we can take personal responsibility for our physical and spiritual decisions because we do see the consequences. We see sin. We see ourselves. And because of this seeing we then know that we have to take personal responsibility for every spiritual decision.

Now, it is up to an individual whether they yield to God's spirit or whether they don't. And that is what it's about. It's about taking responsibility for not yielding or taking responsibility *for* yielding. We can't transfer that accountability and responsibility to anyone else. It is our choice. Now, God in the Old Testament made it very clear that each person was accountable for their choices.

If you'd like to turn to **Galatians 4:1—Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is the master of all**, in other words, they're exactly the same. They have to be servants. They have to follow the instructions that are given to them. **...but is under guardian and stewards until the time appointed by the father.** We are the same. When we start off we are babes in Christ. So God gives us the knowledge and the experience in God's Church over time, and we grow. And then as we come to understand and we begin to "see," then we can be held accountable for our choices. Now, if somebody doesn't know about the Sabbath, well, it's very difficult for them to be held accountable for it. And that's why God pours out His spirit. That's what a calling is all about. Therefore, if a person then comes to "see" and to know about the Sabbath and understand the Sabbath then they are responsible and they can be held accountable for what choices they make. It is the same for us. We are basically babes until this calling, until this maturity.

Verse 3—Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. So before we were called we were under bondage, or *in* bondage, really, because of the captivity of our mind, because of our thinking. And it's only by God's spirit that we can be brought out of this captivity. And we are "under the elements of the world," which is selfishness. We are under the bondage. We are under the elements of selfishness. Because the world is held captive by its own thinking, by its own selfishness. Now, it doesn't know it. And there is going to come a time when God will call them out of that bondage and free them, and then they can be held accountable for choices.

Verse 4—But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, which was "born under the penalty of the law," "the wages of sin is death." Why? ...to redeem those who were under the law... Christ was sent to pay the penalty for us. We have been purchased, redeemed. Why did God do this in and through Jesus Christ? ...that we might receive the adoption as sons.

And because you are sons, God has sent forth His spirit of His Son into your hearts, into the inner thinking, by the power of God's holy spirit this thinking of God, the thinking of Jesus Christ, by the power of God's spirit is in us, so much so that we can, cry out, **Abba, Father! Because it's sincere and we *understand* spiritual matters. The reason we would cry out to God like that is because we "see" ourselves because God has granted us the mercy. God has granted us a gift of seeing ourselves, seeing the natural carnal mind. And then when we see it, we can cry out, "Abba, Father," because the only way that we can be saved is in and through Jesus Christ. And we "see" it. We "see" the need for being redeemed, which is being purchased. And therefore, by this redemption we are no longer under the law. We're no longer under the penalty of sin, which is death, and we're no longer under it because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the gift of repentance. So we're not under the penalty of the sin (the penalty of the law) because of repentance and because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice.**

Verse 7—Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, yes, we're begotten sons of God, and if a son, then an heir of God through Jesus Christ. Well, that's what salvation is about, is moving from a slave to the world (slave to selfishness), to a son, to a begotten son so that we can have God's holy spirit live and dwell in us, which is to have God's thinking in us. And if we *are* a son, if we have God's holy spirit in us and we're yielding to it, then we are "heirs of God through Christ." We are heirs of God. We can inherit Elohim, the gift of inheritance that God has for us, which is eternal life.

Titus 2:11—For the grace (which is "favor" or "mercy") of God that brings forth salvation has appeared to all men, which was Jesus Christ, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present age. So what God is asking us to do is because of this adoption, because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and because of His mercy to us that has brought us this gift, or this opportunity of salvation, and that Jesus Christ has now paid the penalty for sin, that we should see that we should deny ungodliness. We should deny all thoughts that are ungodly, which is unrighteous. Because God is righteous, we're not. So we have to deny our selfish desires, our lusts, and these "worldly lusts," which is this carnal thinking, this selfishness that dwells in us. We should live, should live another way of life. We should walk another way of life soberly, to be serious about our calling. "Righteously," which is the opposite to ungodliness, "and Godly in this present age," as we find ourselves today.

Now this command will go forward to all, that in the future all mankind is going to have to follow this command, because of the gift of life that God has promised us, the gift of eternal life that God has promised us. These are the things that are required—to deny the human lusts that dwell within us. Without Satan during the 1,100 years mankind will still have these selfish lusts, and they're going to have

to be serious about their calling, they're going to have to learn to live another way of life. Now, this can only happen by the power of God's holy spirit.

So in this present age we have been called now to take personal responsibility for every choice we make, and we'll be held accountable, and because of our choices. Well, that's exactly what's going to happen in the future to mankind.

Verse 13—looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who (Christ) gave Himself for us, as our Passover, that He might redeem us, which is to purchase us, from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works. So through faith and believing and committing to God so that God can do works *in us*, because it is God that does righteousness, it is God that does the works in us. So we have to be committed to and zealous towards God, and we have to continue to work on ourselves, to purify ourselves, because God wants to do good works *in us*. And we have to be zealous of overcoming the self. We have to fight against ourselves so that God can live and dwell in us out to the benefit of others. For the purpose of? God doing the works.

So we have a choice, brethren, every single day. We have been called into the Body of Christ, the Church of God. We have God's holy spirit flowing into us. Well, now it's our choice to yield or not to yield. And that's what it's about. Life is about whether or not we will yield to God or we won't. And it's basically simple in many ways, although we don't see it often. This is as clear as it can be. It's about a personal responsibility that we have as individuals, to whether or not we want to choose to yield or we choose not to yield.

So we're going to look at this principle now, the first example of mankind not wanting to accept personal responsibility for their actions. It's found in Genesis 3. Now, we've been there lots of times, but it is in the context of this sermon, we'll go back there because it is about this attitude that is *in* mankind. It's in all mankind. It's in us. And this is about blaming someone else, justifying the self, excusing the self, and these are all signs of a person not taking responsibility for a decision. Now, we have this same potential.

Now, we can look at Adam and Eve and in some ways think that they're weak. Well, this *is* within us. This is exactly the same. And if we were there, we would do *exactly* the same. We'd be no different. Because in our lives we do exactly this every single time we are confronted or the self is confronted. We tend to defend the self, to justify or make an excuse. Because, why? We do not want to take personal responsibilities for our words or actions. We defend the self.

So **Genesis 3:9**—so this is the condition of mankind. **Then the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) called to Adam and said to him, Where *are* you?** "Where have you been?" God would have known exactly where Adam was because God knows all things.

Verse 10—So this is Adam now. **So he said, I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.** So there's this change of thinking now. There's this guilt element because of a decision that they had both made, which was to eat of the fruit of the garden from a tree that they were not to partake of. But they had done it. Now there's guilt. Now, because of this guilt and because

of this challenge that God is going to ask them direct questions, they then move into this not taking responsibility for choices that they had made. Now, this is our potential. This is what we do most of our life. And when we are called into a relationship with God, we are to move away from not taking responsibility for decisions to taking responsibility and the accountability of *every single choice*. Now, this is difficult for mankind to do. It's difficult for any of us to do. Because when confronted, the first thing we tend to do is want to defend ourselves because of our image and the image we have in our own thinking.

Verse 11—And He (God) said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat? Then the man said, The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. Adam here blames somebody else. He first of all blames the woman, then he blames God or implies that God was the issue, because if God hadn't given him the woman he wouldn't have sinned. But first of all he says, "The woman," it's her fault. So he justifies himself. He doesn't take responsibility for a decision that he made. Because when Eve offered him the fruit, the fruit of the tree, he had a decision to make, he had a choice to make, just like we do every day of our life. A decision has to be made. Well, once we make that decision, whether it's a right one or a wrong one, there is a consequence, there is an accountability to it, and of course, there is a responsibility for *accepting* the choice we have made, the decision we've made. Accept it and move on in life.

So he refused to take this personal responsibility. He justified himself and he blamed somebody else. He protected his own image, yet it was his personal choice to disobey God. Because he had a choice to obey or disobey. It was his choice.

Verse 13—And the LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) said to the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. Well, there's truth in that. Yes, the serpent did deceive her, but it was her choice to eat of the fruit, and it was her choice then to offer it to Adam. So both of these did not want to take personal responsibility for a decision they made.

So life is about coming to see that we are responsible for our own lives, for every decision we make. And although we can seek counsel from others and though we can look for advice, in the end, it has to be our choice. It has to be our choice to what we do. Whether we make one choice or the other, it is up to us. Then, once we make that choice, whatever the outcome is we have to accept the consequence of it. And that is simply about taking personal responsibility.

Now, this all goes back to the point of taking responsibility for sin. Because when we sin nobody makes us sin. Satan does not make us sin. He may tempt us, he may place thoughts into the mind, but it *is* our choice whether or not we yield to those thoughts or we don't. And that's what our conversion is about. This transformation is learning to *yield* to God's spirit and to *deny* and not to yield to Satan's thinking, or not yield to our own selfishness. And there is a choice in this. And it takes years of experience to come to see what choices are right and what are wrong. And even in that we still can make wrong choices. Even though we *know* the consequence, even though we *know* that it's wrong, we still can stumble, we can still fall into sin. The beauty of God's way of life is that we can then repent. And when a person

repents, God forgives and forgets; we're not held accountable for that sin. Although there could be physical consequences that may have to be paid, the spiritual consequence of sin, "the wages of sin, of death" will not be paid because God has forgiven and moves forward with us developing our thinking to be like His.

So at any time we find that we have sinned and we believe that it's *so bad* that we're struggling with ourselves, we're struggling to face what we have done, the beauty of understanding God's way of life is that He forgives. The problem with our thinking is that we often get stuck in it and we go back over it, and over it, and over it. Even though we've repented before God and we feel ashamed of it, we tend to carry this guilt, when really we shouldn't. We should boldly walk forward *in faith*—and faith is believing God, committing to God.

Well, God says He forgives if we genuinely repent and we abhor ourselves, we hate the sin. The penalty of sin doesn't have to be paid. So we should free ourselves from this guilt, because guilt, really, is like a self-pity. Because we shouldn't walk around carrying guilt once we have genuinely and sincerely repented. We should move forward.

There is a basic problem within mankind's thinking, the reason why we don't like to take this personal responsibility for sin. And when we sin, often we just can't admit it or we won't admit it. But by the power of God's holy spirit we've been called to make spiritual choices and to pay the penalty if we're not willing to repent. That's what's going to happen. So we are to take responsibility for every choice we make on a spiritual level.

So now we're going to look at Romans 8, which we often look at. But we're going to go through Romans 8 because of the potential of the explanation of what we are, and we come to accept it. And once we accept it, there is *hope* in the fact that we are willing to accept what God says about us, the way we are made, and come to accept what God has planned for all mankind.

Romans 8:5—So this is about choices. **For those who live according to the flesh**, this is somebody that desires to satisfy the self, **sets their minds on the things of the flesh**, so they will think about themselves, and their motive and intent will be one of selfishness. So this is the natural carnal mind at work without God's holy spirit. Then someone may have God's spirit but not yielding to God's spirit. But this is talking about a natural mind. It's of the flesh, and all it thinks about is satisfying itself, even though it doesn't know it or doesn't see it. It believes it can be doing good, but its good is still selfish in motivation.

... **but those who live according to the spirit, the things of the spirit**. So there's two clear ways here. There is the natural mind or there is God's way. There is either thinking selfishly or thinking unselfishly. It's either the mind of God or the mind of mankind.

Verse 6—**For to be carnally (or fleshly, physically) minded is death**, because "the wages of sin is death." So this is the way man is. Man is under the death penalty until he is called into a state of repentance and he begins to see himself and repent of what he is. Now, the most important part of this is that "to be carnally minded is death," is to come to see it, to come to know and come to see, by the power of

God's holy spirit, that that is what the consequence is. If we continue down this selfish path of life, we will face a death, and it's called a second death. Second death is the wages of unrepented sin.

...but to be spiritually minded, which is to have the mind of God, *is life*, because it's *genuine* life, it's *true* life, both now and in the future, **and peace**. It's a matter of whether or not we are yielding to God's holy spirit, whether or not we're going to have life and peace. And in the future we can have spirit life and we can have peace, peace in God, peace in Elohim. It's an incredible promise that God has given us.

Verse 7—Because the carnal (fleshly, natural) **mind**, the one that we've been given from birth, **is enmity** (hostile) **against God**. It's the way man thinks. It doesn't want to yield to anything of God and God's word. Even on a physical level it just doesn't want to; it wants to defend itself. It does not want to take responsibility for any of its thoughts, words, or actions. ...**for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be**. So by nature we resist God, and we don't want to take personal responsibility for things we do. Now, if we do make a mistake and we become aware of it we will still justify or defend ourselves. And we might say we're sorry about something, but we'll always add something into it which will be "*but*," or "let me explain." And all of these things are simply a sign of not taking personal responsibility for a choice or an action.

Verse 8—So then, those who are in the flesh, those that have a fleshly mind, those that are selfish by nature and are yielding to "the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life," these things that are in us, **cannot please God**. It's absolutely impossible because it's all based on pleasing self and selfishness.

But, something that is opposite, **you are not in the flesh but in the spirit**, so we're not "in the flesh," anymore because we have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us. But we're in the spirit. We are looking at the spiritual intent of everything, because God has powered us by the power of His holy spirit to do this. **But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit if**, this is the big *IF*, **if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you**, and we're yielding to it. Because God's spirit can dwell in us. God can pour out His spirit to us to give us these thoughts, and we just simply yield to it so that God can do the works.

Now if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ ("the spirit of God"), **he is not His** ("He is not Christ's"). So if we don't have God's holy spirit, we're of the world and we're yielding to our natural carnal mind of selfishness and we will not take responsibility for our thoughts, words, and actions. If, for example, a person in the world does something wrong and it's highlighted to them and they do take responsibility for it, they do it begrudgingly. They don't willingly take it. They actually deep down are defending the self still. They might say, "Yes, I'll do that, and yes, I'll take accountability," but underneath within the thinking they're still justified why they did it. And it's very hard for the natural carnal mind to take any responsibility for anything because its first position is like what Adam and Eve did, which is to defend the self. That's natural.

Verse 10—And if Christ is in you, and the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Verse 11—But if the spirit of Him (God the Father) **who raised Jesus Christ** (Christ) **from the dead dwells in you, He** (God) **who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies,**

because they are mortal, they're physical, **through His spirit which dwells in you**. So life can be given if we have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us and we're yielding to God's spirit. So if we're yielding to God's spirit we will not take the defence of self. We will not start to justify the self. We will actually yield to God and take responsibility for our thoughts, words, and actions.

Now, in life within the Church of God things are often said that maybe shouldn't be said. Well, if we ever make that mistake we should take responsibility for saying it and just simply *admit* that we were wrong and then repent before God, and if necessary to go to our brother alone, and to make sure that we don't justify why we said it, but to correct the matter.

Verse 12—Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, not to this natural carnal mind, **as to live according to the flesh**, which is our own desires. So we are not debtors to it. We don't owe it anything. We actually don't want anything to do with it. We want to destroy it. We want to fight against it. So we're not debtors to it. We owe *nothing* at all to our natural carnal mind. **For if you live according to the flesh you will die...** Brethren, that's what we face: "the wages of sin is death." **...but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** Now, this is that fighting of self. This is that sacrificing. So when we sin and we're made aware of it by God's holy spirit, let's be responsible going to God and repenting. Now, repenting is an act of responsibility. Because when we sin, we admit it. Well, that's taking responsibility for the sin. We did it; we chose it. Now, the most important thing is that we know we're going to be held accountable for it because we know "the wages of sin." But we can get rid of this accountability. We can get rid of it by repenting. So if we repent before God, we're acknowledging that we're responsible. But to overcome "the wages of sin," it requires repentance.

Verse 14—For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are sons of God. Well, that's the most important thing of life, that we want to be begotten sons of God. We want to be led by God's holy spirit. Now, God achieves that by placing His thoughts, His spirit into our mind so that we can yield, or choose to yield to it. So we know about these matters of God. We know that God is working within His Church. We know God is pouring out His spirit as we yield to Him. And the moment we refuse to yield, we cut ourselves off because we're leaning back on the natural carnal mind. So the beauty of God's plan, of understanding our nature is this very fact, is that God has called us into a relationship with Him and we can be led by God's holy spirit. And if we're led by God's spirit, we are *begotten* sons of God, and if sons, heirs, heirs of the promise, which is life-everlasting, eternal life with God.

Verse 15—But you did not receive the spirit of bondage, or this prejudice, or this justifying of the self, **again to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption**, because of this sonship, because we're begotten sons of God. We've been redeemed by God. We've been adopted, which is this sonship, **by which we cry, Abba, Father.**

Verse 16—The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. So the way that we know we are of God is if we have God's holy spirit. Now, if we have God's holy spirit we'll be in unity with God, we'll have God's thinking, **and if children, then heirs—and heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him**, that we may also be glorified together, so that we can be changed to spirit.

Now, how is it that we have to suffer? Well, brethren, the most important thing about suffering is that we understand that the greatest suffering is the denying of self. That is the suffering. Because the self, "the lusts of the flesh," will want to raise itself up. It won't want to take responsibility. It will want to justify and defend the self. Well, this fighting, this suffering that must go on, this fighting of pride is the most important thing that we can be doing in our life, this agreeing with God that we have a natural carnal mind that is against God. That is the most important thing that we can do.

So indeed, we have to suffer, and if we suffer by denying the self, by putting the self down, at some point in time we can be glorified as Jesus Christ was glorified, we can be changed to spirit, to be changed to spirit in Elohim.

Verse 18—For I consider the suffering of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Now, this glory *is* the very character of God. So this suffering that takes place in this present age, this battling of the mind, the fighting against self, is not to be compared with the glory. Because although it's hard and it's difficult, compared to what God has promised us, the glory of *His* character, *His* thinking in us, well, we can't compare the two. They're poles apart. We can't compare them. So this suffering that we go through now can't be compared to what will be revealed in us, which is the mind of God, the thinking of God at a resurrection.

For the earnest expectation of the creation, which is mankind, eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God, which is at the first part is the 144,000, which we know takes place on the Day of Pentecost. So this "revealing of the sons of God," they lived on this earth and they became begotten sons of God. They had God's thinking and they yielded to it and God called them and they are chosen of God to be part of this first resurrection.

For the creation (mankind) was subject to futility... Well, this is that selfishness, this is the vanity or the pride of life. This is the justifying of the self. **...not willingly,** because God did it for a reason, because there was no other way. This is the only way. Because man was born this way for the purpose of? Being subject to futility. Why? Because God was going to transform the emptiness of the mind, the vanity, the pride of life, to the mind of God. It's this transformation. And it can only happen by *free choice*. And we have this choice. And if we take responsibility, we will be denying the self. Because to be called and to have a natural carnal mind, and then to "see" God's way of life, we have to make choices to not yield to ourselves but to yield to God's holy spirit. Because these choices are so important to God, whether or not we make right choices on a spiritual level, whether we choose to obey God or whether we choose to disobey God.

Now, on a physical level we can make many choices. They all have spiritual implications. But whether or not we make a choice to move home, whether we have a choice to sell a property, whether we do physical things and physical choices, what car we drive, they are physical decisions. And God has given us that ability to choose. And therefore, many people choose different things. We choose the way we wear our hair. We choose the clothes we wear. Deep down they all reflect something. They reflect the inner thinking. But God really desires to know our intent, why we do what we do.

So God is going to change us. We have this futility of mind. We have this emptiness. We have this vanity. Well, God made us this way **all for the purpose of being in subjection into hope**. The hope is that we will be changed. ...**because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption**, which is sin. We are in a state of decay, because sin leads to death. ...**into the glorious liberty of the children of God**. So there's going to be a freedom. There is going to be a freedom given.

At the moment, mankind makes choices based on his natural carnal mind, and therefore, he cannot make right choices. Even a perceived right choice will have the wrong motive and intent. The choice will be based on satisfying self or what is best in their own eyes. But we have been delivered. Brethren, we have been delivered *from* this bondage, from the bondage of our natural carnal mind, because we have access to God's holy spirit. Well, there is going to come a time when mankind will be delivered into the liberty of the children of God. **For we know, we see, that the whole creation (mankind) groans and labors with birth pangs together until now**. Mankind has been suffering for 6,000 years. Ever since the choice of Genesis 3, of Adam and Eve not wanting to take personal responsibility, mankind has suffered for 6,000 years. And God planned it this way, that mankind would live a life all for the purpose of being given an opportunity during a thousand-year or a Hundred-year period.

Verse 23—And not only they (mankind) but we also who have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, because we have to fight ourselves, we have to battle ourselves. **We eagerly are waiting for the adoption**. We want to be in the Family of God. We've been appointed as sons. We have a sonship, but we want this adoption. We want this change. And that change is **the redemption of our body**. This change that's going to take place, that's what we seek. Well, that's God's purpose in making us the way we are, so that we can be transformed, so that we can be changed to enter Elohim.

Now, once called, we then accept the responsibility for choosing to change. We accept the responsibility for the choice to change. Because it is our choice. God will not *make* us do anything. We have to want to, desire to, yield to God. It is our choice whether we want to obey or disobey.

Verse 24—For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope, because if it's seen, it's no longer hope. It's obvious. It's there. ...**for why does one still hope for what he sees?** Well, he doesn't, because it's actually a reality. So we have this hope in a resurrection. We have this confidence. We are looking forward to things, and therefore, we live a life of hope. It's not a wish. It's a hope. It's a living hope because it comes from God's holy spirit. **But if we hope for what we do not see, then we eagerly wait for it with perseverance**. And that is the secret of life, the secret of being in God's Church, which is to endure to the end, never to give up. If we stumble and fall, well, that's the way it is, that's the way we are. Accept that we have stumbled, take responsibility for the fact we've stumbled and that we will be held accountable unless we repent. And we then continue on. We repent, and we persevere. We continue. And in time, our minds will be transformed because that's God's promise. That's God's purpose for mankind.

Now, all mankind is going to face this, this transformation. And if anybody refuses to be transformed, refuses to yield, or refuses to take responsibility for their thoughts, words, and actions, they will suffer the second death.

Verse 26—Likewise the spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as though we ought, but the spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And they're all in the mind. This is about a battle that's in the mind. Because often we just simply don't know what to pray about in the sense of how we're going to get through a matter. But God will provide it.

Now, there was a time just not long ago when I was under enormous pressure personally about a particular matter, and it was all in the mind. And I couldn't shake off the thinking. I couldn't shake off the thoughts and I was under a great bombardment. Well, it was given to me that the reason why I was under such an attack, and there was such a relief because of what God had revealed with regards to what was actually happening. So once I saw it and I knew what it was all about, I was able then to cry out to God and be thankful for what He had done, and relief was given from this testing and this trial. So we often don't know what we should pray about, but God does provide His holy spirit. We then can see a way out of it, this way of escape which is through repentance, which is turning to God.

Verse 27—Now, He (God the Father) who searches the hearts (inner thinking) knows what the mind of the spirit is. God knows our intent. God knows our motive for why we're doing what we're doing, **because He makes intercession for the saints (referring to Jesus Christ)...makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*,** according to God's desire. So Jesus Christ was a man. He *understands* the sufferings of mankind.

Verse 28—And we know (we "see") that all things work together for good to those who love God, now, we've been through this scripture before. We know that "all things work together for good," on a spiritual level, "to those who love God." Who are those that love God? It's those that have God's holy spirit. Because to have love or to love God requires God's holy spirit, and therefore, a person needs to be called. They need to have repented of sin. They need to have been baptized so that sin could be forgiven and covered, and they need to have hands laid on them by a true minister of God so that God would provide the gift of love, the gift of God's holy spirit to the individual.

Back to this verse. We know, we see **that all things work together for the spiritual good to those who love God, to those who are called according to God's purpose,** "according to His purpose." So they are called and they are chosen to fulfill a role.

Verse 29—For whom He foreknew, "For whom He (God) foreknew," He (God) also predetermined, which is "set in His plan." He determined it in His plan, **to be conformed to the image of His Son,** so this was God's plan. God's plan was to call people so that they would be transformed into the image of His Son, the Word of God, the Logos of God, to take on the very mind of God, the mind of His Son, **that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.** Jesus Christ was the first to go before all other people. He is the first to enter Elohim. And therefore, He made the way so others could follow. So He is the firstborn among many brethren.

Verse 30—Moreover whom He predestined, these He (God the Father) also called; whom He called, these He also justified. We're justified by faith in Jesus Christ, **and through whom He justified**, which is through Christ, **these He also glorified.** And they're glorified with with God's mind, by the power of God's holy spirit. We have been glorified because we have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us.

Verse 31—What then shall we say to these things? How incredible are all these things that God is doing for us? We have this natural carnal mind and then here it is, Paul is going on and showing why we have the natural carnal mind and that we can overcome ourselves, overcome the natural carnal mind by the power of God's holy spirit. How magnificent it is to have God's holy spirit, to have been called, and to have it, and the fact that this is all part of God's plan, this is the purpose of life, this is why we are *in* God's Church, so that we can be glorified now in the sense of having God's glory in us (which is God's spirit in us)...well, what shall we say to all of this? This incredible plan that God has? What great love and what great mercy God has for us! What could we say? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** So with *all* of this that God is doing for us, what could go wrong? What could go wrong is our choices, by not taking responsibility for our thoughts, words, and actions, by going back to the natural carnal mind. But if God is for us and we have God's holy spirit, what can go wrong? Well, nothing, brethren. Satan cannot affect us unless we yield to it. So nothing can go wrong other than our wrong choices.

Verse 32—He (God) who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Which is a question. Well, God will give us all things, which is the promise through Jesus Christ. **Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he who condemns?** Which is a question. Who is he that looks down on? **It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, whom is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.** Because He is our High Priest. He makes intercession for us and God says He *will* forgive. **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** There is nothing that can separate us from the love of Christ because Christ has already demonstrated His love for us. Just as God the Father has demonstrated His love for us by providing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Jesus has also demonstrated His love for us by being our Passover sacrifice. **Shall tribulation**, so any distress that's coming? Any of those things, shall they separate us from God's holy spirit?...**distress, persecution, famine, nakedness**, which is being without, **or peril, or sword? War?** **As it is written: For Your sake (for God's sake), we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.** So it's the called out ones that are fighting against themselves, that are taking personal responsibility for their thoughts, words, and actions that suffer every day by denying the self. We suffer because of God. We suffer because of righteousness. We desire this transformation. Therefore, in this desire for this transformation we are going to suffer. The self is going to be put to death, therefore, the self is going to suffer...the self is going to suffer. And it's a wonderful thing if we suffer and we deny the self and we yield to God's holy spirit, because it leads to life.

Verse 37—Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him (through God the Father) who loved us. So we are over comers, brethren. We can conquer the self all by the power of God's holy spirit.

Verse 38—For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angel (or spirit beings) or principalities or powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. So nothing can separate us from that love because they've already demonstrated it. The only thing that will go wrong, brethren, is a choice that we make...the choice that we make. We're either going to defend and justify the self, or we're going to take responsibility for our choices.

Now, there's one particular principle that we'll look at, and we have looked at this particular scripture a few times. Job 1:1, which is about this natural desire of a parent to take or pay the penalty for a child. Now, this is something that is natural. And because it's natural, it's actually not right, because it's the natural carnal mind at work. So normally what will happen is that a child will do something. There's always the inclination for the parent to pay the penalty, pay the consequence for what the action was...in other words, cover it up. I know that I personally have done this with my children. Rather than see my children suffer I've stepped in and paid the penalty, whether it's financial or whatever it is. I've paid the penalty so that I've eased the pain for them. Well, that's not always necessarily a wise thing to do and it's taken me many years to come to see that many of those choices to intervene were actually foolishness and they were driven by my pride and this very principle here about a parent's desire for the *best* for their own children. But it does not really mean that we should be covering sin on their behalf.

Now, this is what Job was attempting to do, but God made it very clear in scripture that it cannot be done, that any sin of an individual, the penalty will be on the individual. This is what we've just been through in sermons, is about this personal responsibility, that God says that, no, an individual will carry their sin. And the sin of a father is not transferred. "The wages of sin is death" is not transferred to the child. Because Israel was complaining to God about this (so-called) transfer of sin or transfer of the penalty. For sin, "The wages of sin is death," it is a personal matter.

Now, let's look at what Job was doing here in **Job 1:1—There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright,** now, these were on a physical level. This was being done by his own will and by his own integrity. This is not motivated by God's holy spirit. This was a matter of personal integrity, which is pride. **...and one who feared God,** so on a physical level he actually feared God. He held God in awe, **and shunned evil.** He turned away from evil. So he had a natural carnal mind, but he'd made decisions and made choices that he wanted to obey God as best he could on a physical level, not having God's holy spirit and not knowing that it required God's holy spirit to obey God, really, but he was doing it out of pride. It was coming from self. So he turned away from evil.

And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. So he has these ten children. **Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household,** so he had a lot of servants as well, **so that this man was great of all the people of the East.** So he had servants and employees, and he also had sons and daughters. **Now, his sons would go and feast,** and this is to celebrate *in their homes, each on his appointed day,* **and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.** So this is a cycle of celebration that they're undertaking.

Verse 5—And so it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them. So now, here it is that Job is trying to bless them. See, he's trying to do it himself. ...and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all. So he's going through offerings as he sees in his own eye. And the reason why he's doing it? For Job said, **It may be**, and this is that "potentially or possibly," **that my sons have sinned and cursed God**, they've acted against God **in their hearts**, in their thinking. Job is now trying to cover sin. Job is setting out before God and saying, "Well, just in case they've sinned, just in case there is a *penalty* for sin, I'm going to make these offerings. I'm going to cover up sin so that God, you'll forgive them of their sin. Well, this is impossible, because it's an individual matter, and the only way sin can be forgiven is personal repentance before God, and then God will forgive the person individually for their sin. Nobody else can forgive sin, only God. Nobody else can *cover* sin, but God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Because the only way sin can be forgiven is *through* the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and upon repentance of the individual. No one else can fast or pray or put up offerings to cover another person's sin.

Now we're going to look at a particular scripture in Numbers 18, And while you're turning to Numbers 18:1, I'm just going to go through some parts that we can see how God works within His Church, how God works now. We can learn much about personal responsibility from what God instructed Aaron to do with regards to the duties of the priests, the Levites, during serving God in the Temple. And their serving God is about what they had to do as far as their duties, their responsibilities.

One way to know we are of God is our willingness to serve and work in the spiritual temple or take personal responsibility for it. Because we are the temple of God. So what is being implied here is if we know we are the temple of God, God's holy spirit lives and dwells in us, we have to have a willingness to serve. And that willingness to serve is this willingness to fight against ourselves, the willingness to work in the temple as instructed. And we're to take personal responsibility for working in the temple. Now, if we're not going to work in the temple, God will not dwell in it. And if we're not going to be responsible and be serious about working in the temple, God will not dwell in it. So before we start this review, it is good to recall that we are the Temple of God. We have a duty of care for the Temple. And that duty of care is to offer sacrifices from within the Temple, like sacrificing the self. Now, the duties of the priesthood (the Levites), they had particular duties in certain parts of the temple. Their duty, their responsibility was to make sure they took care of it, and there's a consequence for not taking care of it, which we will get to possibly in the next sermon.

There is a responsibility to offer sacrifices. That was their role. That was their responsibility. Well, the same for us. We have to offer sacrifices from within *our* temple. Those sacrifices are the sacrifice of thanksgiving. We are to express thanks and appreciation to God. That is one of the sacrifices that we are to offer. Also, the other sacrificing within the temple is the sacrificing of ourselves, of our selfishness. We're to offer ourselves before God. We're going to destroy, we're going to kill, we're going to sacrifice our selfish desires. Well, they're the things that have to take place within the temple. That is our duty. That is our responsibility because we are the Temple of God.

So we're going to now look at the responsibilities of caring for the temple, as it was outlined in Numbers 18:1. Now, we're looking at this on a physical level and we'll imply the spiritual application which is our bodies, our mind, our temple where God dwells, in our thinking, and we'll compare the two.

Numbers 18:1—Then the LORD (Yahweh Elohim) said to Aaron: You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the iniquity *related to the sanctuary*, so they're now going to be held accountable for what happens within the sanctuary. So if there is a sin that takes place, the individual that's going to be held accountable for it. So this is about being responsible. We must serve in the temple, the way God states. So we can't do anything outside of the way God has instructed us to serve. So we know that we have to obey God in spirit and in truth. Now, this is serving in the temple. If we are to control ourselves, that's serving in the temple. If we're to sacrifice and fight against ourselves, that is what is required as far as serving in the temple. But if something goes wrong and we do something wrong, we will bear the iniquity related to the sanctuary, related to the way we think—the words, thoughts, and actions. We're going to have to pay a penalty. If we do it in a wrong way, not in spirit and truth, there is a spiritual penalty to be paid.

The most positive part of this is that we can repent of it. And not like the priesthood where they did something wrong and God would intervene to demonstrate "the wages of sin," which "is death," for us, brethren. Yes, there is a penalty, but we can overcome that penalty by repentance.

Continuing on in that verse... **and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity *associated with your priesthood*.** So this responsibility of being a priest, or the priesthood, of serving God—and we have seen in previous scriptures that we fully understand our responsibility. We have to guard our minds. One of the most important things that we can do is to guard our minds. And the way to do that is to guard our eyes and to guard our ears and to guard our thoughts. They are the responsibilities that we have as members of the Body of Christ, as begotten Sons of God. That's what we have to do.

Now, the Levites were all physical. We are spiritual. So our responsibility is to take care of the temple by guarding particular things. The most important thing is to guard the mind, to guard the thoughts, because we know that Satan is out to destroy this temple, which we are. He is trying to cause us to have an iniquity, which is to sin. Now, if we do, we're going to bear the outcome of that. And the way out of it is through repentance, and it can be forgiven and forgotten. So our mind is the most important thing. We are individually accountable and responsible for what happens in our minds.

Verse 2—Also bring with you your brethren of the tribe of Levi, and the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you, which is Aaron, and Aaron was the high priest. So they were of the tribe of Levi and they were to be joined with Aaron in service to Aaron as the high priest and also the sanctuary. **...while you and your sons *are with you before the tabernacle of witness*.** We, in fact, are a temple of witness on a spiritual level. Isn't that incredible? We are a temple of witness on a spiritual level. So this "temple of witness"...what is a witness? It's the evidence of where God dwells on a spiritual level. So the way that we behave, the way that we conduct ourselves, the words that we use, how we speak, how we treat others, whether we demonstrate love to them is so important, because that is the witness of a temple, of where God dwells, in the temple. So this witness is on a spiritual

level, and it's only us, brethren, by our choices of whether or not we are going to yield to God's holy spirit we can live this witness.

Now, we can't witness God in our life if we're not yielding to God's spirit. We can witness the natural carnal mind because we see it everywhere. Well, we have to be on guard, that we have to be protecting the sanctuary, the temple, which we are. We have to be guarding it so that the natural carnal mind does not come out as a witness to others, in other words, it provides evidence to others that we're actually carnal, that we're just so selfish and only thinking of ourselves. We're not willing to sacrifice for the benefit of others at all.

So we are the temple of witness on a spiritual level. We must take personal responsibility for our temple. We must work in our minds. And that's this personal responsibility. The responsibility we have as members of the Body of Christ, as called into a relationship with God, *is that we guard our minds...*we guard our minds. We have to be at work in our minds. We have to fight. This is that responsibility that we have undertaken.

The other key to this is that we are going to be held accountable for whatever choices we make. So if we make wrong choices there is an accountability to be borne. Well, we know, we understand that "the wages of sin," can be covered by this repentance. And hence, the gift of repentance is such a wonderful thing that God has given us, that no matter *what happens*, if it's not willful, we can actually repent and God will forgive us. That's an incredible thing, this gift of repentance. And the only time God cannot forgive us is if we're willful and deliberate and we are so determined *not* to repent, we do not *desire* to repent under *any* circumstances. Well, God calls that the unpardonable sin. Now, that is a horrendous thing, but it does require a *set action*. It requires a *willful desire* to not follow God's ways, or willfully set a mind in a sin, even though that person may not have been called, but their so enjoying the sin. They've set their mind to it. That's what they *want!* That's their whole desire in life, is they want this particular sin in their life, that they will not change. And God calls that an unpardonable sin.

Now, let's look at this temple that we are, the temple of witness. **1 Corinthians 3:1—And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.** Now, what Paul is saying there, that he couldn't speak to them on a spiritual level (the word "people" there has been added), but he couldn't speak to them on a spiritual level of *spiritual food*, the *deeper* matters of God's way of life, but as to carnal, which is as to fleshly, which is the normal, natural mind. So it's all going to have to be *basic* in nature as to babes, as to a child. What is a "babe in Christ"? Well, it's someone new to the faith that has limited knowledge and spiritual understanding of God's ways. They can't *comprehend* the weightier matters of the law, the spirit of the matter. They are like a child that has limited comprehension. Now, this is important, because when something is given from God, depending on our spiritual comprehension, the power of God's holy spirit living in us, whether we're yielding to it, whether or not we will "see" the intent of a matter, whether we'll "see" the spirit of a matter. Because often things can be given to us on a spiritual level, which is what Paul was wanting to do, but people will not understand it or members of the Body may not fully comprehend it on a spiritual level because they will not yield to seeing the *spirit* of the matter. Now, the spirit of the matter takes time. It takes experience

and it takes time to come to see what God is really revealing. And we can only see by the power of God's holy spirit. And the more that we yield, the more God can give us, which is that fruits of the spirit.

The more that we yield to God's spirit, the more that He can live and dwell in us; therefore, we'll have more comprehension on a spiritual matter. We will begin to see and understand the spirit of a matter, the spirit of the law. Well, Paul was saying to them, well, they're still using their natural carnal mind so he's going to have to speak on a very basic level to them because they couldn't comprehend God's spiritual intent of matters.

Verse 2—I feed you with milk and not with solid food... So what does a baby do? It drinks milk. It cannot consume solid food. So he's saying, "I'm still having to give you the very basics of God's way of life, and I can't give you the deeper spiritual solid food that you really should be absorbing at this time." ...**for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able.** So they weren't able to really get down to the deeper matters of the law. Now, the deeper matters of the law were outlined in Matthew 6, where Christ goes through and outlines the spiritual intent of the law, that murder was something physical, but hate or ill-will was actually the spirit of the law. Or adultery on a physical level, well, that's the physical, but the intent of the mind, that a man can commit adultery in his mind, he doesn't even have to do the physical act; it's in his mind. It's the spirit of a matter. It's the "why" he's really doing it. It's all about his thinking or her thinking.

Verse 3—for you are still carnal. They're still using human reasoning. They're still carnal in their thinking. They still have pride and trust in themselves. Now, because of this, because they're carnal, they will not take responsibility for self. They will be justifying their position, their choices they have made. **For there is envy, strife, and divisions among you,** and there is these things taking place. ...**are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?** Like those of the world? Like those who have *not* been called to change? You're just acting natural! So envy, strife, which is arguing and division, they're arguing against themselves. They're of different opinion - a divided house. They're using the natural carnal mind.

Verse 4—For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal? So what are they doing here? This is about "the pride of life." This is about name dropping, or this is about giving credibility to self because they perceive the importance of another person. Now, one aspect: name dropping. Name dropping is when somebody says, "Well, I know 'such and such.'" They connect themselves to somebody *they think* is more important. And generally it's somebody with money. "I know 'such and such.' They're a millionaire." Or, "I know a movie star." Now, by doing that it's just expressing pride, because what they're doing is lifting their own value, lifting themselves up to something they value. But the person that they're name dropping, doesn't mean to say they're any better at all. In actual fact, based on God's law and God's word, they're actually sinning, and therefore, a person simply name dropping is trying to express themselves to connect themselves to make themselves better or more important in the eyes of somebody else.

Well, this on a spiritual level can happen. And this is what they were doing. They were saying things. "Well, I was baptized by Paul. I'm of Paul. He baptized me." And another says, "Well, I'm of Apollos. I was baptized by Apollos." In other words, they were connecting themselves to someone *they* thought was

spiritually important. Well, this is actually carnal. This is the natural carnal mind because it's all driven by pride.

Now, this can happen today. And without knowing it, people do it. People can say, "I was baptized by a sr. elder." "Well, that's nothing! I was baptized by an *evangelist!*" "Well, that's *nothing!* I was baptized by an *apostle!*" So this is all vanity. This is all pride. Because it's a lack of understanding. It doesn't make *any difference* who baptized us. The person who baptized an individual was a servant of God! They were fulfilling a role they were appointed to! And it's not because the person was of any title within God's Church. It makes no difference, as long as they were ordained and have the authority to baptize. Therefore, it doesn't make any difference. Because it's *God*; it's all about *God's* work. It's what *God's* doing! It's *God* that's granted repentance. *God* has given them the sight to see that they need to be baptized, they need to have their sins forgiven, and therefore, it is *God* that actually provides *God's* holy spirit. The person doing the baptism, the laying of hands, is doing a physical role, which is an outward sign of something that *God* would do. Because baptism is an outward sign of what *God* does, which is forgive sin, cover sin to that point, and the laying of hands is simply an outward sign of something that *God may do*, which is provide the gift of His holy spirit. Now, because somebody, whether it's an apostle or an evangelist or a sr. elder or an elder lay's hands on somebody, that does not guarantee that *God's* holy spirit was given to that individual, because it's all about *God*. It's *not* about the individual.

Well, here it was, these in Corinth were actually lifting themselves up and saying they were following a particular *person!* Well, brethren, we should know we follow no man. We follow no woman. We follow no one other than Jesus Christ and God the Father. That's who we follow. And it's not to do with an individual.

Therefore, if, for example, an evangelist left *God's* Church, or a sr. elder left *God's* Church, well, how foolish it would be to follow the man! How foolish would that be! Because we follow *God*. We follow Jesus Christ. We follow Paul in the sense that *he* followed *God* and Jesus Christ. So here is Paul now correcting them because they're elevating themselves in pride, which is this babes, they're of the milk, in the sense of having such limited spiritual understanding as to take credit that, "I was baptized by..." somebody that was perceived as being higher in authority than someone else or more righteous than someone else. And the reality was it was just an individual taking credit to themselves. That's all they're doing.

Verse 5—Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers, which are servants of God, through whom you believed... Now, it was because of the preaching, that *God used* Paul and Apollos for the purpose of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of *God* to call people so that they would believe and commit to Jesus Christ and to *God* the Father. ...**as the Lord gave to each one?** So it was Jesus Christ that has given them this authority to teach, which is to teach *God's* way of life. They are now servants of *God*. They are ministers of Jesus Christ. And they believed *God* and Jesus Christ. They believed the teaching. Not because of Paul and Apollos but because of *God's* holy spirit, because *God* gave them the "eyes to see." He gave them the spirit of *God*, the gift of repentance that they might *follow God*. And it's been given to each one as a calling. So this role has been given to Paul and Apollos and it was given by Jesus Christ to each individual, to Paul and Apollos. They had different roles to achieve.

Verse 6—I planted, this is Paul speaking, I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So Paul "planted." He was out there preaching and people believed the message. And "Apollos watered." He added to by the preaching, by the explanation of God's word, which is powered by God's holy spirit. But "God gave the increase." It's *God* that gives the fruits of the spirit. It's *God's* Holy spirit. All credit for *everything* must go to God. That is, everything spiritual in God's Church must be given to God.

Verse 7—So then neither he who plants is anything, nor is he who waters. They are just individuals that God is using, but God gives the increase. It's God's work. It's God that does the spiritual work within a person. Now he who plants and he who waters are one... They have the same intent. They both work for the same master. ...and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. They will be held accountable for what they do and they'll be rewarded according to the choices they have made, the yielding to God's holy spirit.

So Paul was given a particular role. Well, he'll be held accountable for what he did in that role. And Apollos was held accountable for what he did in his role, in his labor. So it's all based on what choices, based on what spiritual decisions they make, and it's also based on the spiritual talents given from God, what the role of service is. Because one person can have a role of service with one talent. Another person can have a role of service with ten talents. Each person is held as accountable for the decisions they make and they're held as responsible based on the choices they make, based on the talents they were given. We are personally responsible for what choices we make, and it's based on the talents God has given us.

Verse 9—For we are God's fellow workers (helpers); you are God's field, so we are where God is working, a place of cultivating of God's word, *you are God's building*, we are God's dwelling place. We are a work in progress. We are to be built up in the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ. So here it is, Paul is saying they are fellow workers; they are helpers. Paul and Apollos were there working for God the Father and Jesus Christ. "You," that's us, brethren, "are God's field." Now, *this* is where God works. *This* is the place where God cultivates His word *in our thinking*. We are God's building! So God is building us up, therefore, we have to work *within* this building, which is within our minds. Because we understand that there is a transformation from the natural carnal mind of Romans 8 to this transformation of the mind so that God's spirit will live in us so that we begin to think like God, *all* for the purpose of being changed to spirit. We are to be transformed in the way that we think, from a babe (a child) to a mature person. And it *can* be achieved! How's it achieved? All by the power of God's holy spirit, and us choosing to yield, us choosing to take responsibility for the position we find ourselves in, which is a calling.

Verse 10—According to the grace (mercy) of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. Now, *this* is the key point, brethren, for us. We have to be on guard. We have to take heed *how we build*. Each person must look at the choices they make. We have to look at the choices we make. Are we choosing to yield to God's spirit or not? Now, that's by taking heed. Well, we better consider this, because it's so important. It's an individual personal choice, whether we yield or we don't.

Verse 11—For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. There is no other way to enter Elohim...no other way, no other possible way other than this foundation that's already been laid for us, which is the foundation, which is Jesus Christ and all of Jesus Christ's words, which are the Word of God, the Logos of God. There is no other way that sin can be covered but by the Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That foundation has been laid. **Now if anyone builds on this foundation,** which has been laid for us, which is this calling and this gift of repentance and the gift of God's holy spirit, which is all done through Jesus Christ. **If anyone builds on this foundation,** which is the three strong elements, **gold, silver, and precious stones,** so they are the three strong elements of laying this foundation. Now, this is looking at something physical pointing to something spiritual.

Now it lists the three weak elements. We can actually build on this foundation (which is set by Jesus Christ), which is now, **wood, hay, or straw.** Now, the issue here is because it's about fire. It's about testing and trying. So we have this foundation, which is in Jesus Christ, now we're building on it. We're making choices within our mind. Now, we're either making right choices and yielding to God's holy spirit, which is the "gold, silver, and precious stones," or we're yielding to self, the carnal natural mind, which is going to be destroyed, "wood, hay, or straw." So the key here is that fire purifies or destroys. So through tests and trials within the mind, we're either yielding to God's holy spirit or we're yielding to selfishness.

Verse 13—each one's work will become clear, because of this testing, this trying, **for the Day will declare it,** so in the day, it will declare it. What we're doing in the temple, how we're working in the temple is going to be revealed, **because it will be revealed by fire,** by tests and trials, to see what choices we will make. Now, we often think we're going to make right choices all the time, but until we're in a situation we often don't know what choice we're going to make. Because under pressure we may crumble, under pressure we may yield to and become, our thinking, like straw, hay, and wood, which would be consumed. It's carnal. Or we might yield to God's holy spirit, which is the gold, silver, and precious stones. **...and the fire will test each one's work,** what's going on within the mind. That's what's going to be tested, **and what sort it is.** So it's either yielding to God's holy spirit or its yielding to selfishness.

All of this is about spiritual matters. It is spiritual "gold, silver, precious stones," which will endure fire. So they're going to be tested. Well, they endure fire. Or it is physical "wood, hay, straw," which will *not* endure fire. It'll be consumed. The question is: What sort of work is our work? What is going on in our minds? What are the things that *test* our work? Just to mention a few: Change in understanding of doctrine. Now, that is going to test what our thinking is. Will we yield to God's spirit or we yield to our human reasoning? So these challenges are the tests of fire. So the fire is a change in understanding of doctrine, and people can think one way or the other. Ordinations is a challenge by fire, because it's all to do with the way we think, what are we yielding to. We're yielding to God or we're yielding to our own thinking. A binding or loosening decision by God's apostle. What is going on in our thinking? Another test of fire is personal correction from the ministry. This can cause really a testing by fire. Because a personal correction, what is the tendency? Not to take personal responsibility for what we did, to justify,

to defend the self. "Yeah, *but...*" "*But*, you don't understand..." "The reason I did it was..." or the excuses. So this personal correction can be a test, a test of fire of the thinking within our minds.

Verse 14—If anyone's work, which is spiritual work of yielding to God's word, **which he has built on**, which is built up, **endures**, or remains, or dwells in him after tests and trials, **he will receive a reward**. And that reward is life everlasting in Elohim. So brethren, we are tested and we will be tried. And if we continue to build on the foundation that we have been given, which is truth, and we endure, we endure the various trials that we are to face—and many of those trials will come our way because of our choices—well, we repent and change. As long as we endure to the end and we continue to fight the self, we continue to work in the temple, and we continue to serve God in the temple, in spirit and truth, we will receive a reward.

Verse 15—If anyone's work is burned, because of being lukewarm or complacent, **he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved**. Now, what this is saying is that we, at this time, there are people that can do a work and become lazy or lukewarm by not working in the temple, not fighting the fight, not fighting the self. "He will suffer loss," he will. Firstly, he will lose God's holy spirit. He or she will lose God's holy spirit. God will withdraw His spirit from them. But he himself, the individual, the spirit in man will be saved. Now, this is pointing to a rescue. "To be saved," means we're rescued. And how is a person rescued? So, they have started a calling and their work has been burnt, which is they've started and now they've been burnt because of this complacency, because of this lukewarmness, because of this not fighting the self. They give into the natural carnal mind. Well, they suffer a loss. They lose God's holy spirit, but they're saved for a resurrection to a physical life, and that resurrection is the Hundred-years. The spirit will be saved for another day, which is that Hundred-years. How merciful is God!

Because there are many that have started a work and their work has been burned, and they've suffered the loss, because God's withdrawn His spirit from them. *But* they will be saved. They will be rescued. Now, a lot of people look at the word "saved" and think it's "salvation." Well, no, this is pointing to something different. It's he himself will be rescued by a resurrection and they'll have a chance to build a new work, to build on the foundation. And if they endure to the end, they then will receive the reward at the end of the Hundred-years.

Verse 16—Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the spirit of God dwells in you? That's a question to the Corinthians. Well, it's a question to us, brethren. We know we are a temple of God. We know we have been appointed to *work in the temple*, because we have to work in our minds. And we know that the spirit of God dwells in us *IF* we remain in a state of repentance. **If anyone defiles**, and that is by unrepented sin, **the temple of God, God will destroy him**. Isn't that an incredible statement? So this is where we should be on guard, brethren. We should take heed to how we work. We should take personal responsibility for working. God will destroy the person who defiles by unrepentant sin. And how are they destroyed? By a second death. Because the second death is the best outcome for someone who refuses to yield or refuses to work in the temple because they refused to obey God. Because God has called us to work in the temple. **For the temple of God is holy** (it is pure), **which temple you are**.

So brethren, we have a responsibility to walk before God in spirit and truth. God dwells in His people. The reason we are called into a relationship with God is for the purpose of God dwelling in us. And the reason God wants to dwell in us is because God can do a work in us out to the benefit of others. God desires to work in us so that He *can* benefit others, so that God can express His love to others. If we choose to yield, choose to work in the temple, we will not be destroyed.

Verse 18—Let no one deceive himself, because that's easily done. People have deceived themselves over the last 6,000 years, being called over the last 2,000 years and have deceived themselves. **If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age**, by using human reasoning or human intellect, their own opinion, they rely on their own ability, **let him become a fool**, "let him become humble," humble himself and don't lean on our own understanding in matters. We should look to God for all answers. We must rely on God's word and yield to God's word. And if we do that? ...**that he may become wise**. So by humbling ourselves and not leaning on our own understanding we become wise on a spiritual level. We begin to think like God.

Verse 19—For the wisdom of this world, which is human reasoning, the way a person sees it on an individual level, separate from God's word, what we think is right and wrong, **is foolishness to God**. It's the natural carnal mind of Romans 8. **For it is written, He (God) catches the wise**, anybody using human reasoning based on their own pride, their own opinion, our own desires, **in their own craftiness**, in our own stupidity, really.

Verse 20—and again, The LORD knows ("Yahweh Elohim knows"), **the thoughts of the wise**, human reasoning, the human thinking, the carnal mind, **that they are futile**. That the thoughts are futile. God knows the natural carnal mind.

So, brethren, we'll end *Personal Responsibility - Part 1* and we'll pick it up in a sermon in Part 2 in the near future.□