

Welcome to the Sabbath, everybody.

In the previous sermon on this subject, we looked at the need for personal responsibility with regards to our thoughts, words, and actions. We will be held accountable for the work, or the *lack* of the work within our minds. The analogy that we're looking at is with regards to the Levitical system and how they (the Levites) were given duty or care of the temple, to work in the temple, which was God's dwelling place in the sense of the sanctuary and then the temple.

Now, the analogy we're looking at is with regards to working within *our* minds, because we are the Temple of God if God's holy spirit lives and dwells in us. God made it clear to Israel that each person would have to pay the penalty for their own sins. God also told us that we will be held accountable for our choices. We are the Temple of God *if* God dwells in us, if God's holy spirit lives and dwells in us.

The title of this sermon is *Personal Responsibility* and this will be *Part 2*.

The intent of this sermon is to highlight the need for everyone in the Body of Christ, everyone that God calls, to take personal responsibility for their choices, for the decisions they make in life on a physical level, more importantly on a spiritual level, our spiritual decisions in life.

Now, all of these spiritual decisions are made in the mind. That's why we are looking at this point, which is to guard our minds, and then to ensure that our minds are clean and that the Temple, which we are, is clean.

We'll backtrack a little bit because this analogy we're looking at is in relation to the mind, what we do in our thinking, what are our personal responsibilities in caring for our minds, the Temple which we are.

So we're going to backtrack now to **Numbers 18:1—Then the LORD said to Aaron: You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the iniquity *related to* the sanctuary**, and we looked at that, which was they worked to serve in the temple and they were to serve the way that God stated. Now, *if* they did it the wrong way, therefore, they would have to pay a penalty, they would "bear the iniquity." And we find out later (and we'll look at this in the sermon, *part 3*, possibly), about the very penalty that was applied to them. And if we don't do matters the way that God says, because we have been told to do things in spirit and truth, we'll be held accountable for this action, this choice we make, and therefore, we will have to pay the penalty of the decision.

Continuing on... **and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity *associated with your priesthood***. So there is this responsibility and there's an accountability in being called by God to serve, to be a servant of God. We are individually accountable for what happens in our minds, and that is the

key point. This analogy is they were going to be held accountable for what they did in the temple. Well, we are also going to be held accountable for what goes on in our minds.

Verse 2—Also bring with you your brethren from the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you, which was to serve Aaron because he was the High Priest, **while you and your sons are with you before the tabernacle of witness.** So the point is, we are the Temple, the "temple of witness," on a spiritual level. We must take personal responsibility for our temple, for our minds. We are to be held accountable for everything that goes on in our life.

Now, we're to take personal responsibility for our pride, and for the selfishness which we live, because that's the natural carnal mind. So once we are called, we come to see our pride, we come to see our selfishness. Well, then because of the calling, we now will be held accountable for what choices we make, because now we "see" what we are.

Numbers 18:3—They (the other priests) shall attend to your (the High Priest's) needs and all the needs of the tabernacle. Now, this is that role of service. Now, we have to attend to all the needs of the tabernacle, and therefore, we have to look after the needs of our minds. And the most important thing is to guard our minds. If nothing else comes out in this sermon series, it is all about the guarding of the mind. We have a responsibility to guard our minds. We are going to be held accountable for what we let into our minds and what takes place within our minds, and I'm referring there to thoughts. We understand that Satan, the "prince and power of the air," transmits thoughts to our minds. We have a choice to yield or not to yield. Well, this is what it is about. This is that care for the tabernacle, the care for our minds, which we must also work hard at, which is the caring for our minds. And to do that it requires effort. It requires decisions to be made, what we will do, what we will allow to come into our thoughts, what we'll allow to come into our mind.

Now, the way that things enter into the mind is through the eyes, so it's what we see. And because we are natural, what comes into the eyes, there are choices to be made—not always, sometimes things happen where we can see something that we didn't plan to see. For example, we may be watching a particular program on TV and because it's a program we desire, might even be a nature channel or some program that we enjoy, but in the middle of it an ad comes on and it's got something in it that our eyes would be better off not seeing. Because once it enters through the eyes into the mind then we have to have choices. Because what actually happens, generally, is that some images that will come in through the eyes, into the mind, they will repeat themselves, and we have to fight against seeing them. And there are different images that will enter the mind that will trigger different thoughts, and therefore, we have to guard what comes into our eyes.

And also, the same thing applies to the way things enter into our mind through our ears, what we hear. Therefore, we have to be very careful about what we listen to. Now, often there are songs out there on the radio and that are produced that the lyrics of it are actually terrible, they're actually evil, but the music (the sound and the beat) can draw us to it, therefore, we may be listening to the tune, the music

of it and being enjoying it, but behind that are words which are not of God and they can trigger thoughts in the mind and they can cause problems.

I know there's one particular song that I have heard, and I used to sing it often before I was called, and it has stuck in my mind. Now when I hear it on the radio I know the beginning of the song and I know that the words bring doubt about God's word, therefore, the moment I hear that song, the beginning, I actually change the channel or turn the radio off. Because I know what it will do. I know that it challenges God and I know that that song will be repetitious in my mind and it'll go over and over. And I know that we've all had that battle. Every single one of us has had a battle in the mind with regards to repetition of a song.

Verse 3, continuing...**but they shall not come near the articles of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they die—they and you also.** So this serving in the temple is an experience, once we are called, and it is about decisions that have to be made. So serving in the temple, working with our minds once we are called, is a life and death decision. It's a life and death situation. This working in the temple, we're going to be held accountable for it, what we do. And we don't want to do the wrong thing, and if we come near something that we shouldn't, it could cause us death. This matter of being called and converting, once we have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us, is a life and death decision. And therefore, we need to take it seriously.

We should consider this statement with regards to ourselves. The only time Aaron as high priest could enter the last third of the tabernacle was on the Day of Atonement. And we've covered that *on the Day of Atonement*. Yet, because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we have access to God all the time. We can actually enter God's throne and talk to Him at any time. And that's done in our minds, which Temple we are, therefore, we need to guard what's in our minds.

Now, how can it be if a good tree bears bad fruit? Well, scripture says that it's not possible. It's either a good tree or it's a bad tree. Therefore, if a good tree, it won't bear bad fruit. Therefore, if we are working on our minds and God's spirit lives and dwells in us, bad fruit will not be yielding. But, if we are a bad tree, which means God's holy spirit is not living and dwelling in us and we have only the natural carnal mind at work, we will bear the natural carnal mind, the fruit of it. And the fruit of the natural carnal mind is selfishness.

So we have access to God at any time we choose, and it's all done within the mind. Now, we can pray to God and talk to God at any time. We can do it when we're walking. We can do it when we're laying in bed. We can come before God and kneel before God. We can come before God and stand before God. It doesn't matter. It's a matter of whether or not we turn to God and yield ourselves to God, to trust in Him, to call on *Him* to give us the answers in life.

Let's turn to **Hebrews 9:24**. This is really covering what Christ did for us and the greatness of the very Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ. **Verse 24—For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands**, so it's not now referring to the physical temple, this "holy place made by hands," which is the

building of the sanctuary and later on where Solomon built the temple. This is actually saying, well, Christ wasn't that. It wasn't about entering that, *but* it was about something spiritual. So it's not physical, it's spiritual. And it's saying here that this "holy place is made by hands," **which are copies of the true**, so the physical things that were made (the physical structure) is patterned after or a "type" of the spiritual. So it points to something. ...**but**, this is now saying, **Christ has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us...** So the things that were built in the wilderness (the tabernacle) and then later on the temple, were pointing to or were copies or a structure that was patterned after the things that are actually in heaven where God dwells. And they pointed to that. And therefore, as the high priest would only enter the last third once a year, Jesus Christ has gone there for us and appears there all the time for us. He now is at the right hand, as far as authority of God the Father.

Verse 25—not that He (Christ) should offer Himself often, so it wasn't going to be something that was going to go on and on like the sacrifices used to. They continually offered these sacrifices. Well, Jesus Christ offered Himself once for all, **as the high priest entered the Most Holy Place every year with the blood of another**—and that was on that Day of Atonement.

Verse 26—He (Jesus Christ) then would have had to suffer often, since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, and this is at the end of the first 4,000 years of man. Because prior to this there was not a covering for sin other than a physical exercise or a physical show. But the reality was it took the death of Jesus Christ, the shed blood of Jesus Christ, to truly cover sin. Prior to that, sin was *not* covered, and therefore, man would go through the rituals and the commands that God had with regards to sacrifices, the shedding of blood, all for the purpose of pointing to something that was going to happen in the future, which was going to actually cover sin, because of the acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

He (Jesus Christ) has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. So we have this sacrificial system that was set up by God through the Levitical priesthood, and now Jesus Christ at the period of 31 AD died to take away the penalty of sin because it was the penalty that's the problem. "The wages of sin," what we earn by sin, "is death." Well, the shedding of blood was the only way to cover sin. But the blood of bulls and goats couldn't do it. Only through God the Father, through Jesus Christ, where Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself for us, could sin be covered, and it was. And therefore, we do not have to pay the "wages of sin," the penalty of sin, "which is death." And we don't have to pay it because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ *and* based on our repentance.

And that's why repentance is *so* important, that we *have* to come before God, because now we have the ability to go before God and to admit our faults, not to justify ourselves, but to take personal responsibility for every sin that is in us. And over time we come to see that's what dwells in the natural carnal mind. We live in sin. Our minds are based on sin, based on selfishness, and *all* selfishness is sin.

Verse 27—And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so at the end of 7,000 years there will be a resurrection to judgment, and that is covered by the Last Great Day.

Verse 28—so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. So the first coming of Jesus Christ was for the purpose of covering sin. And the second coming of Jesus Christ is for salvation. So this "death of Jesus Christ once for all" has taken place, therefore, we can walk with boldness and confidence, the fact that the penalty has been paid on our stead, or on our behalf, and therefore, it's all based on repentance, of course, but therefore, we can boldly look forward to this second coming of Jesus Christ for the purpose of salvation. Because at the return of Jesus Christ, 144,000 who will be redeemed from the earth over that 6,000 year period of mankind God has been working, and now there is going to be this first harvest, the first harvest of mankind.

So we look forward to this. We eagerly wait for Him, we eagerly await for Jesus Christ, for Him to appear the second time. And that's what we are looking forward to.

Hebrews 10:1—For the law, now, this is referring to the Levitical system of sacrifices and rituals. For the law, having a shadow, and "a shadow" is something that points to, of the good things to come, which was God's mercy to us in providing a Passover sacrifice for sin. That was "the good thing to come." So the law, this Levitical system of sacrifices and rituals, was actually pointing to something that God was going to provide, and that was Jesus Christ, something good that was going to come. And the good that has come is the sense that sin is now covered, because of the death and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

...and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. So those that did them, it didn't make them pure or clean on a spiritual level, because sin could not be forgiven. Because of the very fact that they went through these sacrifices and they continually did them when they were made aware of their mistake and they were convicted that they needed to give an offering for sin, the reality is that it was not forgiven on a spiritual level, because these physical things could not cover what God was referring to with regards to "the wages of sin."

Verse 2—If sin was not forgiven, For then they would, the sacrifices, not have ceased to be offered? Because if these physical sacrifices could provide the forgiveness of sin, well, everybody would just continue to offer sacrifices, but these could not. Anybody that offered it was not forgiven of sin. So that question there was, **For then they (the sacrifices) would not ceased to have been offered?** Would they? Well, no, they wouldn't. People would just continue to do them and they would do them today. **For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness (guilt) of sins.** So they would have been able to go up, offer their sacrifice and walk away and all would be forgiven.

Verse 3—But in those sacrifices (temple area) there is a reminder of sins every year. They were not forgiven of their sins because these sacrifices couldn't do it.

Verse 4—For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, because of this, when He (Jesus Christ) came into the world, He said, Sacrifice and offerings You

(God the Father) **did not desire**, so God did not desire the physical sacrifices, **But a body You have prepared for Me**, which is referring to Jesus Christ. Physical as man was, but also the Body of Christ is the Church of God. We *are* the Body of Christ. We should take that honor seriously and be acting responsibly, because it is the very fact that, "But a body You (God the Father) have prepared for Me." Now we could look at that on a physical level saying that Jesus Christ, yes, God the Father did prepare a body for Him. He was "Immanuel," God in the flesh. He thought like God. He had God's thinking. But He was given a physical Body and it was prepared for Him for the purpose of suffering, for the point of death covering sin. But also, a Body, which is the Church of God, God has prepared for Jesus Christ. So we have been called into the Body of Christ. We *are* the Body of Christ; we are the Temple of God.

Verse 6—In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. God's desire and pleasure is in living *in* us, dwelling *in* us, in the temple, which we are, all for the benefit of others. So this is very important because it's not about sacrifices and burnt offerings, because God desired to live and dwell in us. So God provided Jesus Christ for the purpose of covering sin that would enable God the Father's spirit, God's holy spirit to live and dwell *in* us, which makes us the Temple. So God desires to dwell in the Temple. God desires to dwell in us.

Now, it's only because of unrepented sin that God will not dwell in us. He has called us for this very purpose. So God's *desire*, and His great pleasure, is to live and dwell in us. We are God's dwelling place. We are the Temple of God. And it's all done for the benefit of others. God desires to live in us, to provide His thinking in us so that we will be a witness with regards to the way we live, the choices that we have made by yielding to God's holy spirit.

Verse 7—Then I said, Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me (talking about Jesus Christ)—**To do Your will, O God.** Now, this is the same for us today. We are in the Church of God *because* we have committed to care for the temple of God, we have committed to care for our minds. Now, we cannot enter Elohim if we do not care for our minds. It's absolutely impossible. Because the natural carnal mind is based on selfishness and God desires to transform this thinking. Therefore, we must care for it. We're going to have to work hard at guarding our minds. So it's so easy today to fall into the traps of the natural carnal mind and the temptation that comes through the transmission of evil by Satan. The will of God is that we keep our temple clean and in order, which is keeping our minds clear and in spiritual order. So we have to keep our minds clear.

Now, the biggest danger we face is to allow things to enter our minds and to let them dwell and fester because this will lead to sin. Now, it's often been thought that the temptation was sin, but it's not. It's the thought that comes into the mind is not sin; it's what we do with it and whether or not we're going to *deal* with our thoughts. Now, if a thought comes into the mind and we highlight it within our thinking that it's not right, that we want to get rid of it, we can get rid of it by crying out to God that we don't want to think that way. But there is no sin involved in that thought. There is no sin involved in the tempting or the testing of our thinking. It's what we do with the thinking. It's how we respond, whether we're going to deal with it in a Godly way, whether we're going to keep our minds clear and clean, or

we're going to pollute our minds, pollute our minds by allowing these thoughts to fester and then having evil thoughts to the fact of desiring evil, because that's what we're doing.

Verse 8—Previously saying, Sacrifice and offerings, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You (God the Father) did not desire, nor had pleasure in them (which are offered according to the law), so physical sacrificial system that pointed to the spiritual.

Verse 9—then He said, Behold, I (talking about Christ) have come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first, Jesus Christ, which is the old system of physical sacrifices, which is that first, which was set up by God for Israel, that He (Christ) may establish the second. Spiritual sacrifices. We sacrifice our selfish desires. That's the second. It is now about the spirit of a matter, what is our intent, why are we really doing something.

So the first, the old system, is done away. We don't have to sacrifice animals. But we have to sacrifice something. We have to sacrifice ourselves. So this is what it's about. This is that change that has taken place.

God looks at the heart, at an individual's intent. Is our intent to care for the temple? Is our intent to keep the temple clean? Is it our intent to make sure we are working in the temple? Because this is the most important thing. We have to be working in our minds.

Verse 10—By that will (the second, God's will) we have been sanctified, which is set aside by God's word, the truth, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. The physical body of Christ was offered once for all, therefore, this system has now changed. Now the spiritual Body of Christ must offer spiritual sacrifices, and these sacrifices are that of giving thanks and denying the self. We have to be working in our minds.

Verse 11—And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man (Jesus Christ), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God (verse 13) from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. (Verse 14) For by one offering He (Jesus Christ) has perfected forever those who are being sanctified, are being set aside for a spiritual purpose.

Verse 15—But the holy spirit also witnesses with us, which is God's spirit in us reveals spiritual matters, for after He said before, (verse 16) This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them. Now that we have God's holy spirit in us we have the responsibility to yield to God's thinking because there is going to be a measurement of this yielding. God's thinking comes to us, but we must choose to yield. We must choose not to quench it, to not quench God's holy spirit by not yielding, by ignoring it, by ignoring the ways of God.

Verse 17—then He (God) says, Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. So sin can be forgiven and God says He will remember it no more, based on repentance. It is forgiven and

forgotten *IF* we repent the proper way. And the way we repent properly is to abhor ourselves, which is to know that we have erred, know that we have sinned, and we don't want to be like this anymore. And the way we do it is through our minds, which is done in prayer. So all of this takes place within our minds. It's all about the way we think, therefore, we have to be responsible and make sure that we are guarding our minds.

Verse 18—Now where there is remission (forgiveness) of these (of sins), *there is no longer an offering for sin*. So an offering is no longer needed as Christ offered Himself once for all. **Therefore**, because of this fact, **brethren, having boldness**, which is this confidence because of the freedom we now have, **to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus Christ**. So we can enter the Holiest, we've been able now to talk to God at any time we choose, and it can be all done within the mind. The context of Hebrews 10:19 is about prayer and having boldness, which is the liberty, confidence, in the freedom given to us to go before God's throne in prayer.

Verse 20—by a new and living way, which is by God's holy spirit. Because to enter before God, to enter the Holiest Place at any time requires a calling. It requires this gift of repentance to be able to "see" that we are what we are, which is natural, and it requires the remission of sins, which is that baptism where a covering can happen. Then we need the power to be able to continue to walk a new way of life, which is the gift of God's holy spirit. Now, once God dwells *in* us, once God lives in us and we have His thinking, we'll have this tendency to desire, to want to approach God all the time. So we can do this at any time. So there is this new and living way, which is powered by God's holy spirit.

Verse 20 continuing, **which He (Christ) consecrated**, which is "dedicated," **for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh...** This is made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in our stead, whereby, being able to repent and be forgiven of sin... **and having a High Priest over the house of God**, which is the Church of God over us, **let us draw near with a true heart**, so it has to be done in sincerity. It has to be done with our inner thinking. So whenever we see the word "heart" it's really talking about the inner thinking of the mind, the deep down intent of the mind. So we are to draw near before God's throne, at any time we desire to do so, with a sincere heart. So we're to do it with a *true motive*, an inner intent of desiring to trust in God, desiring God into our life. So we're to do this **in full assurance of faith** because we believe God. We believe that Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for sin. We believe that God the Father has provided Jesus Christ for a covering of sin. We believe God. We believe God that He says He will forgive us based on repentance. We believe it.

Continuing on in **verse 22...** **having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience**, and that's done by repentance, **and our bodies washed by pure water**, by the Word of God washing our thinking and having our sins forgiven.

Verses 21 and 22, again, this is an admonition to draw near to God in fellowship, with confidence, in exercising faith through Christ that our sins are forgiven, which is removed, cleansed from us. And we can now experience *true* fellowship with a clear conscience, with God the Father and Jesus Christ through their dwelling in us.

Verse 23—Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who has promised *is* faithful. So everything that God has promised will come true because God is faithful. We should trust in God, what He has said. One thing as humans we do is that we tend to not actually believe God. Although God says He will forgive and forget, we don't forgive ourselves or forget. We tend to hang on to sins. Well, this is an aspect of maturity, where over time we believe and we come to "see" and we know and we live repentance, because we actually believe God has forgiven us our sins, and therefore, we can walk in boldness. This takes time, generally, and in the beginning we often might repent and not desire it, but to actually let it go is difficult for us. We are to stand fast in God's word, in His promises.

Verse 24. In this context of true fellowship with God and Christ, we are to remember and act accordingly, that we share this way of fellowship not only with God and Christ, but also with those whom God has called, the brethren. We are to accept them, the brethren, and treat *them* as close family.

Verse 24—And let us consider one another—why?—in order to stir up love, stir up agape, and good works, because it is about the way we think. What is a good work? Love flowing out from us to the benefit of others. That is God's love. So God provides His spirit for us to change our thinking. And it's no point just God coming and living and dwelling in us and us not living love, in other words, no change, do nothing. We have to actually *do* something.

So this purpose is in order to stir up love. Now, the greatest thing that we can do to show love, to live love, is in prayer. It's about how we pray, who we pray for, what we pray about. They're the aspects, and these are the good works. So God's spirit lives and dwells in us for the purpose of good works.

Now, if in prayer we pray genuinely and sincerely for the benefit of others it will change our thinking. And this is the best way to handle any issues that we may have with another person, is to get down on our knees before God and pray for that person with regards to what is best for them based on God's will, but to change our thinking towards them. And this will motivate us and stir up God's spirit in us, because God desires no ill will. Therefore, if we are praying for others, if we're praying with a right attitude, it will stir up good works within us.

Verse 25—not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, this is "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves before God," **as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting, and so much more as you see the Day approaching.**

Verses 24 and 25 are about our attitude and approach toward all others in the Body of Christ. Our fellowship is not exclusively with God and Christ, but if it is true, true fellowship, it is *right* toward others in God's Family, the brethren. Well, brethren, this is where we're at. This is a reality check with regards to time, "so much more as we see (or you see) the Day approaching." We see the Day approaching, which is the return of Jesus Christ. We see it approaching. It is not long away. Now, we're going to have to trust in God more than we ever have in our whole life during this physical period that is approaching, this period of destruction. This is going to be a very, very difficult time. Even though we

have God's spirit, even though we are the Temple of God, even though we have all this truth, it is still going to be very, very difficult. It's going to be very, very challenging.

So as we see this day approaching, it's best now to turn to God in prayer and to lay out our hearts, our minds, our intents before God, and to call on God and to tell God we don't want to trust in ourselves, we don't want to rely on this natural carnal mind, this mind of selfishness. So this is the time now to turn to God in prayer in spirit and in truth.

Verse 26—For if we sin willfully, which is willingly give ourselves over to evil or sin; in other words, it's a deliberate choice. It's willful, **after we have received the knowledge of the truth**, which we have. If we turn away from God now and we refuse to pray, we trust in ourselves, and it's deliberate and it's a willing choice; in other words, we don't want God in our life anymore, "after we have received the knowledge of the truth," we've been called and converted, this knowledge and understanding's been given to us, if we turn away now willingly and deliberately (in other words, we don't want God in our life anymore and it's a deliberate act), **there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**. We actually have committed the unpardonable sin. So this turning away from God is a serious matter. This not caring for our minds, not guarding our minds, not keeping our minds clean is a very serious matter.

Verse 27—but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, the outcome of the judgment's going to be given to us, **and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries**, which is the second death.

I want to now just cover this aspect from the website, which is with regards to the scriptures that talk about blasphemy against the holy spirit, which is the unpardonable sin. Matthew 12:31. Why we're covering this is because the need to look after the temple, which is our minds, is so important. It's a life and death decision. And if we're going to refuse, at this point in time in our life after being called and converting, if we're going to refuse and willfully not rely on God, turn willfully away from prayer and trusting in God as we see the return of Christ drawing near, if we do it willfully, we willfully neglect the care of our minds, we could have committed the unpardonable sin. Because if it's willful and willing and we actually don't want God anymore in our life because of a deliberate choice, we actually *have* committed the unpardonable sin.

Matthew 12:31—Therefore, I say unto you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but, so this is the opposite now, **the blasphemy of/against the spirit will not be forgiven men**. So this knowingly speaking against God's power and rejecting God's power, which is holy spirit, will not be forgiven, because it's deliberate and it's wilful because, in other words, we're not willing or desiring anymore to yield to God at all. We actually don't want God in our life at all.

Verse 32—Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man (Jesus Christ), it will be forgiven him. Now, people do that all the time with regards to blasphemy, and because they're not called they don't understand God and they have a perverted view of God and Jesus Christ, well, that will be forgiven them because it's not willful or deliberate, because they don't know the truth. **...but whoever speaks against the holy spirit...** Now, the holy spirit is God's power, so it's against the power of God. Anybody who blasphemes the holy spirit, which is denies God living in their life, willfully, they just don't want God. They set their minds against God. **...it will not be forgiven him, neither in this age or in**

the age to come. So now we're looking at this 6,000 years of man. If somebody has been called and converting and then turns against God willfully and deliberately, knowingly, they knowingly sear their conscience because of this not wanting God in their life anymore. They fight against God's holy spirit. They willingly reject it. They know it's wrong, but they just do it because that's what they want. Well, if they've done that and they've set their mind, God says it will not be forgiven them. And in the age to come, which is during the next 1,100 years, this same principle of God's word will apply. God is going to pour out His holy spirit and give mankind the opportunity to repent. Well, once they start that process God says that if they go against God's spirit, the power of God living and dwelling in them, which is the mind of God living and dwelling in them, if they make choices that willfully they don't want God's way, they willingly turn against God, *knowingly* fight against God, it is actually considered an unpardonable sin and it will not be forgiven.

Now, the reason it won't be forgiven is they don't want to repent. It's not that God can't forgive. God *desires* to forgive. But the real matter is *they*, the person, *does not* want to repent. They *refuse* to repent. They don't want *anything* to do with repentance. Therefore, God will not forgive because they don't want to repent, whereas, if they were to repent, God would forgive them. But because they're working against God's power in their mind—the holy spirit—God's power in them, God's way of being in them, they fight against it, they resist it, they don't want it. God says they don't want to repent (in other words), well, God says it won't be forgiven them.

"This scripture must be read with the understanding that the holy spirit is not a person in the Godhead, but it is the very power of the one true God. It is this power that a person can become impregnated with (which makes us begotten sons of God)..." We become sons of God or begotten sons of God all by the power of God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us.

Now, a person can become impregnated with the holy spirit, "...after baptism and the laying on of hands. Once one is begotten of God's spirit, God reveals that He and His Son then begin to dwell in (which is abide in/ live in) that person." Now, this is what we're going through now. This is that very principle about the temple, which we are. God desires to live in us. Now, when God lives in us we become the temple, the dwelling place, the abiding place of God the Father and Jesus Christ. "This is the very reason Jesus Christ died. He died in order for mankind to be forgiven of sin, so that He and His Father could begin to spiritually dwell in those who are begotten of God." This is about the begetting of God's holy spirit. It's about God's spirit living and dwelling in us. And it's this spirit that makes us the Temple of God. And the reality is, brethren, that we are the Temple of God, therefore, we have to care for our minds. We have to be on guard all the time to make sure that it is clean, make sure that it is tidy and in order. And we must be very careful not to let things into our minds that shouldn't be there, that would pollute the temple, pollute our minds.

Continuing on reading this part from the website: "After someone has been begotten of God, and He and His Son begin to dwell in her or him, then that person begins to grow spiritually. If that person sins, then because of that new covenant agreement that was made at baptism, they are to repent quickly, as God cannot dwell with sin/in sin." And that's why we have to guard our minds, because God can't live with sin, therefore, God can't live in our minds, dwell in our minds because if we haven't guarded our minds and it's polluted and unclean God's not going to be there. Therefore, we must repent quickly, clean out our minds. "That is why Christ died as our Passover, so that sin can be forgiven and then God can dwell in us."

"If a person comes to the point that they refuse to repent, then they become in danger of the unpardonable sin (sin not repented of and therefore cannot be forgiven)." And that's what the point mainly is. It's about this not desiring to repent. We refuse to repent. We don't want to repent. And therefore it cannot be forgiven. "If that person cannot be brought to repentance through the grace and mercy of God at work in his or her life, then they have committed the unpardonable sin and will suffer the penalty of eternal death (never to be resurrected to life)." Which is that second death. "This is the final penalty for all who refuse to repent of sin, which is an eternal punishment (not being eternally punished but an eternal punishment)." It's death forever, never to have life again.

"God's desire for all is that every person repents of sin. As long as a person responds to the mercy, patience, and love of God to be able to repent of sin, then such a person will want God to dwell in them so that he or she can grow spiritually and eventually become part of the Kingdom of God, God's Kingdom." So isn't that exciting to understand? We understand the fact of an unpardonable sin. We understand what it is. It is actually something that is deliberate. And it's all based on a choice because the person does not want to repent. They actually are happy the way they are. They actually *desire* this way of life that they have chosen. So we have to continue to keep our minds clean and to guard the doors of our minds.

Hebrews 6:4—For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, someone who is "enlightened" is somebody that has been called and has the knowledge of the truth, has God's holy spirit living and dwelling in them, which enables them to be enlightened, to be able to see the truth, **and have tasted the heavenly gift**, which is God's spirit, **and have become partakers of the holy spirit**, so they have partaken of the holy gift, which is that calling and receiving of God's holy spirit and now they are partakers of God's spirit, they're partakers of God's thinking. They have the mind of God. They "see" the truth, **and have tasted the good word of God**, which is the truth. The "good word of God," is the truth of God, the Logos living and dwelling in a person, **and the powers of the age to come**.

Verse 6—if they fall away, now, this is something that is a willful decision. They willfully and willingly desire not to have anything to do with this way of life. **...if they fall away to renew them again to**

repentance, because they have already made a choice *not* to repent, since they have put to death again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to open shame. For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and briers, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned. Now, this all points to this second death.

So we, brethren, are like the earth. We are like a garden. We are a location. And we should be bearing herbs, because we "absorb the rain," which is God's holy spirit, God's thinking, and we have been "cultivated," we've been transformed, and we receive these blessings from God. But if we then turn away from God, if we willingly and willfully reject and we start to "bear thorns and burrs," we are then rejected. So in this garden there are these plants growing, and then there's these thorns grow up on this thorn bush. They are actually pulled out and they're destroyed. They're burned, and that is all pointing to something spiritual. Therefore, brethren, we need to make sure that we are caring for our minds; we're guarding our minds.

Continuing on with reading: "This reference," what we just read, "refers to a converted person (someone who has been called, repentant, been baptised, and received God's spirit by the laying of hands) who knowingly and intentionally rejects the truth once delivered and denies God and Jesus Christ to live (dwell/abide) in them." So it has to be intentional, it has to be knowingly. They know what they're doing. They make this personal choice. "This is *not* a person who through neglect or deception went to sleep spiritually which was prophesied to happen to the Church." So it is something that is knowingly, and willingly, and intentionally done. It's not somebody through neglect that just goes to sleep or just falls away in the sense of rejects God. So how much more it is important for us, brethren, to be caring for the temple.

Hebrews 10:28. Now, the reason we're looking at this is because it is an analogy. It's about the physical Levites that were caring for the temple, and they have this responsibility and they were going to be held accountable. Well, the analogy is that we, brethren, are the Temple of God, and therefore, we have a duty of care. We have a personal responsibility to work in the temple and we're going to be held accountable for what work we do. And that analogy is one from physical to something spiritual. And when we read various aspects of the Old Testament, we can just apply it to the spirit of the matter, which is something that takes place in our minds. They didn't really understand what they were doing. It was all physical rituals, physical sacrifices, where for us, brethren, it's all spiritual. It all takes place in the mind. We have to care for this mind. We have to guard this mind. And the mind is where the sacrifices come from, because it's in our thinking.

Hebrews 10:28—Everyone who has rejected Moses' law, which is physical, dies without mercy on *the testimony of two or three witnesses*. So then if something happened and they had two or three witnesses the person then could be held accountable, and therefore, they would be put to death because of these witnesses.

Verse 29—For how much worse a punishment, do you suppose, do you think, will he be thought worthy, someone called and converting, who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant, which is the Passover, how sin is forgiven, by which he was sanctified. So we were set aside by the death of Jesus Christ. We're set aside for holy use and purpose all because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Now, if we treat this sacrifice of Jesus Christ a **common thing**, which is something ordinary, **and insulted** (despised) **the spirit of grace**? Well, what do we think how we will be measured? Do we think that we can get away with trampling the Son of God's sacrifice underfoot just by not considering it, by not working hard within our temple? What do we think the outcome will be? If the physical priesthood, if those physical were destroyed because they didn't look after their temple, didn't do their duties, and the physical people, if they sinned and there was witnesses, they were put to death, how much more for us, brethren? How much more seriously should we consider the care of our minds? How much more should we be diligent *not* to neglect the very sacrifice of Jesus Christ, why He died for us?

Verse 30—For we know Him (God the Father) who said, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the LORD. And again, The LORD (Yahweh Elohim) will judge His people. The point is, if we judge ourselves we will not have to be judged and pay the penalty for sin. If we stop repenting, God will pay us for our sins. So this, "Vengeance is Mine," this is all going back to how we work, what we do within our minds. If we esteem the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, if we esteem our calling as nothing, if we esteem what God has done for us as nothing, God says, "I will repay." God will judge us. He will judge His people according to the way we work, how we guard our minds. So we are being measured, and it's all about the way we think, what will we do with God's word? Will we *esteem* the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the payment of sin for us? Will we esteem it highly or will we esteem it lightly? Will we "trample underfoot" what God has done for us? Will we "trample it underfoot"? Will we neglect it? Will we just choose not to follow God's instructions? What will we do? Well, that's what life's about.

So God says we won't get away with it. Whatever our choice is, whatever decision we make, God says, "vengeance," or "repayment is Mine. I will repay." We will get paid for the choices we make. Well, that's why this is a serious matter. This guarding of the mind, this looking after our thinking and watching out for the way we think, and repenting, always being in a state of repentance, always being on guard, always being watchful for what enters the mind, and always being willing to repent and desiring to repent for the purpose of God living and dwelling in us, this is what our life is about. And God says He will judge His people. Well, brethren, we are under judgment. We are under judgment now. And the best way through all things in life is that of repentance.

Now, we have pride, and it is a big problem, because we tend to lift ourselves up and desire to justify or defend the self. We don't like to take responsibility for what we really are. But the secret to life is taking personal responsibility for every choice we make. Now, if we make a mistake, if we err, if we sin, the way through it is repentance. It's a wonderful plan that God has for mankind, this transformation of the mind so that they could be given the gift of life-everlasting. It's an incredible thing.

Verse 31—It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. When could we fall into "the hands of the living God?" When we stop repenting. We stop repenting. We stop judging our thoughts, words, and actions. We stop caring for our minds. We stop working in the temple. We stop keeping it clean. So, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." If we stop repenting is when we fall into God's hands because we're going to have to be judged. Our thoughts, and words, and actions are being measured. Well, we need to measure them ourselves. We need to guard against them now and to work hard at them now by repenting. And if we don't repent it's going to be a very fearful thing, to fall in the hands of God, because we know "the wages of sin is death."

So why is it fearful? Because God will repay everyone who fails to repent with death. That's the outcome. Everybody who fails to repent and willingly and willfully turns against God will be paid. They'll be paid, "the wages of sin." Therefore, it should be a fearful thing. Now, it should be a fearful thing for us to not guard our minds, to not be working in the temple, to keep it clean.

Verse 32—But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, which is "called to 'see' spiritually," **you endured a great struggle with sufferings.** We remained under God's thinking. And that's what we have to do. And the self suffered because of the choices to fight against it, to fight against the self. So we've endured these great struggles, and with sufferings, because we're having to put to death the self.

Verse 33—partly while you were made a spectacle... That was to others. How? ...**both by reproaches and tribulations,** which is hardships from the world, **and partly,** so one part was this, because of the world, **but partly,** the other part, **while you became companions of those who were also treated,** so other members of the Body, other called out ones. Because when we associate with members of the Body of Christ, we're isolated by the world, we become companions of one another. We draw away from the world, therefore, we're going to suffer persecutions because of it. Therefore, we're made a spectacle—partly because of who we are, and partly because of our change that is taking place, the change with God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us. This caring for the temple sees a great *change* take place. This guarding of the mind sees a *change* take place, and it's noted by others.

Verse 34— for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, well they gave willingly to support the work of God. And what was needed to support Paul and his work? Well, they gave, and if he asked them they supported him. But they also supported him when he didn't ask because of the power of God's holy spirit living and dwelling in them. ...**knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven,** because the reward is spiritual. It's not a physical thing. So this willingly giving, this willingly supporting the work of God, they were supporting an apostle, Paul, well, they *knew* that their reward was spiritual because it's all about the spirit of a matter. It's all about God's holy spirit.

Verse 35—Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, this boldness in what we believe, don't cast it away, **which has great reward,** because the reward is from Yahweh Elohim, and that reward is spirit life in the Family of God. So let's not cast away this confidence of our calling that we have, this boldness in what we believe.

Verse 36—For you have not endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, which is this obedience and yielding to God's spirit, you may receive the promise, this promise from God.

Verse 37—For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not delay, will not tarry, will not delay. Well, Jesus Christ is coming and He won't delay. God's plan is set and it's perfectly in order and on time. So we have to not fall down, not withdraw, not draw back. We are to walk forth in confidence, in *boldness* in what we believe. We are to endure to the end so that God can reward us the gift He has promised us, which is the gift of life.

Now, there is no other way of life that a person would want to live once we have lived this life, once we have tasted of the good word of God, of God's holy spirit. Why would we want to go back into the world? The world has nothing to offer!

Verse 38—Now the just shall live by faith, so we live by faith. Faith is believing God. We *live* what we believe. And that's what we do. **But if anyone draws back,** now, this is that pulling back, and by pulling back, it's not believing God. Because "the just live by faith," they believe God. Well, if we pull back from believing God we're not living faith anymore, we just draw back. So we no longer believe God if we do that. **My life has no pleasure in him.** This is God speaking. So God cannot live and dwell in us anymore because of our lack of faith because we don't believe Him. And if we don't believe Him, what are we doing really? We're calling God a liar.

This is spiritual in nature, not physical. "My life (My holy spirit), cannot dwell in him," is what God is saying. "My life has no pleasure in him." Well, we often look at that as a physical thing and say, "Well, God doesn't have pleasure in someone because they're drawn back. *But,* this is spiritual! God's life can't live *in* a person if a person is drawing back because they lack faith. They no longer believe God. Because faith is believing God and living it. Well, when we draw back we don't believe God, and therefore, we won't be living it. Therefore, God's spirit cannot live in a person, in a temple (which we are) if a person doesn't believe God, because by not believing God, we really are calling God a liar.

Verse 39—But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, so the outcome if we stop believing God, it will lead to perdition. "Perdition" is destruction. So this drawing back, this not believing God will lead us to a second death. **...but of those who believe to the saving of the life.** So this believing God will save our life. This trusting God (believing God) will lead to life. So this aspect of faith is so important, to come to understand that it's either we believe God or we don't. If we believe God we have faith and we're going to live it, we're going to implement it into our life. But if we draw back it's saying we don't believe God anymore.

But he who draws back, what's going to happen? We're going to face "perdition," we're going to face destruction. We stopped believing God, now it leads to death now in one way because God withdraws His holy spirit, and therefore, we're back to the natural carnal mind, which is like a death, because, "The natural carnal mind is hostile against God, not subject to the law of God, and indeed, cannot be." So we either believe God or we don't.

Now, he who believes God saves his life, because it's God living and dwelling in us that gives us true life. It's God's spirit living in our minds, the temple, which we are.

Hebrews 11:1—What is faith? **Now faith**, which is this confidence and trust in God (we believe God), **is the substance** (confidence) **of the things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.** So this is that confidence that we have in God's word. We believe God. We have faith. If we don't believe God, we don't have faith. So we are not to pull back by not believing God because if we pull back it means we no longer believe in God.

Hebrews 11:39—Now, through that chapter we saw the men and women of faith, those that put their trust in God, had confidence in God's word, and believed God. Now, that "believing God" and "having faith," and the hope that goes with that faith is what these people demonstrated by living it. **Verse 39** —**And all these**, all these people before, **having obtained a good report** (testimony) **through faith**, because they believed God, they believed what He said, **did not receive the promise**, which was life-everlasting or eternal life. Now, they didn't receive it at that time. They died and they are in the grave. They are going to wait for a resurrection. And we know that it's at the return of Jesus Christ, it's the blowing of the 7th Trump the 144,000 will be resurrected. Well, this is the "receiving of the promise," the promise of eternal life.

Verse 40—**God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.** So this is about they are being made complete, separate from us, which is the Church at that time. So this resurrection to life will happen at the same time. All those people of faith, all of these, "having obtained a good report," because of their faith, through faith—they hadn't received the promise, which is that gift of eternal life. But God in His plan has established that 144,000 would be resurrected at the return of Jesus Christ. They will be made perfect, which is to be changed to spirit, and that wouldn't happen until *all* were complete, the 144,000 was complete. Now, that is actually happened. It's something in history now, that the sealing of the 144,000 is now complete. It's done *through* Jesus Christ, *through* the work of God in them, and now their minds have been transformed to the point that now, even though they have died (and there are some still alive today). It doesn't matter because God will resurrect them in an order so that they will be made perfect together in Elohim. What an exciting plan that God has! So at the same time they will be given the promise of eternal life.

Back to **Numbers 18:4**, continuing here with instructions—**They shall be joined with you and attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting**, so this "tabernacle of meeting," as we understand was a tent area, **for all the work of the tabernacle; but an outsider shall not come near you.** Now, this is interesting, because this is physical, but we can just take an analogy here to something spiritual. If we are not called to serve God, we cannot service the temple. This is the main point. If a person's not called, they cannot guard their minds. Because their minds are selfish by nature, and therefore, yes, they might guard their minds to a degree, but still it's done on selfishness. It's what they have decided to do based on their own understanding. But it's not to do with God's word.

So a person that is not called to serve God on a spiritual level cannot service their minds. They can't work in this temple; therefore, it says here, "an outsider shall not come near you." So a person just can't come to God; God has to call them. We have been called to service our minds, God's dwelling place. So this is that same analogy of service in the temple.

Verse 5—And you shall attend to (#1) the duties of the sanctuary and (#2) the duties of the altar—Why?—that there *may* be no more wrath, which is the punishment of sin, on the children of Israel. Now, this is a key point, because they were now called by God as a tribe to service the duties of the sanctuary, which is that whole area where the tabernacle was. And they were to perform certain duties, which is about this keeping it clean and the very process of keeping things in order and done exactly the way God said. And "the duties of the altar," the duties of the altar were the sacrifices. Why? That no longer could God pour out His anger on the children of Israel, which was this punishment for sin.

Well, it applies to us today, brethren. We have to be making sure that we have (and are) taking care of the sanctuary *and* the duties of the altar. Now, "the cleaning of the sanctuary" is that guarding of the mind, making sure that it is clean and it's not going to be defiled. And "the duties of the altar," are the sacrifices that we have to make. Now, these sacrifices, we understand, are that of thanksgiving to God for all things, but also the sacrificing of ourselves, which is our duty. Our duty is to sacrifice the self, to deny the self, to yield to God's holy spirit so that we *can* deny the self, put the self down, sacrifice for the benefit of others. So "that there may be no more wrath." Well, there may be no more sin: "The wages of sin is death." So if we're working on ourselves and sacrificing ourselves, there won't be sin, because it'll be something that we are doing, which is yielding to God's holy spirit. Therefore, the punishment of sin will not be applied to us: "The wages of sin is death."

So through this repentance, through this working in the sanctuary, through this duties of the altar, through this sacrificing of the self, putting the self down, praising God, going to God in prayer, we can stay in a state of repentance. Therefore, if we are in a state of repentance the wages of sin will not be applied to us, the children of Israel.

If we service our minds, we can avoid the penalty of sin, the wrath of God, which is death. So we are to service our minds. We're to be at work, like a priesthood was on a physical level. Well, we are a spiritual priesthood; therefore, we best be at work within our minds, working hard. We are to guard our minds, our thoughts, our words, and our actions. We are to ensure the temple is clean and that it's not left unclean, or something comes in to defile the temple.

Now, there's aspects of this that we can come to understand, and it's to do with the physical of "clean and unclean." Now, when we first are called, often we look at "clean and unclean" as the most important thing, because it's physical. And we go to great lengths to ensure that we don't absorb unclean foods, and we turn all of our foods to being clean, according to God's word. Therefore, we'll find out what type of particular fish it is, and if it's (for example) a shark, we'd say, "That's unclean. I'm not going to eat that," and we focus very much on the physical. But the reality is that the physical laws, which are for our bodies, which are about health, and it also is connected to mental health. Physical health and mental health are connected. Well, this "clean and unclean" which is for our health, which is because of our bodies, and our bodies carry our minds around; therefore, we need to be very diligent to make sure that we are striving to eat clean foods and not unclean foods. But the real purpose of it, it points to something spiritual.

When we're first called, the physical can become our focus rather than the spirit of the matter, rather than the spiritual aspect of this. The "clean and unclean" laws point to the spiritual, clean spiritually or unclean spiritually. Now, this is about keeping the mind clean. It's about whether we allow sin in, which is unclean, or we allow God's holy spirit in, which is clean. We are to eat *clean* food, which is God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us, which is God's thoughts *in* us, or we will be making decisions to eat unclean food, which is the thoughts of the natural carnal mind and those that have been placed in by Satan—we'll be yielding to those things and doing them. So we're either clean—have God's holy spirit living and dwelling in us—or we're unclean. We have the natural carnal mind of selfishness which can be tempted to think a particular way because of Stan's broadcasting. So we're either clean or we're unclean. Our temple (our minds) is either clean or it's unclean. There's only one way or the other.

Now, there is a particular point that I want to look at from the point of view of the way we think. Leviticus 10:8. Now, this is directed towards the priesthood. We are the people of God, and therefore, we are called into a relationship with God for the point of service. We are in a role of service. Well, this is what Leviticus 10:8 is about, which is relation to the aspect of drink.

Leviticus 10:8—Then the LORD said to Aaron, saying: Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. So what's that saying? It's saying, "Do not drink intoxicating drink." And when was it not to be done? "When you go into the tabernacle of meeting." Now, the point was that they could drink alcohol, they could drink wine, but this is about going into the tabernacle of meeting, which is going into this area before God, "lest you die." So they were to go in with a clear, clean mind. And it was a "statute forever before your generations."

Why? Verse 10—that you may distinguish between the holy and the unholy, between the unclean and the clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD God has spoken to them by the hand of Moses. Now, this is very interesting. The Church of God has put forward the fact that one to two drinks (as a principle) should be enough. This is all about our mind. This is all about guarding the mind. Too much alcohol can cause us to lose control of our thinking. So if we look back at this in Leviticus they weren't to go before God and to be working in the temple, and to have intoxicating drink, because they would lose their function, they would lose their control of self, and they wouldn't be able to work out what was holy and what was unholy. They'd make mistakes. They would sin. And they would not be able to work out what was clean and what was unclean.

For us, brethren, how much more important is it that we be on guard, because too much alcohol will cause us to what? To not be able to work out what is holy and what is unholy, to not be able to work out what is clean and unclean *in our minds*. This is not talking about physical food. This is talking about something spiritual! So when we consume alcohol we need to be very, very careful. Now, how foolish would it be for anybody to go and have excessive drink where they have lost control of the functions of their thinking, and then to go to God in prayer? How *foolish* would that *be*? Because the mind is now distorted, "the temple which we are." How would we pollute the temple? By drinking too much, by losing control of our senses, in the sense of spiritual matters. Because we would lose control of our

thinking, and therefore, we lose control of our thinking, we will not be able to distinguish between holy and unholy.

What's that really saying? What is holy? God is holy! God's spirit is holy! It's called, "God's holy spirit," because it comes from God. It's righteous thinking in the mind. Now, what is unholy? Something from the natural carnal mind. It *does not* come from God. Now, too much drink, being intoxicated, having lost control of our senses, our thinking, not being able to control it, we won't know what is of God, coming from God, and what is coming from the natural carnal mind. We will not be able to *distinguish* our thinking, and therefore, we can go to sin very quickly because we'll call something unholy, holy. We'll say, "Ah, it's from God." But we've lost control of our senses because of intoxicating drink. Now we wouldn't be able to distinguish between what is clean, what is coming from God. What is clean? It's God's way are clean. God's ways are *pure*. And what is unclean? What is polluted? What? It is something that is from Satan or from our natural carnal mind.

So the reason why the priesthood was not to have intoxicating drink when approaching God in the tabernacle of meeting—what was the consequence if they did? They would die. Why? Because they'd make mistakes in the way that they thought and what they did. They wouldn't be able to distinguish what the right process was.

Well, how much more for us, brethren, that we come before God and that we *know* how to distinguish what is holy and unholy, through the word of God, by God's power living and dwelling in us, what is clean and unclean. Now, it would be foolish for us not to take guard and be warned of this matter, that we should *always* be on guard about how much alcohol we consume. Because we have access to God all the time, and we *are* the Temple of God, and God wants to dwell *in* us. Therefore, to have too much alcohol, to lose control of our functions, to lose control of our thinking is sin. To become intoxicated to the point of being out of control of our thinking is sin, because of this very principle, that we have to have control of our thinking.

Because the moment we drink too much, what will happen is we lose control of our thinking, and therefore, we are a tool for Satan. Satan then can broadcast quite clearly and we won't know what is right and what is wrong, what is actually clean or unclean, what is holy or unholy.

So this principle is based today, more importantly for us even then than it was for the priesthood. Too much drink can open up a path for evil thoughts. This spiritual principle in Leviticus 10 should be applied to the care of our minds. We should *never* approach God when intoxicated.

We're going to look now at one point about taking personal responsibility in 1 Chronicles 21. Now, this has been covered often within God's Church, which is about David numbering Israel. But there are points here to come to understand about this taking personal responsibility that David demonstrated. But it also highlights the consequences of decisions we make and why we need to be on guard all the time about *discerning* what is clean and what is unclean, in other words, what is right and what is wrong, what is of God and what is not, and what is holy and what is unholy.

1 Chronicles 21:1—Now Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel. So here it is, Satan now is working to influence David. **So David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba to Dan, and bring me the number of them to me that I may know *it*.** Now, David is looking here at measuring the strength of his army. So he wants to measure the strength. So this is about strength. Now, what is strength about? It's about relying on the self. It's about trusting in self, defending self. And if he has enough numbers he will know how strong he really is. Now, this really is a demonstration of a lack of trust in God. Now, David has been enticed here, and the broadcasting of the mind has taken place and he's yielded to this thinking. He hasn't been guarding his mind.

Verse 3—And Joab answered, May the LORD make His people a hundred times more than they are. So he's saying, "Well, let's not rely on numbers. Let God defend us. Let God be the one, and may He increase the numbers...and we don't need to count." **But, my lord the king, *are you not all my lord's servants?*** Which he asked David. **Why then does my lord require this thing?** "Why are you wanting to know the numbers?" Because this is a demonstration of something that he knew that it shouldn't be done. Joab actually was right. There wouldn't be a need to be numbering Israel to find how strong they were. But this is what David had asked. This is what he had been tempted to do and he's yielded to it. **Why should he be the cause of guilt in Israel?** "You make it important, the people will make it important, so let's not do this." **Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore, Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came to Jerusalem. Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to David. All Israel, one million one hundred thousand men who drew the sword, so this is those that could fight, of a particular age, and Judah, four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword. But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's word was an abomination (or abominable) to Joab.** Joab did not believe that he should be doing it, and therefore, going back and not following the instructions of David he has now decided that he wouldn't give the true numbers to David.

And God was displeased with this thing; therefore He (God) struck Israel. So David said to God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing; but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly. So he's now seeking forgiveness. He is now at a point where he realizes that his sin is now causing the suffering of others. Israel is now suffering because of David's decision. Now, David hasn't guarded his thinking, and because of his lack of guarding his mind and doing this others are suffering. Well, that same principle applies to us, brethren. If we don't guard our minds we can cause suffering to others. Now, often we just don't simply think about it or even know often that we are. But it can and it does. When we sin we cause harm to ourselves but also harm to others, because of the way we are.

Verse 9—And the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and tell David, saying, Thus says the LORD: I offer you three *things*; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do *it* to you, so that this forgiveness of sin, which was going to happen, but the penalty would still have to be paid. Now, this often happens in life, where we make mistakes and the penalty will still have to be paid. Not the penalty, "the wages of sin," but the penalty that goes because of the consequences of sin. And we understand there are laws in motion. So here God is saying, "Well, yes, you'll be forgiven, your sin, but there's going to be a penalty to be paid."

Verse 11—So Gad came to David and said to him, Thus says the LORD: Choose for yourself, either three years of famine, or three months to be defeated by the foes with the sword of the armies who overtake you, or else for three days the sword of the LORD—the plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying through all the territory of Israel. Now consider what answer I should take back to Him (to God) who sent me. Now, this would be difficult for a natural carnal mind, but David, because of his heart, because of his thinking, he knew that God was all-merciful. And that's what we should come to understand in this particular event. But we should turn to God and trust in God. And we should trust in God because we don't know what's best for us. We think we know what's best for us, but we don't. Now, God is all-merciful, that's one thing that we can trust in and believe in, because God says He's merciful and He's demonstrated it to us by many things, through the sacrifice of Christ, and also the fact that we're called is a demonstration of God's great mercy to us.

Verse 13—And David said to Gad, I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies *are* very great; but do not let me fall into the hands of man. Now, this is wisdom at work. This is actually true humility. To understand that God knows best *is* humility.

Verse 14—So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell. And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he was destroying, the LORD looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, It is enough; now restrain your hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, so this is that manifestation. He's seeing something, and this is, often this is talking on a symbolic language. For example, the sword, which is a symbol of death, and therefore, David is now seeing something because God has granted it to his mind, because we "see" in the mind. So he "sees" this angel "standing between the earth and heaven," **having his sword in his hand and drawn, stretched out over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. Now, they were clothed in sackcloth because they were at a point of fasting. **And David said to Him, Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered?** Now, he asked this question because it was David that asked for the numbering of Israel. He accepted personal responsibility for his own sin because it *was* his sin. **I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these sheep (these people), what have they done?** Well, the reality is that they were carnal. They were living in sin, but he's asking this in relation to this very matter. This, "What have they done, compared to what I have done? I've numbered Israel. I've trusted in my own strength. I'm trying to build myself up. I'm trying to protect myself. I haven't trusted in You, whereas, I should not have numbered Israel. I don't need to know how many, because if there's only one, it makes no difference. If there are none, it makes no difference," because God is all-powerful and God's will, will be done.**

Continuing on... **Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued.** So this is that element of taking personal responsibility for what we do, for our thoughts, words, and actions, for taking personal responsibility for the *guarding of our minds*. We are the ones who can drink too much. We are the ones who can let down. We are the ones who can neglect our calling. Brethren, we'll be held accountable for our choices.

So we'll end the sermon here today and pick it up next time. □