

DISCERNING
THE LORD'S
BODY

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY

OUR ONGOING IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST THROUGH COMMUNION

Background Reading: Romans 6:3-11

Scripture speaks of coming worthily to the Lord's Supper, discerning what it represents and recognizing that we are engaging in a sacred and holy ceremony.

***“. . .if we are to receive the blessings
communion offers, we need to be living
in obedience, refraining from deliberate
sin and desiring a more intimate
fellowship with Christ. . .”***

However, it can also be said that to discern the Lord's Body and Blood at the communion table is to:

1. Acknowledge that the cup represents Jesus' shed Blood (occasioning death) which was the price paid for our salvation (Hebrews 9:22).
2. Acknowledge that the bread or biscuit represents Jesus' beaten and bruised Body, His suffering (both physical and mental) being necessary for man's physical and mental healing (Isaiah 53:5).
3. Acknowledge that Jesus took man's place at Calvary's Cross, thereby obtaining salvation for all those who identify themselves with Him - by making Him their Lord and Saviour (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Armed with this understanding of the Atonement, we are identifying ourselves with Christ, not only in His death but also in His Resurrection. When Jesus was raised from the dead, He broke the power of sin and everything associated with it (Colossians 2:15). This includes anything that would keep man in bondage, including all sickness and disease. Amen. Indeed when Jesus said, “*It is finished,*” sin was defeated. Therefore we are no longer under any obligation to obey sin or the sin nature, but instead should reckon ourselves to be “*dead indeed unto sin*” :

ROMANS 6:11 Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROMANS 6:12 Let not sin (the sin nature) therefore reign (rule, gain the upper hand) in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof (ungodly lusts of the flesh).

ROMANS 6:13 Neither yield your members (parts of your mortal body) as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin (the sin nature): but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead (raised in “newness of life”), and your members as instruments of righteousness to God (through the energies and graces of the Divine Nature).

ROMANS 6:14 For sin (the sin nature) shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law (trying to please God in your own strength), but under grace (God’s grace is abundantly available to us as we yield and believe for it).

Again, if we are discerning (understanding) the Body and Blood correctly (1 Corinthians 11:28-29), we will be identifying with Christ in all that He went through, knowing that as joint heirs with Him, we too have been legally set free from the power of sin, sickness and disease. He has paid the price, and we are raised up in victory with Him through His Resurrection into “*newness of life.*”

“ . . . Armed with this understanding of the Atonement, we are identifying ourselves with Christ, not only in His death but also in His Resurrection. . . ”

Of course to take advantage of our legal position, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to educate our spirit through the renewing of the mind so that God can empower us, strengthen us and even heal us, if needed. Therefore every time we take communion, we should discern the Body and Blood of Christ in this light, knowing that we have been legally set free from every sin, every bondage and every disease through Christ's broken Body and shed Blood.

If we do not properly discern the Body and Blood, then yes, some may remain sick, become sick or even die prematurely. If we do not properly understand the meaning of the Blood of Christ, the devil will run rampant in our life - for only through the Blood can we be forgiven, cleansed and protected. And when we come to communion, if we have committed transgressions, we need to put them under the Blood if we are to fully identify with Christ.

At this time of communion, we also need to discern the Body of Christ so that we may participate fully in the freedom He has won for our bodies and minds. To be able to discern the Lord's Body properly will help bring our body (if we are sick) into line with the New Testament Covenant that God has made with us through Christ. For as we know, part of this Covenant includes the provision of healing.

In other words we must understand the Atonement - the suffering, death and Resurrection of Christ - and how it applies to us in order to appropriate, on a personal level, the victory Jesus won for us.

When we come together as a corporate body of Believers around the communion table, it can be a time where our faith is activated and even tested. The enemy knows this and will take advantage of us if we allow him to do so. Communion presents us with an opportunity to exercise our faith at whatever level of faith we are at.

This of course will depend on how much we have allowed the Spirit to properly renew our minds with God's Word.

If we do not rid ourselves of sin before we partake of communion, by repenting of it and putting it under the Blood, then we will not be able, at an experiential level, to fully identify with Christ in all aspects - and we will fail the test. If this happens, the devil and his forces will take advantage of our failure to either take, or live on, the higher ground.

“. . .If we do not properly understand the meaning of the Blood of Christ, the devil will run rampant in our life - for only through the Blood can we be forgiven, cleansed and protected. . .”

Before the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites had to identify themselves with God Almighty by shedding the blood of the Passover lamb and painting this blood on the lintels of their doorways. Then the angels of destruction could not touch their households, having to “pass over” those identified by the blood. If they had not obeyed God in this area, then their households would have suffered loss (Exodus 12:3-13).

The same can be said today if we do not continue to identify, in faith, both at communion and in our daily Christian walk, with the precious Body and Blood of Christ. The Lord's Supper represents the crossroads at which we, as the Church, arrive, and what each individual does at this crossroads is important. The devil looks for weak sheep which he can attack, so do not allow yourself to become a weak sheep for there is no need. If you have problems with sin or faith, then seek out a mature Christian who can help you. Remember that God does not withhold His blessings from us - rather the enemy takes advantage of us if we allow him to do so (1 Peter 5:8).

We will now go on to look at how we can discern the Lord's Body from a deeper perspective, examining two Old Testament stories as type-patterns for today.

THE JOURNEY OF THE STRONG

Background Reading: Exodus 12:21-36

To be able to discern the Lord's Body properly will help bring our body (if it is out of line with our New Testament Covenant i.e. good health) into line with the New Testament Covenant that God has made with us through Christ. In the time of Moses, the Israelite people, who were God's "Church" at that time, were taken out of Egypt by God's hand. Even though they were not in the Promised Land but in transition, wandering in the desert, not one was feeble or sick (Psalm 105:37). In fact their sandals and clothing did not wear out (Deuteronomy 29:5), and God supplied the Israelites, who may have numbered 3 - 4 million, with every single requirement (Nehemiah 9:20-21). His Covenant with them was based on the blood of animals, which was a type-pattern of Calvary's sacrifice.

As we have read, in Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church, which probably only numbered hundreds of Believers, many were weak, sickly and feeble. This was the case even though they were a part of the New Testament Church which was based on a Covenant of grace and not law, as the old economy in the Old Testament had been. This new economy, based on grace, was established by the Blood of Jesus. Why then did the Israelites seemingly enjoy greater physical blessings (in terms of health) than the church at Corinth?

1 CORINTHIANS 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:29 For he who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation (judgement) to (upon) himself, not discerning (understanding spiritually) the Lord's Body.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:30 For this cause (careless and unworthy participation) many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep (have died prematurely).

Concerning Moses and his people, it was only after the establishment of the blood-ratified Covenant that God's grace was able to protect, provide for and lead His people. Good health was part of this Covenant.

PSALM 105:37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes (numbering in the millions!).

Today our Covenant with God has been ratified by the Blood of the perfect sacrifice. There is therefore no more reason to sacrifice for Christ fulfilled completely the requirements of the Law, saying "*It is finished* (fulfilled)."

“. . . Concerning Moses and his people, it was only after the establishment of the blood-ratified Covenant that God's grace was able to protect, provide for and lead His people. . . ”

A thing to take note of is that the Israelites did two things in regard to the sacrifice. **Firstly**, they applied the blood to the doorway of their houses for protection. In fact this was the first Passover, and it pointed to, and was a type-pattern of, the last Passover, Christ at Calvary. There were many type-patterns involved in the detailed instructions given by the Lord to Moses and Aaron regarding how the Passover was to be celebrated.

EXODUS 12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish (Jesus was without sin, “a Lamb without blemish and without spot” : 1 Peter 1:19), a male of the first year (representing Jesus Who died at the peak of His manhood): you shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:

EXODUS 12:6 And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month (they were to select the animal on the tenth day, and then kill it on the

fourteenth day [Vs.3]; it was to be minutely inspected during these four days, that no trace of illness would be observed, representing Christ, it had to be perfect): and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. (The actual Hebrew says, “between the two evenings,” which was about 3 p.m. This was the exact time that Jesus died on the Cross of Calvary [Matthew 27:46].) (E.S.B.)

EXODUS 12:7 *And they shall take of the blood (representing Jesus’ shed Blood), and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it (the blood brought protection from judgement).*

The second thing the Lord told His “Church” (Israel) to do was to eat the flesh of the Passover lamb. In order for God’s mercy and grace to be extended to the homes of the Israelites, they had to do these two things so that they could be protected and provided for and not come under judgement.

EXODUS 12:8 *And they shall eat the flesh in that night (referred to in a symbolic sense by Jesus in John 6:53-55), roast with fire (speaks of the judgement of God coming on the Sin-Bearer), and unleavened bread (denotes the perfection of Christ - no leaven = no sin); and with bitter herbs (these were to remind the Hebrews of the bitterness of their slavery in Egypt) they shall eat it.*

EXODUS 12:9 *Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water (Christ cannot be accepted without the Cross), but roast with fire (speaks of the price paid for sin at the Cross); his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof (all of what was accomplished at the Cross must be accepted and embraced).*

EXODUS 12:10 *And you shall let nothing of it remain until the morning (all of the lamb had to be eaten - all of Christ must be accepted, which means all that the Cross*

meant and achieved); and that which remains of it until the morning you shall burn with fire.

EXODUS 12:11 *And thus shall you eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste (in readiness to leave Egypt): it is the Lord's Passover (the Passover was always a type-pattern of Christ and the Cross).*

EXODUS 12:12 *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement: I am the Lord.*

EXODUS 12:13 *And the blood shall be to you for a token (a "token" or symbol of the Blood of the real Pascal Lamb) upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you (this is, without a doubt, one of the single most important Scriptures in the entirety of the Word of God; the lamb had taken the fatal blow; and because it had taken the blow, those in the house would be spared; it was not a question of personal worthiness, self had nothing whatever to do in the matter; it was a matter of faith; all under the cover of the blood were safe, just as all presently under the cover of the Blood are safe; . . . the Lord didn't say, "When I see you," or, "When I see your good works," etc., but, "When I see the blood"; this speaks of Christ and what He would do at the Cross in order that we might be saved . . . : E.S.B.), and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. (Salvation from the "plague" of Judgement is afforded only by the shed Blood of the Lamb, and Faith in that shed Blood : E.S.B.)*

EXODUS 12:14 *And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. (The Passover is continued in the Lord's Supper [1Corinthians 5:7-8] : E.S.B.)*

***“. . .In fact this was the first Passover,
and it pointed to, and was a type-pattern
of, the last Passover, Christ at
Calvary. . .”***

Note: In relation to the instruction to continue the feast of the Passover “for ever,” “it actually continues in the participation by Christians of the “Lord’s Supper,” which in a sense is an outgrowth of the Passover. In fact, God doesn’t recognize the Old Testament Passover anymore, and in fact, hasn’t recognized it since Jesus died on the Cross, and rose from the dead. It was not God’s Will after this great event for men to continue to look to the “type,” when in fact, the “antitype” had come, and had fulfilled all the type. Why does one want to offer up sacrifices of animals, when “the Sacrifice” has been offered! . . .”

“In the Perfect Age to come, which is graphically outlined in Revelation, Chapters 21 and 22, seven times in this account the word “Lamb” as it refers to Christ, is used. Now please understand, in this Perfect Age to come, Satan and all his minions of darkness, plus every unsaved soul, will be in the Lake of Fire. And to be sure, they will be there forever. There will be no more sin or transgression of any nature, but yet, the Holy Spirit refers seven times, as stated, to the “Lamb.” So I think that this tells us that in some fashion, this “memorial” will be kept forever. The word “Lamb” referring to Christ, is used in this fashion, I think, in order that all Believers might know and understand that the great and glorious privileges that we will have forever and forever . . . are all brought about as a result of what Jesus did at the Cross.”¹

As stated, today we keep this feast in the New Testament Church through the ordinance of Communion. Here we come together as a corporate body to remember, appreciate and celebrate Christ our Passover and what He has done for us.

The first requirement represented in type our identification with Christ on the cross. In other words, we must be identified in His death so that we can be identified in His Resurrection. It is the

Blood of Christ which is our covering. It is the Blood which saves from judgement, those who have had their sins forgiven.

EXODUS 12:13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

ROMANS 5:9 Much more then (if Christ died for us while we were sinners) being now justified by His Blood (how much more will He do for us now we are reconciled to Him!), we shall be saved from wrath (the wrath of God directed against sin) through Him.

The second requirement, that of eating the lamb's flesh, had nothing to do with judgement passing over the household, for only blood on the doorways could have provided them with this grace of protection. This second requirement of the Israelites in covenant with God not only gave them physical strength for their journey into the wilderness, it also revealed in a natural way the promise of what was to come because of Calvary in regard to Divine healing/health. Hence, "*there was not one feeble person among their tribes.*"

PSALM 105:37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes (truly an amazing statement!).

When the Israelites ate the flesh of the lamb through physical digestion, this food was sent into their bloodstream to become part of them, flesh of their flesh, bone of their bone, skin of their skin, body of their body. It became part of them. It was a type of the Body of Christ.

When we as a corporate body partake of the bread in the communion service, we are to remember we are part of His perfect Body by digesting the Word in faith in regard to this truth.

Just as the Israelites ate of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:8-11), scripture tells us we are to eat of the Lamb of God, "*the bread of life,*" "*the living bread*" (John 6:48, 51, 53-56). In reality, we eat of the Lamb by embracing all that the Lord commands for our lives, via

the Logos Word and the Rhema Word, according to the leading of the Spirit. It is to do all, relying on His Lordship and so direction. With this God has promised to all who seek, find and embrace His will, the grace to do so.

Eating of all the flesh of the lamb (Exodus 12:10) constitutes a type-pattern which points today to obeying all that our Lord, the true Passover Lamb, has said. When we embrace all that God has said, and the Spirit leads us to do, we will indeed be eating all the Passover Lamb and so giving no grounds for the enemy to afflict us, mind or body.

“ . . . In reality, we eat of the Lamb by embracing all that the Lord commands for our lives, via the Logos Word and the Rhema Word, according to the leading of the Spirit. . . ”

After the Israelites did what the Lord had told them to do with the blood and the body of the lamb, they “*journeyed*” (Exodus 12:37) out of Egypt. As they “*journeyed*,” their sicknesses and diseases left them. Sickness was eradicated, diseases were no more, feebleness was a forgotten thing. The Covenant provided for Divine health.

If the Old Covenant could offer this, what more can the grace of God, which comes through Christ, give to those who believe? No less can or should we expect, for the old economy pointed to the new economy in Christ. The Old Testament Covenant proved that God is “*the Lord Who heals.*” The New Testament Covenant showed the reason for this grace, that it came through the real Lamb of God, by Whose stripes we are healed, of whom the Passover lamb was a type. God was honouring the real Lamb of God ahead of time, in the type, based on the assurance of His foreknowledge. The following story illustrates this truth more clearly.

THE BRASS SERPENT

Background Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

The second Old Testament story concerns the brass serpent. This story follows on from a situation where the people sinned by murmuring against God. Venomous snakes then bit many of the people so that they died.

NUMBERS 21:7 *Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against you; pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us.” And Moses prayed for the people (interceded on their behalf).*

NUMBERS 21:8 *And the Lord said unto Moses, “Make thee a fiery serpent (representing sin), and set it upon a pole (representing the cross): and it shall come to pass, that every one who is bitten, when he looks upon it, shall live (the curse of death shall be lifted, as with those who look upon Christ and the Cross).”*

If we look at the story in Numbers 21:4-9, we will see that the Israelites, who sought healing after being bitten by the snakes, had to look with repentant hearts upon the brass serpent on the pole and believe that God would heal them. This brass serpent on the pole was a type-pattern of Christ, as our Sin Bearer. The snake represented the cursed man, Jesus, the Sin Bearer, Who was cursed on our behalf, taking the penalty of death in our place (Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:23).

Under the Lord’s direction, Moses made a serpent of brass in the wilderness and held it aloft on a pole. Those who looked upon the serpent of brass, if they had been bitten by a serpent, were saved from death.

NUMBERS 21:9 *And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived (it was to Moses . . . that the Lord proclaimed the way that the Son of God would die; it*

would be by the Cross, symbolized by the serpent on the pole : E.S.B.).

The brass serpent on the pole is clearly a type of Christ bearing the sins and sicknesses of man. The serpent was a symbol of sin. Christ Himself never became sinful on the cross but was made the sin offering for the whole world. At this time even the Father forsook Him - while He became the “Sin Bearer” and the sin of the world was legally (though not experientially) attributed to Him. In this way sin’s penalty could be paid, and those who then identify with the Saviour can become righteous in Him!

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 For He (God the Father) has made Him (Jesus) to be sin (a sin offering) for us, Who knew no sin (He was sinless); that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (our sin was imputed to Him, His righteousness imputed to us).

MATTHEW 27:46 And about the ninth hour (3 p.m.) Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is to say, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

As the Israelites, with humble, repentant hearts, looked upon this brass serpent which represented Christ as the Atonement sacrifice, today we must also, with humble hearts, look in faith upon Christ Who was placed on the cross (pole). As we do so, we must trust that through Him, our sin and sickness bearer, we have been made whole (been healed), spirit, soul and body.

“ . . . The snake represented the cursed man, Jesus, the Sin Bearer, Who was cursed on our behalf, taking the penalty of death in our place. . . ”

He paid a debt He did not owe. We owed a debt we could not pay. As our Kinsman Redeemer He took the penalty we deserved,

thus satisfying the law of perfect justice. This has brought us peace and reconciliation with our God. Amen.

COLOSSIANS 1:20 And God purposed that through - by the service, the intervention of - Him (the Son) all things should be completely reconciled back to Himself, whether on earth or in heaven, as through Him [the Father] made peace by means of the Blood of His cross. (Amp)

ALL SIN AND SICKNESS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

When the Israelites looked upon the serpent, it represented Christ the cursed One, Who would nail our sin and everything associated with the curse to the Cross. This of course was a once-only payment to bring to nought our sin, and to give us power over sin and the sin nature itself. Only if they looked upon that which represented the Redeemer (Who would stand in their place, become a curse for them and take the punishment due to all men on their behalf), could God bring His grace to the rescue - even that day hundreds of years before the sacrifice. In God's perfect foreknowledge, it was counted to the Israelites as salvation as they trusted (unknowingly) in the Saviour of the Cross - through the type-pattern of the serpent on the pole. Really they were trusting in God's representative Moses who spoke God's Word and told them to look upon the serpent and live. This gave God the legal ground to heal them, as He, by His foreknowledge, worked backwards from the Cross. So although they didn't understand, in a spiritual sense, they were trusting Christ, the Lamb of God, as revealed by God after the Fall.

GENESIS 3:15 And I will put enmity (animosity) between you (here the Lord is speaking to Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed (Jesus the Redeemer); it (He) shall bruise your head, and you shalt bruise His heel.

Each time the Israelites, according to the Law, made a blood sacrifice for sin, they were trusting ahead of time, because of the type-pattern, in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, i.e. that their sins

would be forgiven. The types were a result of Calvary, even though they were forerunners. In trusting in the types, they were trusting in that which was to come. This enabled God to account it to them as righteousness. So as stated, they were really trusting in Christ through the type-pattern that the serpent on the pole represented.

They trusted and relied on the Saviour, Who was to come by promise, that what He would do would negate sin's power and anything associated with it. In this they looked upon the serpent who represented the cursed Christ, the One Who was to take the punishment of the curse, namely death. If they did this, i.e., looked upon the serpent and trusted in what God's servant Moses had said, then they were able to enjoy some of the benefits of the Cross - even at this point in time.

GALATIANS 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, "Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree" (Deuteronomy 21:23)

Nothing has changed in this New Testament Age except the Saviour, Who was to be put on a cross that the pole represented, has come. The promise has been fulfilled. In the Old Testament era, the people of God had to look forward to the Cross, trusting in the types which represented Christ. In this New Testament Age, we must look back to the Cross and focus our attention on Him with a repentant heart, so as to allow the Blood of Christ to wash our sin away. In this our sin, and anything associated with it, is nailed to the Cross. We no longer need types for the real Saviour has come. Indeed He died and was raised from the dead for us, so that we may have life and have it more abundantly.

“. . . In the Old Testament era, the people of God had to look forward to the Cross . . . In this New Testament Age, we must look back to the Cross. . .”

Christ took our complete punishment on the Cross so that we could have complete salvation of spirit, mind and body. However

only if our sin is left at the Cross can we then, by faith, enjoy all the benefits of the Atonement. In other words, we must, with the eye of faith, with a clean heart and a humble spirit, see ourselves after our sin is nailed to the Cross of Christ as being raised up with Christ into newness of life (as partakers of the Divine Nature):

2 PETER 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises (refers to the Word of God): that by these (promises) you might be partakers of the Divine Nature (given to all who are saved), having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (speaks of salvation and ongoing sanctification).

Therefore, in dealing with sin, we must forever look to the crucified Christ, and leave all our sin nailed to the Cross through repentance. Then with a heart of faith, we must see ourselves in Christ, denailed from the Cross, and raised with Him to enjoy the benefits the Cross has afforded us (Romans 6:1-8). So in order to be raised with Him in a conditional sense and enjoy the graces provided by the Atonement, our day-to-day sin must be nailed to the Cross. To have unconfessed sin in our life, or not to have proper focus concerning the spiritual realities of the Cross, will cause us not to experience the benefits of our salvation at an experiential level.

In other words we are to look on and trust in the Christ of the Cross, and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the truth of the greatest words that were ever spoken: *“It is finished.”*

It tells us in Hosea that God’s people can be destroyed through a lack of spiritual knowledge (Hosea 4:6). But Christ promised that He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to teach us and lead us, as Christians, into all the truth needed to live in abundant life (John 14:16, 17, 26).

Even today the snake-bitten sons and daughters of Adam need to trust in the crucified Christ to be healed of their sin. Even as a Christian, if sin enters one’s life, the Cross and the Blood must be the answer. This is true, however, for all sin, that of the heathen and the Christian alike. Deliverance from sin and its curse comes only as we look upon Christ on the Cross, determining to leave our sin in the hands of the Saviour through our repentance and trust in Him.

“. . . To have unconfessed sin in our life, or not to have proper focus concerning the spiritual realities of the Cross, will cause us not to experience the benefits of our salvation at an experiential level. . . ”

Not to continue to develop in our relationship with the Lord, by growing in the knowledge of God’s will and Word and the power thereof, will cause sin to accumulate in our lives. This will drag us back in those areas of sin to live in its dark valleys. We need to leave our sin behind, nailed to the Cross, so that the process of ongoing sanctification may take place. In this way we can become more Christ-like, and develop a passion for the things of God. Then the Holy Spirit can help us develop faith in our hearts to move the mountains that would try to stop God working in our lives and us serving Him on the mountain tops. However everything proceeds from the Cross. We cannot bypass the Cross, for all sin, past present and future, must be nailed to it. Only when the Blood is applied to our sin can all this take place.

If you are a Christian living for God and you become sick, then this is the time to focus your faith on the fact that Christ allowed Himself to be nailed to the Cross so that along with our sin, all sickness could also be nailed to the Cross. For as we have said, He became a curse for us. In other words, He took all the punishment required to free us from the curse we were under - and this includes the curse of sickness.

With this focus of all sickness being nailed to the Cross, you can then either pray yourself or receive the prayer you need from another. As this takes place, let the picture of Moses and the serpent on the pole be in your mind’s eye. Know that it was a pattern or a type of Christ, our Deliverer, on the Cross of Calvary, so that we could be identified positionally and conditionally in His Resurrection.

ROMANS 6:4 Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (we died with Christ, we were buried with Him along with all our sins and

transgressions, and His Resurrection was ours as well into newness of life!).

The abundant life spoken of in the scriptures (e.g. John 10:10) includes freedom from sickness and disease, for through His stripes and the Cross (within the context of the complete Atonement), He paid the price for the curse of sickness to be lifted (Isaiah 53:5).

Our focus must be Jesus our Lord, the object of our faith must be His Cross and we must recognize our power source as the Holy Spirit. Then we will find our victory in Him. As we with proper focus identify with Him, the power of His Resurrection is made available to us. But for this to be a reality in our lives, we need faith.

We can be confident that both sin and sickness are nailed to the Cross of Christ. We need only then allow the Holy Spirit to develop the faith in us to believe this - so that the victory may be ours.

With Christ as our focus and the Cross as the object of our faith, know that the Holy Spirit will bring the power of God to heal broken bodies according to the finished work of Calvary and the boundaries of this work.

The story of the brass serpent represents to us, in the New Covenant, man repenting and putting his sin under the Blood of Christ, then trusting in the Lord that the power to heal will be available because of the Atonement.

THE LORD OUR HEALER

The Atonement has provided God's grace by which we can be made whole in every area. As we have stated, Christ paid the full price for our redemption and this includes healing. Faith must reach out and grasp it when it is needed so that the Father may be glorified through Jesus.

Again it is by faith in the Cross (the Atonement) that the benefits of the Cross flow to us in an experiential way, from salvation to bodily healing. God was not only the Israelites' Deliverer from the destroyer, He was also the Healer of their diseases. In fact one of God's names is "Jehovah - Rapha" which means "*the Lord our healer*" or "*the Lord Who heals*" (Exodus 15:26).

***“. . .Our focus must be Jesus our Lord,
the object of our faith must be His Cross
and we must recognize our power source
as the Holy Spirit. . .”***

God is the same yesterday and today, and will be the same tomorrow and forever. He changes not. The Lord still heals today as we eat by faith God's living Word, Jesus the Pascal Lamb of God, so as to be one with Him. As we have said, this eating is a spiritual action involving the embracing of all God has for us. In doing this we will be believing to be filled with God's life-giving graces that will bring about change, first on the inside (to the mind and heart) and then on the outside (to the body) - as faith is developed within us to make proper demands on heaven's power. Christ went through all that He did not only so we could have life (so that our names could be written in the Book of Life in heaven) but so that we could have abundant life. This is essentially to have the power of God to walk in His will, and so to please the Father in all we do.

JOHN 10:10 The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I (Jesus) am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (to the full).

Under the Covenant, sickness and disease are therefore a marked enemy to be eradicated on sight. The only way to experience this abundant life, however, is by taking up your cross, then yielding daily to the Holy Spirit so that the graces and energies of the Divine Nature are made available to you both to will and then to do of God's good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). Don't let sin rob you of your inheritance in Christ. Repent, be restored by the Blood and eat of Christ until full of His grace so that you may run the race set before you. The Israelites' race was set before them, but sadly many did not enter the Promised Land of God's will, flowing with milk and honey.

“ . . . Under the Covenant, sickness and disease are therefore a marked enemy to be eradicated on sight. . . ”

Only as we, by faith, apply the Blood to our sin so that we are washed clean, can we then eat by faith of the goodness of Christ’s flesh. As we do this, as we journey with the Spirit Who leads and empowers us, and as we apply the Word of God to any need for bodily healing, sickness and disease will have no place in our lives. We will grow old gracefully, still in our old age running as a foot soldier of the Cross, not in the power of the flesh but in the power of the Divine Nature which energizes our very being, and helps us become one with God.

2 PETER 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We can even have the mind of Christ, which is to think as He thinks. This is to have the same mindset Christ had when He walked the earth, a divinely energized mind so that in thought and power, He could do the will of the Father.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have (access to) the mind of Christ (so that we are able to see things as He sees them through the eye of faith).

As we come around the communion table let us remember that the Lord is not only the Forgiver of sins but also the Lord Who heals all those who would, by faith, eat of the Passover Lamb of God.

PSALM 103:3 (Bless the Lord) Who forgives all your iniquities; Who heals all your diseases;

ISAIAH 53:4 Surely He has borne (in punishment) our griefs (sickness, weakness and disease), and carried our

sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

ISAIAH 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions (rebellion), He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace (the punishment that brought us peace) was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed (and made whole).

Sickness should then have no more power over us than sin. We should no more accept sickness in our lives than we accept sin. Both have been dealt with through the Cross. There is nothing left to do, as we have said, except **repent** (of sin), **believe** (God's Word), **reckon** (ourselves to be dead to the old man and alive to the new man in Christ), then **yield** (on a daily basis to the Holy Spirit) (Romans 6:8-13).

With the Divine Nature of which we are now partakers in Christ (2 Peter 1:4) energizing us, we can then become one in faith with Christ. Then through prayer, Anointing for healing is able to flow from the centre of our being outward to touch our flesh (or through prayer the flesh of another). Only holy faith can make proper demands on the Anointing of God. Only in the energy of the Divine Nature can we obtain this faith - this belief and trust in Christ, His Atonement and what it has given to us, health and wholeness in every area.

“ . . .Sickness should then have no more power over us than sin. We should no more accept sickness in our lives than we accept sin. . . ”

When we take up the cup that represents the shed Blood of Christ, we should do so with a heart which expresses gratitude that indeed our sins have been washed away. We should also give thanks to the Father that the power of sin has been broken in our lives. In fact it no longer has any dominion over us. This is because, being raised with Christ, each of us has become a partaker of the new Nature within. We are to be thankful and appreciative that we have

been born again, and that the old (unregenerated) man is no longer with us, having been nailed to the Cross with Christ. This is how we discern the Lord's Blood.

When we eat the bread we are to rejoice in faith that healing is now ours - that by His stripes we are healed, and we are one with Him. What He has, we have, for we are bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh and body of His Body. In this we rejoice that in addition to sin, sickness no longer has any power over us. This is how we discern the Lord's Body.

EPHESIANS 5:30 For we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

The key is that after the Israelites made a Covenant, they "journeyed" (Exodus 12:37) under God's direction given through Moses, God's saviour for Israel, a type-pattern of the Christ Who was to come. If they had not "journeyed," they would have remained in Egypt. If they had stayed in or turned back to Egypt, they would have removed themselves from the Covenant, for the blessings that came with it were conditional upon them following God's directions. When the Israelites did follow God's directions, sicknesses and infirmities left them.

If we do not "journey" hand in hand with God in our walk on the earth, then the blessings of the Covenant will be denied us because we are not seeking or allowing the Lord to show us the path for our life. In this New Testament Age, we do not live under the Law of Moses as the Israelites did to obtain God's blessings. Rather we live under the law of grace. In this the only requirements are that we abide in Christ, are led of the Spirit, and have faith in God's Word.

Today not law but faith releases the Covenant's promises. By obeying the Law and following Moses, the Israelites found that sickness and disease were no longer in the camp. Today we as Christians could go to church faithfully every Sunday, but this would not necessarily bring to us any of the Covenant blessings beyond salvation. Indeed unless faith accompanies our actions, we cannot appropriate the promises of our New Testament Covenant. This, of course, includes healing.

HEBREWS 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he who comes to God must believe that He is (that He exists), and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.

DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY

Faith recognizes the truth of God's Covenant and holds fast to the promised benefits of Christ's Atonement. At communion we, by this faith, are saying that when we partake of the bread, we are one with the Lamb of God and He is one with us. With this faith we can profess that *"by His stripes we are healed."*

"...Today not law but faith releases the Covenant's promises..."

Eating in faith means becoming one with Christ through faith in the Atonement, which then affords us the physical benefits of our Covenant with God. In communion we are to remember the applied Blood. We are also to remember that by faith, we have eaten His flesh through identifying with Him on the Cross as our substitute, and, in His strength, embracing all that He commands us to do.

He was beaten so that we can be made whole, free from all sickness and disease. He suffered pain so we don't have to suffer the pain of sickness. Remember all this when you partake of the bread of communion.

MATTHEW 8:17 And thus He fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, He Himself took [in order to carry away] our weaknesses and infirmities and bore away our diseases. (Amp.)

In the church at Corinth many were sick, showing that surely something was lacking - as it is in many churches today. As we have said, and let us never forget, God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is the God Who heals all our diseases. By faith we must accept this. In the power of the Divine Nature we must take up our cross of self denial, and by faith we must "journey" so as to follow

the same Spirit Who led the Israelites finally, when all unbelief was gone, into the land of promise.

To the Believer who would trust in His Covenant, God has proven Himself over the many centuries to be the Healer of sickness as well as the Forgiver of sins. Both have been taken care of in the Atonement. So we need to “arise” from our bed of sickness - if we have one - in the power of the Spirit of Truth. Jesus’ Blood was shed at Calvary not only for the remission of sins, but to seal the promise by which we can be healed. This was paid for by His stripes, the terrible beating and the punishment that He endured, while still believing and trusting in the Father. Jesus maintaining His faith in the Father at this time was essential for the benefits of the Atonement to come to us - for it meant He did not sin. Faith prevailed in His life, proving that no matter what the world or the devil did, He was going to remain righteous to the end. He was crushed for our guilt, the punishment needed for us to obtain peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are (have been) healed (Isaiah 53:4-5). Surely He has borne our griefs (sicknesses) and carried our sorrows (pains). We are made whole through this great Atonement, spirit, soul and body. He took away our infirmities, every last one - feebleness of mind and body, and all weaknesses. Infirmity and sickness should have no more power over us than sin does. Again, if we don’t accept sin in our lives, then we should not accept infirmity and sickness. Christ paid the price so that we do not have to be shackled by sin and sickness.

“ . . . Jesus’ Blood was shed at Calvary not only for the remission of sins, but to seal the promise by which we can be healed. . . ”

By taking the red liquid at communion, we are remembering the shed Blood that saved us from our sin and washed us clean, giving us spiritual healing.

By eating the bread at communion, we are bringing into remembrance the sacrifice of the broken Body so that we might have

physical healing by having faith in the Atonement that makes us one with Christ.

LUKE 22:19 And He took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, "This is (represents) My Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me."

LUKE 22:20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is (represents) the New Testament (New Covenant) in My Blood, which is shed for you."

1 CORINTHIANS 11:24 And when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "Take, eat: this is My Body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me."

1 CORINTHIANS 11:25 After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, "This cup is the New Testament in My Blood: this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?

We need to discern with proper focus in order to appropriate, by faith, the Lord's Body for our healing. When we discern the Lord's Body properly, we will not do as many in the church at Corinth did - take the Lord's supper unworthily.

We need to understand our Covenant with God - that it is a Blood and Body of Christ Covenant.

The power of the Blood was such that it was able to ratify the Covenant between man and God. In the Old Testament spiritual economy, because of the state of man and the worth of the animal sacrifices, these sacrifices had to be performed on a yearly basis.

The offering of a perfect sacrifice fulfilled all the requirements of the Law, and introduced the New Testament economy of grace.

Because of the worth of this sacrifice, no further offering or sacrifice is needed. The Covenant has been ratified by the Blood shed at Calvary on our behalf. The price for our sin, for our health and for our future has been paid in full. *“It is finished,”* Jesus said. The price was paid and accepted by the courts of heaven. So because the Blood has ratified the Covenant of Divine healing, we can now say, “By His stripes I am healed.”

The Blood is the answer to the problem of sin. The wounded Body of the Saviour was needed to answer the problem of sickness and disease.

As the old hymn proclaims:

“There is power, power, wonder working power in the Blood of the Lamb.

There is power, power, wonder working power in the precious Blood of the Lamb.”

***“ . . . The price for our sin, for our health
and for our future has been paid in full. .
.”***

JESUS' STRIPES

The healing power of God is available today because Jesus maintained His faith in His Father's Word during His time of terrible physical and mental suffering on and before the cross. He maintained His faith in the Father, having complete trust that He would not ask anything of His Son that wasn't necessary. This testing proved Him to be the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sin. Note that the word *“stripes”* in Isaiah 53:5 is properly translated from the original Hebrew as “wound.”

JOHN 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged (whipped) Him.

ISAIAH 53:4 Surely He (Jesus) has borne (taken) our griefs (sickness, weakness and disease), and carried our sorrows: yet we did (ignorantly) esteem (consider) Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

ISAIAH 53:5 But He was wounded (pierced) for our transgressions (rebellion), He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace (the punishment that brought us peace) was upon Him (and Him alone); and with (by) His stripes (wounds) we are healed (and made whole).

Wuest writes concerning the “stripes” of 1 Peter 2:24, which Peter wrote about in reference to Isaiah 53:5:

*“The Roman scourge was a lash usually made of leather thongs loaded at intervals with bone or metal. Peter, in his first epistle (2:24), in the words, “with whose **stripes** ye were healed,” gives us a vivid picture of his recollection of how our Lord’s back looked after the scourging. The word “**stripes**” in the Greek text is in the singular number. The word refers to a bloody wale trickling with blood that arises under a blow. Our Lord’s back was so lacerated by the scourge that it was one mass of open, raw, quivering flesh trickling with blood, not a series of stripes or cuts, but one mass of torn flesh.”²*

(underlines added)

In this physical state, our Lord would have suffered incredible physical pain that would also have produced enormous mental suffering. The stripes, mentioned in Isaiah 53:5, caused much pain and suffering to our Saviour. The injustice, betrayal and abandonment He experienced were added to increase His soulish suffering (mental anguish) so that we may have peace and wholeness in our minds. In the suffering and ultimate death of the Lamb of God on the cross, holy justice was satisfied, the curse upon man (spirit, soul and body) being taken care of at the Atonement.

“ . . . Our Lord’s back was so lacerated by the scourge that it was one mass of open, raw, quivering flesh trickling with blood, not a series of stripes or cuts, but one mass of torn flesh. . . ”

The “*stripes*” (wound) relates to the physical suffering Jesus endured - so that we may be healed. As we have said, the Atonement consists of the suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus. The suffering aspect of the Atonement included the physical suffering of Jesus, the mental suffering of Jesus and the spiritual suffering of Jesus - throughout the crucifixion and the lead up to it. After this time of terrible testing was finished, Jesus’ death and then His Resurrection completed the Atonement process.

However it is not just by the stripes which Jesus bore that we are able to be healed. It is because He maintained His faith through this whole time of testing that we, today, can obtain the healing power of God when we need it. It was by His shed Blood that the promise was then sealed, and healing became available to us.

Our debt for salvation, as well as the debt for the healing of our soul and body, have been “paid in full” through the Atonement. Let us never forget that Jesus bore the punishment due to us through this whole process.

1 PETER 2:24 Who His own self bore our sins in His own Body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes you were (past tense) healed (body and soul).

HEBREWS 5:9 And (through His completed experience) being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him

Our Saviour’s sufferings in relation to the Atonement were vicarious, “borne” by Him on behalf of man to save him from the consequences of sin (Romans 8:17). We could then see Isaiah 53:4 in this same light, “*Surely He has borne* (paid the price through vicarious suffering for) *our griefs* (sicknesses).”

Yes sin was “borne” by Christ, but so was all sickness and disease that sin had brought into the world. However, He did not bear our sins and sicknesses in His Body as such. He bore the penalty for our sins and our sicknesses, the penalty being the debt we could never pay. He bore the penalty for the curse of sickness to be lifted.

MATTHEW 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying, “Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses.”

“The word “infirmities” in this 17th verse speaks of feebleness of mind and body, malady, frailty, disease, sickness and weakness. All this Christ bore on the Cross fulfilling Isaiah 53.”³

“ . . . The suffering aspect of the Atonement included the physical suffering of Jesus, the mental suffering of Jesus and the spiritual suffering of Jesus - throughout the crucifixion and the lead up to it . . . ”

Therefore we can see that Jesus has already paid the price for us to obtain healing and wholeness in every area of our lives. Our healing was paid for approximately 2,000 years ago. God waits for us to meet the conditions so that His power can make this truth a reality in each of our lives, for we can know from the promises in scripture that God wants His people to be fit and well, and to live in good health. Jack Hayford speaks accordingly of the provision of the Cross:

“HEALING, DIVINE, THE MINISTRY OF: The dynamic ministry of Jesus not only revealed God’s heart of love for mankind’s need of a Redeemer, but unveiled God’s compassionate heart of mercy for mankind’s need of a Healer. The will of God was perfectly disclosed in His Son; we are to seek ways to fully convey that perfect revelation. Just as the Fall of man introduced sickness as a part of the curse, the Cross of Christ has opened a door to healing as part of salvation’s provision. Healing encompasses God’s power to restore

broken hearts, broken homes, broken lives, and broken bodies. Suffering assumes a multiplicity of forms, but Christ's blood not only covers our sin with redemptive love; His stripes release a resource of healing at every dimension of our need." ⁴

(underlines added)

Jesus Himself, spirit, soul and body, had to receive the punishment due to us for sin. He had to suffer in these three areas of man's makeup in order to pay the price for man to be made whole in each of these areas. Therefore He suffered mental torment so that we can have peace ("*the chastisement of our peace was upon Him*" (Isaiah 53:5). See also Luke 22:44). He suffered physical torment so that we can be healed in our body ("*and with His stripes we are healed*" (Isaiah 53:5). See also Isaiah 52:14, Luke 22:63-64). His spirit suffered in that the Father turned away from Jesus as He became the "Sin Bearer" (Matthew 27:46). Ultimately the price paid for wholeness in our spirit was death - for without the shedding of Christ's Blood (bringing about death) there can be no forgiveness.

“ . . . Since the body, soul, and spirit of man had sinned and were under the sentence of death, it took the whole being of the Messiah to take man's place. . . ”

In suffering in His righteous spirit, soul and body, Jesus became a complete sacrifice for our spirit, soul and body. He suffered to the full extent, spiritually, mentally and physically. This suffering constituted, before death, as much pain and suffering as any man could endure while remaining alive and sinless. This mental and physical suffering was necessary for the healing of our mind and body. Then for our spirit, He shed His Blood and laid His life down so that He could die in our place. He took this, our penalty, so that we could be cleansed (healed) in our spirit, and brought back into proper relationship with the Father.

ISAIAH 53:10 Yet it pleased the Lord (Jehovah) to bruise Him (Jesus); He has put Him to grief: when You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His

seed (spiritual offspring = born-again Christians), He shall prolong His days (this refers to the Resurrection), and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper (all shall be restored as it was before the Fall) in His hand (by His rule).

ISAIAH 53:11 He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied (the redemptive price having been paid): by His knowledge (the knowledge of Him being imparted to men's hearts) shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities (through the Atonement).

As Dake wrote concerning Isaiah 53:10:

“Complete sacrifice (Isaiah 53:10). Himself - His entire self, not His personal soul only. It took His body, soul, and spirit to make a complete offering for sin and sickness. He was a complete substitute for man. Since the body, soul, and spirit of man had sinned and were under the sentence of death, it took the whole being of the Messiah to take man's place. The word soul is sometimes used of an individual (Genesis 12:5; 41:26). There is no such thing as sinning with the flesh and not with the soul and the spirit, as taught by some. The flesh cannot be filthy and the soul and spirit holy. The body became sinful, depraved and diseased by sin in the fall, and the body must be redeemed from these things if redemption is to be complete.”

“Why God was pleased with the death of Christ (Isaiah 53 verse 10). The only reason it pleased Jehovah to permit Him to be crucified was to bring about the redemption of the whole creation so that His eternal program could be carried out with man on earth (v10). He could not have been pleased with the mutilation of His beloved Son because He punished men for this (Acts 2:22-24; 1 Thessalonians 2:16). Both the Father and the Son volunteered to suffer such indignities for the salvation of men (John 3:16; 10:18). Such a sacrifice on the part of God showed His divine perfection, justice, mercy, and boundless benevolence. The law was upheld, sin was judged, and a basis of pardon and eternal reconciliation was made possible.”⁵

The Atonement has completely addressed all of man's problems both in a legal sense and a conditional sense. It has not only dealt with sin and satisfied justice but has made the way for the grace of God to empower us to live in God's abundant blessings. Indeed the Atonement has opened heaven's gates so that now in Christ we are blessed with "*all spiritual blessings*" (Ephesians 1:3). Because Jesus suffered on our behalf in His body, soul and spirit, the Atonement is complete in addressing the entire need of man, body, soul and spirit.

Before coming around the communion table, Christians should be prepared, through such teaching as we have just studied, in order to have a proper spiritual focus at this time of appreciation and celebration. In this way, we will be able to discern the Lord's Body and Blood properly, as we are meant to do. Then we will not have "Corinthian" churches, but rather, Holy Spirit taught, led and empowered churches, which can and will make a difference in the land. Amen.

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

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NOTES

NOTES

- 1 S.B.C. Exodus pg.171.
- 2 Wuest, K. S., Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Mark 15:13.
- 3 S.B.C. Matthew, pg.136.
- 4 Hayford, J. W., Hayford's Bible Handbook.
- 5 F.J.Dake., Dake's Annotated Reference Bible.

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to see people living
in abundant life
by the power of God
through Jesus Christ"*



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