

Message Six

The Intrinsic Significance of the Purification of the Returned Captives

RA Hymns: 1122, 744

Scripture Reading: Ezra 9:1—10:44; Neh. 13:23-30a;
Matt. 5:8; Rev. 21:18b, 21b; 22:4

- Ezra 9:1 Now when these things had been completed, the officials approached me, saying, The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.
- Ezra 9:2 For they have taken some of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands; indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this unfaithfulness.
- Ezra 9:3 And when I heard about this matter, I tore my garment and my robe, and pulled out hair from my head and my beard, and sat down appalled.
- Ezra 9:4 Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel on account of the unfaithfulness of those of the captivity was gathered to me, and I sat appalled until the evening meal offering.
- Ezra 9:5 And at the time of the evening meal offering I rose up from my affliction, even with my garment and my robe torn, and I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to Jehovah my God.
- Ezra 9:6 And I said, O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have multiplied over our head, and our guilt has increased up to the heavens.
- Ezra 9:7 Since the days of our fathers up to this day we have been exceedingly guilty; and because of our iniquities we, our kings and our priests, have been delivered up into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to plunder, and to shamefacedness, as it is this day.
- Ezra 9:8 And now for a brief moment favor has been shown by Jehovah our God to leave us a remnant to escape and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a little reviving in our bondage.
- Ezra 9:9 For we are slaves, yet our God has not forsaken us in our bondage but has extended lovingkindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to raise up the house of our God and to repair its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.
- Ezra 9:10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments,
- Ezra 9:11 Which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, The land which you are entering to possess is a land unclean with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations, with which they have filled it from one end to another, and with their defilement.
- Ezra 9:12 Now therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, nor seek their peace or their prosperity forever; that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.
- Ezra 9:13 And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve and have given us those who have escaped as this,
- Ezra 9:14 Shall we again break Your commandments and intermarry with the peoples that do these abominations? Will You not be angry with us until You have consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor any who escape?
- Ezra 9:15 O Jehovah the God of Israel, You are righteous; for we have been left a remnant of those who have escaped, as it is this day. Here we are before You in our guilt, although none can stand before You because of this.
- Ezra 10:1 Now while Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a very large gathering of men and women and children was gathered together to him out of Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.
- Ezra 10:2 And Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said to Ezra, We have acted unfaithfully against our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, yet now there is hope for Israel concerning this.
- Ezra 10:3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and those born of them according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the law.
- Ezra 10:4 Arise, for the matter is your responsibility, but we are with you; be strong, and do it.
- Ezra 10:5 Then Ezra arose and made the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel swear that they

would do according to this word; so they swore.

Ezra 10:6 Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib; and when he came there, he ate no bread and drank no water, for he was mourning because of the unfaithfulness of those of the captivity.

Ezra 10:7 And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together to Jerusalem;

Ezra 10:8 And that whoever did not come within three days, according to the counsel of the leaders and the elders, all his possessions should be forfeited, and he himself should be separated from the congregation of the captivity.

Ezra 10:9 Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together to Jerusalem within the three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month, and all the people sat in the open square in front of the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of the heavy rain.

Ezra 10:10 And Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, You have acted unfaithfully and have married foreign women to increase the guilt of Israel.

Ezra 10:11 Now therefore make confession to Jehovah the God of your fathers, and do His will, and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign women.

Ezra 10:12 Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, It is so; we must do as you have said.

Ezra 10:13 But the people are many, and it is a time of heavy rain, and we are not able to stand outside; neither is this a task for one day or two, for we have transgressed greatly in this matter.

Ezra 10:14 Let our leaders represent the whole congregation, and let all those who are in our cities who have married foreign women come at appointed times and with them the elders of every city and their judges, until the fierce anger of our God is turned away from us on account of this matter.

Ezra 10:15 Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tikvah stood up against this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite supported them.

Ezra 10:16 And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, with certain heads of fathers' houses were set apart according to their fathers' houses, all of them by name; and they sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.

Ezra 10:17 And they finished with all the men who had married foreign women by the first day of the first month.

Ezra 10:18 And among the sons of the priests who had married foreign women there were found of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brothers: Maaseiah and Eliezer and Jarib and Gedaliah.

Ezra 10:19 And they pledged that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their guilt.

Ezra 10:20 And of the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah.

Ezra 10:21 And of the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uzziyah.

Ezra 10:22 And of the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasaah.

Ezra 10:23 And of the Levites: Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah (that is, Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

Ezra 10:24 And of the singers: Eliashib. And of the gatekeepers: Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.

Ezra 10:25 And of Israel: of the sons of Parosh: Ramiah, and Izziah, and Malchijah, and Mijamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.

Ezra 10:26 And of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Elijah.

Ezra 10:27 And of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.

Ezra 10:28 And of the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, Athlai.

Ezra 10:29 And of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, Jeremoth.

Ezra 10:30 And of the sons of Pahath-moab: Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.

Ezra 10:31 And of the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

Ezra 10:32 Benjamin, Malluch, Shemariah.

Ezra 10:33 Of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, Shimei.

Ezra 10:34 Of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, and Uel,

Ezra 10:35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluhi,

Ezra 10:36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

Ezra 10:37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu,

Ezra 10:38 And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,

Ezra 10:39 And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,

Ezra 10:40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

Ezra 10:41 Azarel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,

Ezra 10:42 Shallum, Amariah, Joseph.

Ezra 10:43 Of the sons of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, and Joel, Benaiah.
 Ezra 10:44 All these had taken foreign wives; and some of them had wives by whom they had children.
 Neh 13:23 In those days I also saw that the Jews had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab;
 Neh 13:24 And as for their children, half spoke in the language of Ashdod; and none of them could speak the language of Judah, but they spoke the language of the respective peoples.
 Neh 13:25 And I contended with them and cursed them and struck some of them and pulled out their hair; and I made them swear by God, saying, You shall not give your daughters to their sons nor take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves.
 Neh 13:26 Did not Solomon the king of Israel sin in these matters? And among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel; yet the foreign wives caused even him to sin.
 Neh 13:27 Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil by acting unfaithfully against our God in marrying foreign women?
 Neh 13:28 And one of the sons of Joiada the son of Eliashib the high priest was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite, so I chased him away from me.
 Neh 13:29 Remember them, O my God; for they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.
 Neh 13:30a Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign. ...
 Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
 Rev 21:18b ... and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
 Rev 21:21b ... And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.
 Rev 22:4 And they will see His face, and His name will be on their forehead.

I. The Lord’s recovery is unique, and it must be absolutely pure, single, and holy, without any mixture; thus, we need Ezras and Nehemiahs to carry out a purifying work; in all the steps of the Lord’s recovery, there is the need of purification:

- A. Ezra purified the recovery by causing “the holy seed” to be separated from anything heathen—Ezra 9:1—10:44:
 Ezra 9:1~10:44 be omitted.
1. Before Ezra arrived, there was mixture because some of the Israelites had married heathen wives and had children born of this mixture; this is a type, which we should apply spiritually, not literally.
 2. In the Lord’s recovery there is the need of purification to separate “the holy seed” from anything that is heathen—9:1-2:
 Ezra 9:1 Now when these things had been completed, the officials approached me, saying, The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.
 Ezra 9:2 For they have taken some of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands; indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this unfaithfulness.
 - a. The Lord’s recovery is the holy seed; we must be so pure that the holy seed will never be mingled with anything heathen.
 - b. When the recovery is holy, we will see the Lord’s blessing—Ezek. 34:26.
 Ezek 34:26 And I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing, and I will cause the showers to come down in their season; there will be showers of blessing.
- B. After the building up of the house, we need purification (seen under Ezra’s leadership), and after the building up of the city, we need to be purified again (seen with Nehemiah’s absoluteness)—Ezra 9:1-2; 10:1-44; Neh. 13:1-30a.
 Ezra 9:1 Now when these things had been completed, the officials approached me, saying, The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even those of

the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

Ezra 9:2 For they have taken some of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands; indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this unfaithfulness.

Ezra 10:1~44 be omitted.

Neh 13:1 On that day they read in the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and it was found written in it that no Ammonite or Moabite should enter the assembly of God forever,

Neh 13:2 For they did not meet the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them; yet our God turned the curse into a blessing.

Neh 13:3 And when they heard the law, they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.

Neh 13:4 Now before this, Eliashib the priest, who had been appointed over the chambers of the house of our God, because he was related to Tobiah,

Neh 13:5 Had prepared for him a large chamber where previously they had put the meal offering, the frankincense, and the vessels, as well as the tithes of the grain, the new wine, and the fresh oil, as commanded for the Levites and the singers and the gatekeepers, and the heave offerings for the priests.

Neh 13:6 But during all this time I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king of Babylon I went to the king; then after some time I asked leave from the king.

Neh 13:7 And I came to Jerusalem and perceived the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah by preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.

Neh 13:8 And it grieved me much; therefore I cast all the household utensils of Tobiah out of the chamber.

Neh 13:9 Then I gave commands, and they purified the chambers; and I returned the vessels of the house of God, the meal offering, and the frankincense there.

Neh 13:10 I also found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them and thus the Levites and the singers, who performed the service, had gone back, each to his own fields.

Neh 13:11 So I contended with the rulers and said, Why has the house of God been forsaken? Then I gathered them together and set them in their stations.

Neh 13:12 And all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the fresh oil to the storehouses.

Neh 13:13 And I appointed treasurers over the storehouses, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah; and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were counted faithful, and it was their charge to distribute to their brothers.

Neh 13:14 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not blot out my loyal deeds, which I have done for the house of my God and for its services.

Neh 13:15 In those days I saw some in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on their donkeys, as well as wine, grapes and figs, and every kind of load, and they were bringing them into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I protested on the day that they sold food.

Neh 13:16 And Tyrians who dwelt there were also bringing in fish and every kind of merchandise, and selling it on the Sabbath to the children of Judah and in Jerusalem.

Neh 13:17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah and said to them, What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day?

Neh 13:18 Did not your fathers act this way, and did not our God bring all this trouble upon us and upon this city? But you bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath.

Neh 13:19 And when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the doors be shut and commanded that they not be opened until after the Sabbath; and I set some of my servants at the gates so that no load could enter on the Sabbath day.

Neh 13:20 Then the merchants and sellers of all kinds of merchandise spent the night outside Jerusalem once or twice.

Neh 13:21 But I testified against them and said to them, Why do you spend the night in front of the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time on they did not come on the Sabbath.

- Neh 13:22 And I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves and that they should come and keep the gates, in order to sanctify the Sabbath day. For this also remember me, O my God, and spare me according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness.
- Neh 13:23 In those days I also saw that the Jews had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab;
- Neh 13:24 And as for their children, half spoke in the language of Ashdod; and none of them could speak the language of Judah, but they spoke the language of the respective peoples.
- Neh 13:25 And I contended with them and cursed them and struck some of them and pulled out their hair; and I made them swear by God, saying, You shall not give your daughters to their sons nor take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves.
- Neh 13:26 Did not Solomon the king of Israel sin in these matters? And among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel; yet the foreign wives caused even him to sin.
- Neh 13:27 Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil by acting unfaithfully against our God in marrying foreign women?
- Neh 13:28 And one of the sons of Joiada the son of Eliashib the high priest was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite, so I chased him away from me.
- Neh 13:29 Remember them, O my God; for they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.
- Neh 13:30a Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign. ...

C. In the local churches we must be thoroughly purified of all mixture; anything common and anything contradictory to the heavenly nature of the Lord's recovery must be purged out—2 Tim. 2:19-22.

- 2 Tim 2:19 However the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.
- 2 Tim 2:20 But in a great house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also wooden and earthen; and some are unto honor, and some unto dishonor.
- 2 Tim 2:21 If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work.
- 2 Tim 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

II. Babylon is a mixture of the things of God with the things of idols, and the principle of Babylon is the principle of mixing the things of man with the Word of God and the things of the flesh with the things of the Spirit—2 Chron. 36:6-7; Ezra 1:11; Rev. 17:3-5:

- 2 Chron 36:6 Against him Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came up and bound him in bronze fetters to carry him to Babylon.
- 2 Chron 36:7 Nebuchadnezzar also carried away some of the vessels of the house of Jehovah to Babylon and put them in his temple in Babylon.
- Ezra 1:11 There were five thousand four hundred vessels of gold and silver in all. Sheshbazzar brought up all of them with those of the captivity who were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem.
- Rev 17:3 And he carried me away in spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.
- Rev 17:4 And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the unclean things of her fornication.
- Rev 17:5 And on her forehead there was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
- A. Anything that is a part of Babylon is abominable in the sight of God, and anything Babylonian gives Satan the ground to defeat the people of God—Josh. 7:1-21.
- Josh 7:1 But the children of Israel acted unfaithfully in that which was devoted to destruction, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah,

took of that which was devoted to destruction; and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the children of Israel.

Josh 7:2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, east of Bethel; and he spoke to them, saying, Go up and spy out the land. So the men went up and spied out Ai.

Josh 7:3 And they returned to Joshua and said to him, Not all the people need go up; let about two or three thousand men go up and strike Ai. Do not make all the people labor there, for the enemies are few.

Josh 7:4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled before the men of Ai.

Josh 7:5 And the men of Ai struck some of them, about thirty-six men; and they pursued them from before the gate unto Shebarim and struck them on the slope. And the heart of the people melted and became like water.

Josh 7:6 And Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the ground upon his face before the Ark of Jehovah until the evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust upon their heads.

Josh 7:7 And Joshua said, Ah, Lord Jehovah! Why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all? To give us over into the hand of the Amorites and cause us to perish? If only we had been content to dwell across the Jordan!

Josh 7:8 O Lord, what can I say after Israel has turned its back before its enemies?

Josh 7:9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?

Josh 7:10 Then Jehovah said to Joshua, Rise up! Why have you fallen upon your face?

Josh 7:11 Israel has sinned. Indeed they have trespassed My covenant, which I commanded them; indeed they have taken of that which was devoted to destruction; indeed they have stolen; indeed they have been deceptive; indeed they have put it among their goods.

Josh 7:12 Thus the children of Israel are not able to stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become something devoted to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy that which was devoted to destruction from among you.

Josh 7:13 Rise up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, There is something devoted to destruction among you, O Israel; you will not be able to stand before your enemies until you remove that which was devoted to destruction from among you.

Josh 7:14 Therefore in the morning you shall be brought near by your tribes; and the tribe which Jehovah takes shall draw near family by family; and the family which Jehovah takes shall draw near house by house; and the house which Jehovah takes shall draw near warrior by warrior.

Josh 7:15 And he who is taken with that which was devoted to destruction shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has trespassed the covenant of Jehovah and because he has committed folly in Israel.

Josh 7:16 So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel near by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken.

Josh 7:17 And he brought the family of Judah near, and the family of the Zerahites was taken. And he brought the family of the Zerahites near warrior by warrior, and Zabdi was taken.

Josh 7:18 And he brought the house of Zabdi near warrior by warrior, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

Josh 7:19 And Joshua said to Achan, My son, give glory to Jehovah the God of Israel, and make confession to Him. And tell me what you have done; do not hide anything from me.

Josh 7:20 Then Achan answered Joshua and said, It is true; I have sinned against Jehovah the God of Israel; and this is what I did:

Josh 7:21 When I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle of Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And now they are hidden in the earth in my tent, with the silver under it.

B. God hates the principle of Babylon more than anything else; only when we judge everything Babylonian in us can we confess that we too hate the principle of Babylon.

III. In Acts 21 and in the book of James, there is mixture; James mixed the Old Testament with the New Testament, the new dispensation with the old, the new people of God with the old, and the new man with the old man—James 1:1, 17-18; 2:1-4, 8-12; 3:2; 4:11-12; 5:10-11:

- Acts 21 be omitted.
- James 1:1 James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the dispersion: Rejoice!
- James 1:17 All good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variation or shadow cast by turning.
- James 1:18 He brought us forth by the word of truth, purposing that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.
- James 2:1 My brothers, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with respect of persons.
- James 2:2 For if there comes into your synagogue a man with gold rings in splendid clothing, and there also comes in a poor man in filthy clothing,
- James 2:3 And you look upon the one wearing the splendid clothing and say, You sit here in a good place, and to the poor man you say, You stand there, or sit under my footstool;
- James 2:4 Have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil reasonings?
- James 2:8 If indeed you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;
- James 2:9 But if you respect persons, you commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.
- James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law yet stumbles in one point has become guilty of all.
- James 2:11 For He who said, Do not commit adultery, also said, Do not murder. Now if you do not commit adultery, but you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.
- James 2:12 So speak and so do as those who are to be judged by the law of freedom.
- James 3:2 For in many things we all stumble. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.
- James 4:11 Do not speak against one another, brothers. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.
- James 4:12 One is Lawgiver and Judge, who is able to save and destroy. But who are you who judge your neighbor?
- James 5:10 As an example, brothers, of suffering evil and of long-suffering, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord.
- James 5:11 Behold, we call those who endured blessed. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen his end from the Lord, that the Lord is very tenderhearted and compassionate.

- A. Acts 21 exposes the terrible mixture in the church in Jerusalem; the Jewish believers still kept the law of Moses, remained in the Old Testament dispensation, and were strongly under the Judaic influence, mixing God's New Testament economy with the outdated Old Testament economy—vv. 18-21.

- Acts 21 be omitted.
- Acts 21:18 And on the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.
- Acts 21:19 And having greeted them, he related one by one the things which God did among the Gentiles through his ministry.
- Acts 21:20 And when they heard it, they glorified God and said to him, You observe, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews who have believed; and all are zealous for the law.
- Acts 21:21 And they have been informed concerning you that you are teaching all the Jews throughout the nations apostasy from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the customs.

- B. They were unaware that the dispensation of law was altogether over, that the dispensation of grace should be fully honored, and that any disregard of the distinction between these two dispensations would be against God's dispensational administration and would be a

great damage to God's economical plan for the building up of the church as the expression of Christ—John 1:16-17; Rev. 2:9.

John 1:16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.

Rev 2:9 I know your tribulation and poverty (but you are rich) and the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

- C. The law makes demands on man according to what God is; grace supplies man with what God is to meet what God demands; grace is God enjoyed by man—John 1:16-17; Gal. 6:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; 12:9; 1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 3:2; 4:29; 6:24.

John 1:16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and reality came through Jesus Christ.

Gal 6:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Cor 12:9 And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.

1 Pet 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Eph 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.

IV. A great problem among God's children is the mixture of the self with the spirit—Heb. 4:12:

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- A. This mixture disqualifies many from serving God, for in their spirit there is much mixture, which is displeasing to God—2 Tim. 1:3.

2 Tim 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, while unceasingly I have remembrance concerning you in my petitions night and day,

- B. The spirit in our innermost part is pure and undefiled; however, when the spirit comes forth and passes through the soul and the body, it may become contaminated by filthiness and corruption—2 Cor. 7:1.

2 Cor 7:1 Therefore since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

- C. Dealing with the spirit emphasizes dealing with impure motives and intentions and other mixtures within us—1 Thes. 5:23; 2 Tim. 1:7.

1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

V. We need to be pure in heart, in conscience, and in spirit:

- A. Those who are pure in heart will see God—Matt. 5:8; Job 42:5; Rev. 22:4:

Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;

Rev 22:4 And they will see His face, and His name will be on their forehead.

1. To be pure in heart is to be single in purpose, to have the single goal of accomplishing God's will for God's glory—1 Cor. 10:31.

1 Cor 10:31 Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

2. A pure heart is a heart that takes the Lord as the unique goal—1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:22; Psa. 73:1.
 - 1 Tim 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;
 - 2 Tim 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
 - Psa 73:1 Surely God is good to Israel, / To those who are pure in heart.
 3. In the New Testament sense, seeing God equals gaining God, and to gain God is to receive God in His element, life, and nature so that we may be constituted with God; seeing God transforms us, because in seeing God we receive His element into us, and our old element is discharged—2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
 4. To see God is to be transformed into the glorious image of Christ, the God-man, so that we may express God in His life and represent Him in His authority—1 John 3:1-3; Gen. 1:26.
 - 1 John 3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. Because of this the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.
 - 1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is.
 - 1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.
 - Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
 5. We should be pure in heart and single for the Lord's recovery; only then will we be a help to the recovery—1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Pet. 1:22.
 - 1 Tim 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;
 - 2 Tim 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
 - 1 Pet 1:22 Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently,
- B. We need to have not only a good conscience but also a pure conscience—Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3:
- Acts 23:1 And Paul, looking intently at the Sanhedrin, said, Men, brothers, I have conducted myself in all good conscience before God until this day.
 - Acts 24:16 Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.
 - 1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
 - 2 Tim 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, while unceasingly I have remembrance concerning you in my petitions night and day,
1. A good conscience is a conscience without offense toward God and man—Acts 23:1; 24:16.
 - Acts 23:1 And Paul, looking intently at the Sanhedrin, said, Men, brothers, I have conducted myself in all good conscience before God until this day.
 - Acts 24:16 Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.
 2. A pure conscience is a conscience purified of any mixture; such a conscience testifies that, like Paul, we are seeking only God and His will—2 Tim. 1:3.
 - 2 Tim 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, while unceasingly I have remembrance concerning you in my petitions night and day,

- C. The first qualification in the work is purity of spirit—2 Cor. 6:4a, 6:
 2 Cor 6:4a But in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, in much endurance, ...
 2 Cor 6:6 In pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love,
1. It is very difficult to find a person whose spirit is pure (7:1); pureness is the prerequisite in the leadership and a basic condition of our service (1 Tim. 3:9; 1:5); the problem of mixture is the greatest problem among workers; impureness is often the source of misunderstanding and suspicion (2 Tim. 1:3; 1 Tim. 3:9; Titus 1:15).
 2 Cor 7:1 Therefore since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
 1 Tim 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
 1 Tim 1:5 But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and out of a good conscience and out of unfeigned faith;
 2 Tim 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, while unceasingly I have remembrance concerning you in my petitions night and day,
 Titus 1:15 All things are pure to the pure; yet to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.
 2. We need to deal completely with all the mixture in our spirit so that when our spirit is released, it will not be dangerous or cause trouble to others.
 3. If we want to be used by God, our spirit must be released, and our spirit must be pure—2 Cor. 6:4a, 6.
 2 Cor 6:4a But in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, in much endurance, ...
 2 Cor 6:6 In pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love,

VI. The city of New Jerusalem is pure gold, like clear glass, and the street of the city is pure gold, like transparent glass—Rev. 21:18b, 21b:

- Rev 21:18b ... and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
 Rev 21:21b ... And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.
- A. Gold signifies the nature of God; the city's being pure gold indicates that the city is of the divine nature and takes the divine nature as its element—v. 18b.
 Rev 21:18b ... and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
 - B. The pure gold of the street and the city is like clear glass, signifying that the entire city is transparent and not in the least opaque—v. 21b:
 Rev 21:21b ... And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.
 1. If we take God's nature as our unique way, we will be pure, without any mixture, and transparent, without any opaqueness.
 2. If we are infused and saturated with the life-giving Spirit, our inner being will become transparent and crystal clear—2 Cor. 3:8-9, 18.
 2 Cor 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?
 2 Cor 3:9 For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.
 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
 - C. If we want to have the real church life, the church herself must be pure gold, that is, altogether of the divine nature; here we need the work of the cross to purge us and to purify us—Rev. 1:11, 20.
 Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
 Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw upon My right hand and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

- D. The difference between apostate Christendom and the genuine church is that one is a mixture and the other is pure; the local churches, like the New Jerusalem, should be crystal clear, without any mixture—22:1.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.