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The Two Witnesses/Prophets of Revelation 11 and the Two Olive Trees/Anointed Ones in Zechariah-Part I

“And I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.”

Revelation 11: 3.

Several interpretations among mainstream Christian expositors have been advanced as to who these two witnesses are. Those that allude to their alleged power and activities in verses 5 and 6 conclude that these two are Moses and Elijah, perhaps because the latter prophesied that God would bring on a three-and-a half-year drought upon apostate Israel when king Ahab and his wicked heathen wife, queen Jezebel were in power. Elijah prayed at the ending of the period of drought and God dramatically answered his prayer. See James 5: 17, 18; cf. 1 Kings 17: 1-7; 18: 36-46. As to why Moses, is hard to see.

However, it is not our purpose here to analyze as to whether the reasons advanced are Biblically-sound or can stand the closest scrutiny of the Scriptures for arriving at their conclusion that Moses and Elijah (as worthy as these godly men are) are these two witnesses. Rather, believing that the light of God's truths, as revealed and shed abroad through the testimony and witness of the Old and New Testaments is only what can dispel the darkness of ignorance, error, deception, confusion and sin, we re-emphasize that our focus and disciplined approach to every study and dissertation on any topic of the Bible adheres to two general guidelines.

To all Bible students, these two general guidelines are recognizable combinations running throughout the Old and New Testaments, such as: of “to the law *and* the prophets,” “Moses and the prophets,” “to the law *and* the testimony,” “thus saith the Lord” *and* “it is written,” the “spoken word *and* the living Word,” the “law written on tables of stone *and* the law written in the heart and mind.” In the necessarily compacted, concluding stage of these combination it is specifically identified and defined as: “*keeping* the commandments *and* the faith” and “having the testimony of Jesus *which is* the Spirit of prophecy.” These are two guidelines are:

I. The Bible's is its own best expositor

See 2 Peter 1: 20, 21. As with all the “*holy men of God*” who wrote but were not the originators of the thoughts contained and preserved in the sixty-six canonical books of the Bible--the Holy Spirit “*moved upon*” the *gospel-prophet* to lay down the firm

foundation upon which a fundamental structure rises from. From it branches out all the necessary details and rules on how to properly, intellectually and spiritually study, as in “eat” God’s word or the heavenly manna. Note the following:

“Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts, for precept must be upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little: for with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people. To whom He said, this is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear. [cf. Heb. 3: 7-18; 4: 11; Exo. 16; Num. 11]. But the word of the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule the people which is in Jerusalem.” Isa. 28: 9-14, K.J.V.

First, these instructions were not then, and are *not* now directed to the heathen, non-believers and naysayers of the Bible but to God’s people of all ages, faithful or unfaithful. Here in this scripture from Isaiah, as the type, this “word of the Lord” was and is directed towards “the scornful men that rule the people that are in *Jerusalem*.” Clearly, as the *type* in the Old Testament dispensation, these men are the religious leaders or spiritual guardians of the chosen people and nation universally connected to Jerusalem, as the city and symbol representing them universally.

In its antitypical expanded application in the Christian era and our time, it undoubtedly refers to those who profess to be worshippers of the God of heaven, particularly those who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ, in general, Christians and Christianity but specifically, their pastors, ministers, reverends, theologians and Bible expositors. During Christ’s time, they were the publicly venerated Jewish elders, scribes and Pharisees and feared members of the Sanhedrin, or Council (numbering 71)—the highest judicial body in nation that had the power over life and death. However, during the administration of the Roman procurators in Christ’s time, its death sentence had to be confirmed by the Roman governor at that time.

Note the repetitions in these verses: “Precept *must* be upon precept” is repeated thrice; “line upon line,” four times” and “here a little and there are little,” twice. These repetitions are by no means typos, errors in translation, idle or unnecessary redundancy but are, in fact, an urgent emphasis, elsewhere in the Bible also expressed as “This is *the* way, *walk* ye it. “Hear ye! Hear ye!” “This do and thou shalt live!” etc.

The word *precept* alone, says it all as it *precedes* the specifications “line upon line,” here a little there a little.” Precept, as translated into English, comes from: “Hebrew, generally *miswah*, ‘order,’ ‘commandment,’ and *piqudim*, ‘orders’ (always in the plural). In the Greek, generally *entole*, ‘a command,’ ‘charge.’] A specific command that places the recipient under obligation to obey; usually a divine injunction requiring man’s obedience (Ps. 119: 4; Jer. 35: 18; Mark 10: 5, KJV; Rom. 2: 26, RSV; etc.).

Piqqudim is rendered ‘precepts’ 21 times in Ps. 119, and ‘statutes’ in Ps. 19: 8, KJV, and ‘commandments’ in Ps. 103: 18; 111: 7, KJV.” (*SDA Bible Dictionary, Complete with Atlas, Commentary Reference Series, Vol. 8, 1960*).

Thus, any sincere seeker of Bible truth is “commanded, ordered and charged” not only to approach each study as being in the very presence of God Himself and as attentively “sitting at the feet of Jesus” as Mary did but to exercise a good student’s discipline and due diligence by carefully following the “line upon line,” “here a little there a little” method of Bible study--in short, comparing Scripture with Scripture and knowing how to do it. Furthermore, as “*prophets are subject to prophets*” (1 Cor. 14: 32), it follows that all Bible *prophecies* are *subject* to other Bible prophecies in that they are to be compared to one another following an established chain or grouping such as the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8: 14 and the smaller time periods within it, etc. “By their fruits you shall know them.” If the prophecy is genuine, it will never contradict any other, neither will it negate any truth of gospel, most specially the pillar doctrines denominated as the “present testing, sealing truths” of the comprehensive three angels’ second advent messages for the last days.

II. “To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isa. 8: 20, KJV.

“To the law and the testimony.” verse 16 of the same chapter says, “*Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples.*” Focus here on “the testimony,” the “law” (or commandments), and “My disciples” (or the commandment-keeping “saints”) in the New Testament.

Both of these verses from the *gospel-prophecy* of Isaiah must be connected with the verses dealing with the *end-time prophecies of the “everlasting gospel”* given by the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14 that proclaim mankind’s last merciful warnings before earth’s probation closes forever. These combined verses *also* reveal the church and a people carrying forward that same distinction in Isaiah’s time, though worded a bit differently as the latter provides the added specifications that clearly determine and thus identify their “*remnant church*” status and distinction over all the rest of the Christian churches of the last days, as “*building up the old waste places, raising up the foundation of many generations, repairers of the breach on the law, restorers of the streets to dwell in,*” specifically the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Isa. 58: 12-14

Notice who they are: “*Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments [law] of God and have the faith of Jesus.*” Rev. 14: 12. Then in Revelation 19: 10, John the beloved wrote: “And I fell at his feet [the angel] to worship Him. And He said unto me, See thou do it not: *I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*”

As to this angel’s fellow-servant, relationship-level with John and “the brethren” [thus, church-members] “that have the testimony of Jesus” which is “the spirit of prophecy,”

let us consider the following that sheds more light on it, in its greater relationship to the “two witnesses/prophets” of Revelation 11 and the “two olive trees/anointed ones” in Zechariah’s vision. We quoted from *An Exhaustive E.G. White Commentary of Revelation, Vol. 2*, commentary notes on Revelation 19: 10:

“**Fellow servant.**’ – Literally, fellow slave, ‘fellow bondmen.’ What a privilege it is that devoted workers on earth may share the companionship of, and be co-workers with, heavenly angels!”

“**Of thy brethren.**’ - That is, a fellow-servant of thy brethren. Some have considered this designation as evidence that the speaker must be a member of the human family, such as Enoch, Elijah, Moses, or one of the saints raised with Christ at His resurrection. However, there is no direct evidence in Scripture that a translated [or resurrected as with Moses] human being *ever acted in the role of an angel*, as here, to reveal truth to his fellow men. (cf. *Early Writings*, 231).

“**The testimony of Jesus.**’ – see on Revelation, chs. 1: 2 and this: “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the *remnant* of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and *have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*” Rev. 12: 17. Commentary on this verse says: “Testimony of Jesus Christ. ‘Or, ‘witness of Jesus Christ,’ In the Greek this phrase may be understood either as the ‘testimony’ (or ‘witness’) Christians bear concerning Jesus, or as the ‘testimony’ (or ‘witness’) that originates with Jesus, and is revealed in His church through

“**Spirit of prophecy.**’ – For the word ‘prophecy,’ compare the word ‘prophet’ in Matt. 11: 9-11. It refers to a ‘messenger-prophet’]. The *Holy Spirit* was sent to bear testimony to Jesus (John 15: 26), and *His witness is equivalent to that of Jesus in person*; The Spirit of prophecy is one of the gifts [not ‘fruits’] of the Spirit (see on 1 Cor. 12: 10; Eph 4: 11). For the manifestation of this gift among the people of God in the last days, see Note at the end of the chapter; see on ch. 12: 17.” (end of quote).

Furthermore, since this writer believes, having proven beyond doubt now--through years of continuous study and examination of her writings with that of the Bible and compared to what other theologians, religious literature writers and pastors say--that the special gift of prophecy defined as “the Spirit of prophecy which is the Testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 19: 10) was bestowed upon God’s messenger-prophet for the last days of earth’s history that commenced its countdown after October 1844. This messenger-prophet was a woman, only after two previous men, one white the other black, turned down the calling. Her name is Mrs. Ellen G. White. Her writings and life work does not follow in the line of the prominent men of the Protestant Reformation, as claimed by some, but in the line of the *special messenger-prophets* starting with Elijah in the Old Testament and followed by John the Baptist “who prepared the way” for Christ’s first coming as the promised Messiah. The work message and work of these three messenger-prophets may be briefly described as a combination of revival and reformation.

Thus, the “Testimonies of Jesus which is the Spirit of prophecy” and vice versa being “the lesser light that points to the greater light” which is the Bible itself, this writer relies mainly on the these two as an application of the Isaiah 8: 20 admonition, “To the law

and the testimony if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them,” while also referencing other expositions of other writers who share the same convictions and follow the same guidance and instructions.

For the love of Christ, the truth, and our fellowmen’s sake, I cannot but repeat a very specific warning. For, in spite of all the counsels, admonitions, warnings and reminders made by those who have the burden of “earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), multitudes persistently refuse to take heed and humbly undertake the efforts necessary, in the rapidly shrinking time and opportunity remaining, to make the appropriate changes in their attitudes and in the way they consider and even *handle* God’s Word.

To this I cite the warning of the prophet directly regarding this matter: the final drought and famine of God’s word is rapidly approaching to which there is no human solution possible. It will simply “come to pass” for it is an irreversible divine judgment. It concludes the long, persistent, merciful warnings of God down through the centuries to the present time when the Holy Spirit—who moved and is still moving upon Christ’s human angel-messenger tasked with giving the appropriate and genuine warning messages. His presence is *already* gradually being withdrawn from the earth as the global troubles, “winds of strife” and “distress among nations” are sounding the warnings in “trumpet tones” not lilting or pleasing sounds for “itching ears” to God’s people and the unrighteous alike.

The Holy Spirit’s progressive *withdrawing* from the earth is simultaneously taking place with Christ’s *winding* up His last work in the most holy of the heavenly sanctuary as the sinner’s merciful High Priest, Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate *and* righteous Judge of all the earth. Then, Jesus, who is “the Mediator between God and man” (1 Tim. 2: 5) and the “Mediator of the better covenant” and the “new testament” (Heb. 8: 6; 9: 15; 12: 24) will cease His final mediatorial work and vacate His office and will cast down His High Priestly censer, saying, “with a loud voice coming out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done!” Rev. 16: 7.

Thus, more than the current anxiety over the pandemic threat of the “novel corona virus,” economic collapse, earthquakes, tornadoes, hail storms, a nuclear war between global nuclear powers, a giant meteor hitting the earth and causing the next “ice age” or “fear of what man can do,” etc., let us instead pray for the Holy Spirit to soften our hearts and enlighten our minds with “the wisdom that is from above” and humbly ponder upon the following scriptures that is also central to our current study bearing past, present and future ramifications!

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord God, that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing of the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.” Amos 8: 11, 12.

In the prophecy of Daniel 4 we read of a similar description of men “running to and fro.”

“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the *words*, and seal up the book, even to the time of the end: *many shall run to and fro*, and *knowledge shall be increased*.” Dan. 12: 4, K.J.V. As a matter of necessity, we will go deeper into what these two specific passages mean, comparing and contrasting them by the invaluable help provided in the following incisive extracts from *An Exhaustive E.G. White Commentary on Daniel, Vol. 1*, commentary ch. 4, p. 14:

“**Shut up the words.**’ Compare the similar admonition in regard to Daniel’s earlier vision (ch. 8: 26). The instruction did not apply to the whole book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. It applied, rather, to that part of Daniel’s prophecy that dealt with the last days (AA 585; DA 234). Not until that time was reached *could* a message, based on fulfillment of these passages, be proclaimed (see GC 356). Compare ‘the little book open’ in the hand of the angel of Revelation 10: 1, 2 (see TM 115).

“**Run to and fro.**’ Heb. *shut*, a word occurring 13 times, a word occurring 13 times in the OT (Num. 11: 8; 2 Sam. 24: 2, 8; 2 Chron. 16: 9; Job 1: 7; 2: 2; Jer. 5: 1; 49: 3; Eze. 28: 8, 26; Dan. 12: 4; Amos 8: 12; Zech. 4: 10). In most of these occurrences *shut* describes a physical roving about.

“Many interpreters believe that *shut* is here is used in metaphorical sense and describes an earnest search throughout the pages of the Bible, with the result that there is an increase of knowledge concerning the prophecies of the book of Daniel (see under ‘knowledge shall be increased’; cf. DA 234; GC 356). Others believe that Daniel here predicts a multiplication of travel and means of travel such as have marked the last century [dramatically accelerating and increasing into the new 21st century we are in].

“The LXX exhibits a vastly different reading: ‘And thou, Daniel, cover up the commands and seal the book until the time of the end, until many will rave violently [literally, ‘go mad’] and the earth shall be filled with unrighteousness.’ Theodotion’s version is nearer than the Masoretic, ‘And thou, close the words, and seal to the book to the time of the end; *until many are taught, and knowledge is increased*.’ [itals mine].

“**Knowledge shall be increased.**’ This clause may be considered the logical sequel to the immediately preceding clause: when the sealed book is opened at the time of the end, knowledge concerning the truths contained in these prophecies will be increased (see PK 547; Rev. 10: 1, 2). At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century a new interest in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation was awakened in widely separated places of the earth. The study of these prophecies led to a widespread belief in the second advent of Christ was near. Numerous expositors in England, Joseph Wolff in the Middle East, Manuel Lacunza in South America, and William Miller in the United States, together with a host of other students of the prophecies, declared, on the basis of their study of the prophecies of Daniel, that the second advent was at hand. Today, this conviction has become the driving force of a worldwide movement.

“This prophecy has also been interpreted as pointing to the stupendous advances in science and general knowledge in the last century and a half, advances that have made

possible a widespread proclamation of the message of these prophecies.” (end quote).

How do we *see* Christ who is still invisible till His return and *hear* His voice when He is not yet physically present? The prophets and Christ Himself revealed that countless of His own people let alone the numberless lost souls of the world still “have eyes that cannot see” and “ears that cannot hear,” explaining that these fearful spiritual condition is not due to unintended ignorance but of “the hardness of the heart.”

Now, in order for anyone and everyone earnestly seeking to “see” Jesus Christ who is *yet invisible* to mortal eyes and corruptible flesh—he has to see Him *in His written Word—the law and the testimony, the Old and New Testaments, the testimony of Jesus which is the Spirit of prophecy*. In order for anyone and everyone sincerely desiring to “hear” His voice speaking to one’s conscience and heart *today* through the Holy Spirit--and hardens not his heart---he will certainly obtain God’s wisdom, understand His doctrine and find rest and refreshing to his soul as he faithfully and patiently follows the prescribed means of obtaining all these in the way he studies God’s revealed will in His *written and spoken word*—expounding upon, magnifying, and glorifying the Living Word of John 1: 1 that “was made flesh and dwelt among us.” verse 14.

First, they must be “weaned away” from the spiritual growth-stunting, continued abnormal sucking of the “milk drawn from the breast” or refusing to graduate from the elemental “a b c’s” of the gospel and move on to partaking and digesting the “strong meat” or solid food “of the gospel.” We will cite below the verses of Scripture and Spirit of prophecy admonitions that address this widespread self-inflicted, crippling spiritual disease proliferating in mainstream Christianity, among those claiming to the “chosen people of the last days,” “the remnant” and “if possible, even the very elect.” Notice:

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone that partake only [italicized word added by the NKJV translators] is the unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who by reason of use [emphasis mine] have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Heb. 5: 12-14, NKJV.

“Discern” is not the same as “know.” Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan disguised as a serpent to *disobey* God’s word which is a command, implying it was the secret or key that was withheld, preventing them from rising higher than their sinless state and elevate them to be “like God *knowing [both] good and evil.*” Gen. 3: 5. First of all, Satan, “the father of lies and murderer from the beginning” (John 8: 44), thusly, the father and progenitor of all false gods and false christs following after and obtaining their satanic power from him, *know, by experience*, what is evil means, for they are evil. On the other hand, Adam (and Eve) who were “made in the image and likeness” of the Creator, did not know evil until they yielded to temptation, experimented in disobedience and immediately *knew, by that first experience* in sinning, what evil was and is! Too late, they find that instead of “becoming like God,” they immediately started feeling and acting like the evil one! Losing their original innocence and purity manifested as a “fine

white light” they see their “nakedness” because of guilt and hide behind the trees of Eden. They attempt to cover their nakedness with fig-leaf aprons to no avail. When God finds them, instead of repenting and confessing their first of all sins, they resort to the original blame-game, blaming one another, blaming the serpent (Satan), and in logical conclusion, blaming God Himself! Indeed, “by one man’s disobedience, sin entered into the world and death passed on to all men.” Rom. 5: 12, 14 17-19.

Hereunder are the perils of not progressing in the knowledge of God and His will as revealed in His written Word:

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the power of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.” Heb. 6: 1-6.

Notice here that Paul actually exhorts the believers who have already learned the important *doctrines* enumerated and have actually experienced the enlightenment of these to “leave the discussion of these elementary principles of Christ and go on to perfection!” And yet how many Christians, particularly those who claim to be members of the remnant church and thus feel they are the “chosen ones” of the last days, are strangely and alarmingly still struggling with, debating one another and even confused over the meaning and applications of these doctrines, defined here “elementary principles of Christ!”

Stuck, either by choice which is sinful negligence, or dragged down by the “savor of death unto death” exerted by those within the church who the apostles and the Spirit of Prophecy revealed and warned of are some of Satan’s special agents to cause confusion, disgust and discouragement, not a few have fallen victims to this baleful work. However, in the judgment currently taking place in the most holy of the heavenly sanctuary, not one reason or excuse pleaded by the guilty—including apparently “tracing from cause to effect,” which actually is, passing the buck of responsibility by blaming it on the tempter, the first try attempted by Adam and Eve, too, -- can ever justify yielding to temptation or deception. Why? Christ in His adopted human nature “was tempted in all points as we are tempted *yet without sin[ning]*,” and “where sin abounds, grace *much more* abounds!” It is Satan versus God; sin versus grace. Sin, “the transgression of God’s law,” is of and from Satan. Grace, “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom. 1: 16) is of and from Jesus as imparted by the Holy Spirit to every contrite and penitent sinner. Hence, ‘by grace are ye *saved* [from sin and sinning], not by *works* [of self-atonement “good deeds” and various religious exercises such as fasting, pilgrimages, self-flagellation, long prayers, purchasing forgiveness through church-issued Indulgences, etc.] “lest any man should boast.” Eph. 2: 8-10.

The real issue and question is: Who is greater in in your life? Who has your undivided attention, loyalty and affections? Who occupies your mind? Who is enthroned as king, Lord and master in your heart? Remember! It is *impossible* to love and serve God and Satan at the same time. Satan loves and encourages this; to God, it is an abomination; practice sin and righteousness; obey God and obey Satan. We cannot serve two masters at the same time; that is plain duplicity. We are either servants of God or servants of Satan. As Joshua openly declared to Israel: “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!”

Furthermore, and this is critical: “For it is *impossible* for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted [and experienced] the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the power of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.” Heb. 6: 1-6. We would be foolish and presumptuous indeed if skip dissecting and analyzing this listing carefully:

(1) “Those once enlightened.” – These are not nominal Christians or new believers but have already obtained knowledge of God’s word which the immediate context suggests, are already in the discussion of the office and work of the priesthood of Christ, which is part of the five fundamental pillar doctrines of “present truth” (see the preceding verses). Such must have “tasted” the “good gifts” and “the *wisdom* that descends from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” James 3: 17. Enlightened is far more advanced than informed and knowledgeable. But even at this lofty stage, not “once-saved-always saved” as these passages clearly warn of!

(2) “Have *tasted* the good word of God,” which is the same as tested and *experienced* “the heavenly gift.” This heavenly gift is of three things: (a) The Father’s “once-and-for-all sacrificial Gift of His only-begotten Son for the redemption of lost mankind, Jesus Christ the Word, “God manifest in the flesh” (John 1: 1-3, 14; 1 Tim. 3: 16) (b) the Holy Spirit, Christ’s one and only vicegerent *on earth* who is invisible yet the very Personal presence and fullness of the Godhead *in the spirit*, even as in Christ “dwells all the fullness of the Godhead *bodily*” (Col. 1: 16, 19; 2:9), who abides, dwells in and infills the heart of every true believer; and (c) “the new heart, new mind, new spirit” in “the new covenant in whose mind and heart is written God’s law”-- the “new creature in Christ,” “the new man in Christ.” Eze. 11: 19; 16: 31; 36: 26; Heb. 8: 10-13; 10: 16, 17; 2 Cor. 5: 17; Col. 3: 9, 10.

(2) “Have become partakers of the Holy Spirit.” These are believers who not only understand justification by faith, which is the believer’s “title to heaven,” it being the perfect “righteousness of Christ in His atoning sacrifice *imputed* to the penitent, confessing sinner. By faith, having complied with the conditions specified to confess his sin, he is justified, meaning, fully and completely pardoned of *that sin* repented of confessed to God. On *that sin* or sins forgiven by God in Christ, the sinner stands before God as though he never committed it. Christ’s righteousness covers it but it is not yet blotted out from the books of heaven. But being “partakers of the Holy Spirit” in the highest sense, means this believer has received the *imparted* righteousness of Christ

which is sanctification by faith!

Both justification and sanctification are by faith because “without faith it is impossible to please Him.” Heb. 11: 6. Justification simply means pardon, full and complete granted by God and God alone through Christ for it is His law that has been transgressed and He alone can grant pardon. Justification never replaces sanctification in the plan of redemption. Justification is followed by sanctification and both work together in the life of the Christian in his pilgrim journey on earth, the antitypical wilderness of sin.

Unlike justification which is instantaneous in that the penitent sinner is forgiven of God at the same moment of his repentance and confession of that sin, sanctification is a daily matter, a work of a lifetime for the true Christian. That lifetime reckoning commences when he gives his heart to God in true conversion. His walk with God thereafter may be long or short, depending on how long he lives with a rational mind for he must be constantly making willing, intellectual, rational and spiritual choices and decisions as he perfects a moral character after Christ’s pattern character. At death, his probation closes, his life journey ended, his character fixed for eternity.

Sanctification is the righteousness of Christ being *imparted* through the Holy Spirit to the willing believer, empowering him to *overcome* sin, the flesh, the world and the devil *even as Christ overcame*” (Rev. 3: 20, 21). With his will yielded and heart fully surrendered to Christ, the penitent sinner then “works out his own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in him to *will* and *do* His good pleasure.” Phil. 2: 12, 13. Sanctification is the work that *fits up* the believer for heaven and eternal life.

But again, although the faithful believer has ascended to walk this spiritual highway “cast far above the world --“the straight and narrow path” of obedience, self-denial and self-sacrifice, “following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth,” it is not a guaranty that the believer will *choose* to stay on course to his end. This side of the resurrection morning no saint is above and beyond the temptations and deceptions of Satan who will only be destroyed at the end of the Biblical “a thousand years” or millennium. Jesus Christ said, “he that endures to the end the same shall be saved.” Matt. 10: 22. Let us, by grace, overcome daily, enduring, obeying with the patience of the saints with the faith of Jesus, one victorious day at a time and leave tomorrow in God’s hands! Today may be our last.

(To be continued next issue)