

BY THIS ALL MEN WILL KNOW

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:35)

The importance of these words cannot be over emphasized. Jesus stated in the clearest possible language what was most important to Him regarding the relationship between His disciples and the evangelization of the world. Please note that these words were spoken on the night before Calvary. The timing of His words obviously serves to highlight their significance. All the words of Jesus are important, but His last words are especially so.

Note also that Jesus spoke these words about love at a time when His disciples were disputing among themselves as to which one of them would be the greatest (Lk. 22:24). These men had heard Jesus teach about love for three long years and yet they still did not really love one another. This is evidenced by their dispute. Such conduct does not reflect love, for love does not envy, boast, or seek to have its own way. We repeat, Jesus had taught them much about love, but they still did not love. Remember His poignant words about love in the Sermon on the Mount: **“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt 5:44-48)** Obviously, correct doctrine is not enough. These men had the correct doctrine about love, but apparently lacked the power to put it into practice.

On that fateful night in the upper room, Jesus tried again to teach them the true nature of love. He reminded them that the kings of the Gentiles lorded it over their subjects, but among His followers greatness would be achieved through service. Then, as if to make this message crystal clear, He girded Himself about with a towel and began to wash their feet. Even this, however, was insufficient to change their conduct. Even the personal example of Jesus Himself did not empower them to love one another. This is why it was expedient for Jesus to go away. When Jesus went away He promised to send them the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:7). It was the Holy Spirit that would dwell within them and empower them to love. Please remember that Christian love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5:22). In the flesh you can love them that love you, but in the Spirit you can love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that spitefully use you and persecute you.

This is why Jesus told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for power. (See Acts 1:1 - 8) Their greatest efforts to achieve unity, and to evangelize the world, would be utterly futile without the power of the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit that would empower them to love one another in such a way that the world would know they were His disciples. We should not be surprised, therefore, that the coming of the Holy Spirit brought about unprecedented love, harmony, and unity in the Jerusalem Church. In fact, it became like a city set upon a hill that could not be hidden. The book of Acts describes their unity with these words: **“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:44-47)** A similar passage is also found in chapter 4: **“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No-one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were**

no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.” (Acts 4:32-35)

The unity and harmony of the Jerusalem church was obviously associated with their remarkable success in evangelism. Today, we look back with great wonder and admiration at their success, and do our best to “restore” the “New Testament Church”. No matter how hard we try, however, that unity and power eludes us. We hold our conferences, teach our lessons, and write our books, but the problem of division seems to be growing, not diminishing. Perhaps it is time that we step back and reevaluate our entire approach to unity.

In this regard let us go back to the basics and reconsider the covenant relationship that the Jerusalem Church had with God. They did not debate themselves into unity, or educate themselves into unity. Their unity came from the New Covenant. Their unity came from the Holy Spirit. If we want the unity they enjoyed, we need to go back to square one and seek to understand the nature of their covenant with God. We would consider a man foolish who bought a house, a car, or even a cell phone without having a clear understanding of the covenant he was signing. If this is important regarding earthly matters, and it is, it is even more important regarding our relationship with God. **THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING THE NEW COVENANT IS SIGNIFICANT BEYOND MY ABILITY TO EXPLAIN OR DESCRIBE!**

THE OLD COVENANT AND THE NEW COVENANT

It is commonly believed that the Old Covenant is the first 39 books of the Bible, and the New Covenant is the last 27. This is not so! It never has been so and it never will be so. The Jewish people did not call the Hebrew Bible the “Old Testament”, they called it the “Tanakh”. In about A.D. 170, Melito, the Bishop of Sardis, listed the books of the Hebrew canon and called them the “Old Testament”. He was the first person to do so. The church at Sardis, as you know, was a church condemned by Christ because they had the name that they were alive, but were dead - Rev. 3:1. Around A.D. 200, Tertullian, a converted Roman centurion, became the first to call the Christian Scriptures the “New Testament”. It is to be profoundly regretted that this doctrinal error has gained almost universal acceptance in the Christian world.

The Hebrew word for “covenant” is “berith” and it is found many times in the Hebrew Bible. In the book of Genesis, for example, we read of 7 different covenants. God made covenants with men like Noah and Abraham, and men like Abraham and Abimelech also made covenants with one another. When the Scriptures refer to the Old Covenant, however, it is not talking about any of these covenants.

In the language of Scripture, the Old Covenant was the Ten Commandments. God made this covenant with His people in the day when He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. This truth is stated first in Jer. 31:32, and then repeated in Heb. 8:9. Once the Ten Commandments were completed God added nothing more to them (Deut. 5:22). The completed Covenant was then placed in a receptacle called the “Ark of the Covenant” (Deut. 9:11; 10:8).

The Old Covenant was cold, rigid, inflexible, and without mercy. 3,000 died when the old covenant was given. Since the Ten Commandments had to be interpreted they also were a constant source of controversy. After more than 3,000 years, for example, the best and brightest Jewish scholars still do not agree on how to remembering the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. For this reason the Old Covenant is allegorized in Scripture by Hagar and Ishmael (Gal. 4:21 - 25).

God found fault with the Old Covenant and decided to write a new one. This new covenant, however, would not be written on stone, nor with paper and ink (2 Cor. 3:3). It would be written on the fleshly tablets of the human heart and mind. 3,000 people were saved when this New Covenant became a reality on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Please note that the New Covenant was a complete reality before one word of the New Testament Scriptures was written. While all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, the Scriptures are not the covenant. Those people at Pentecost, who were "born again" became "living letters" that could be "known and read by everybody" (2 Cor. 3:2).

To help us understand the glories of the New Covenant, let us do what Jesus did with Nicodemus, and compare our physical birth with the spiritual.

Physical life - Physical life begins in the womb when the sperm cell of the father unites with the ovum (egg) of the mother. This fertilized egg is called a "zygote" and contains all of the genetic material necessary for future development. This tiny new life combines 23 chromosomes from the father, and also 23 chromosomes from the mother. The deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA strands within these chromosomes are so tiny that 5 million of them can pass through the eye of a needle at the same time. 30,000 genes are also added to this unique combination of chromosomes, (over 15,000 from each parent) and still this new person is so tiny that he, or she, cannot yet be seen with the naked eye. These genes, and chromosomes, like letters of a divine alphabet, spell out the unique characteristics of the new individual.

The utter complexity of this genetic code, contained in this tiny zygote, is beyond human comprehension. For example, the human brain contains more than 100 billion neurons, each linked to as many as 10,000 other neurons, and the blueprint for the brain was contained in our genetic code from the moment of conception. To simply say that the cells of a newborn baby multiply, does not do justice to the miracle of life that grows by divine blueprint within the mother's womb. Here is a brief sampling of some of the information that God placed in our genetic code from the moment of conception.

- Medical experts remind us that the eye is a perfect and interrelated system of about 40 individual subsystems, including the retina, pupil, iris, cornea, lens and optic nerve. For instance, the retina has approximately 137 million special cells that respond to light and send messages to the brain. About 130 million of these cells look like rods and handle the black and white vision. The other seven million are cone shaped and allow us to see in color. The retina cells receive light impressions, which are translated to electric pulses and sent to the brain via the optic nerve. A special section of the brain called the visual cortex interprets the pulses to color, contrast, depth, etc., which allows us to see "pictures" of our world. Incredibly, the eye, optic nerve and visual cortex are totally separate and distinct subsystems. Yet, together, they capture, deliver and interpret up to 1.5 million pulse messages a milli-second! It would take dozens of Cray supercomputers programmed perfectly and operating together flawlessly to even get close to performing this task.
- The Hearing Care Center states that the ear is the most complex sensory system in the human body. Vision and smell are extraordinary senses, but they do not match in complexity the ear's process of turning minute waves of sound pressure from air molecules banging against the eardrum into the neural signals that get sent to the brain and interpreted as sound.
- Your heart beats 70 times per minute, or 36,792 times per year. All the blood in your body passes through the heart in only three minutes. Every day your heart pumps 7 tons of blood.
- The circulatory system in your body is estimated to be 60,000 - 100,000 miles long.
- Your arteries relax as the heart beats and contract between beats, thus supplying the tiniest

- branches in your circulatory system with a constant and smooth flow of blood.
- Your capillaries are microscopic junction points between arteries and veins. They are thought to be porous, allowing oxygen and nourishment to pass through to the body and carbon dioxide and waste to flow back to the blood.
 - Your blood contains 30 trillion red cells that are destroyed at the stupendous rate of 72 million a minute. As they are destroyed the body salvages 85% of their vital iron which is returned to the bone marrow for the manufacture of new hemoglobin. Without this ability to conserve iron we would all die of anemia.
 - The speed of blood flowing through your body is controlled by the vasomotor center at the base of the brain. Blood flows slowly while we are resting but must flow faster during periods of strenuous activity.
 - Your kidneys contain 64 miles of piping and every day separate 180 quarts of filtrate from the blood. 178 quarts of purified blood are returned to the system, and 2 quarts are extracted as waste.
 - Your liver is designed to see that the blood contains the exact amount of sugar needed at all times, and the precise amount of amino acids required for tissue building and repair. When you have eaten more than is needed the liver will store the excess and keep a reserve supply of aminos and glycogen for emergencies.
 - Each square inch of your skin contains 3,500 sweat glands, or perspiratory pores. If these microscopic drain pipes were connected together they would be nearly 40 miles long.
 - Dozens, if not hundreds of times each day, our body does amazingly complex things that we often take for granted. Take, for example, the sneeze. When the inside of your nose gets a tickle, a message is sent to a special part of your brain called the sneeze center. The sneeze center then sends a message to all the muscles that have to work together to create the amazingly complicated process that we call the sneeze. The sneeze involves muscles in your abdomen, chest, diaphragm, vocal cords, the back of your throat, and even your eye lids. When all these muscles work together in exactly the right order they can expel those tiny particles out of your nose at speeds of over 100 miles per hour.
 - Puberty, and sexual functions, as you know, are programed by God to develop years later. No matter how hard a little boy tries, he cannot grow a beard.
 - David said it like this: “I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14).
 - Please remember that all of this, and much more, was placed by God in your genetic code from the moment of your conception. Further, you were a unique creation distinguished from all other human beings by your own finger prints, voice print, facial features and physiognomy.

Spiritual life - The value and complexity of spiritual life is obviously much greater than that of the physical. Physical life is temporal, and spiritual life is eternal. Physical life deteriorates, spiritual life does not. Physical life is limited by time and space, spiritual life is not. Remember! God created the “things” we see out of what is not visible (Heb. 11:3) After comparing human birth with spiritual birth Jesus said to Nicodemus: **“I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?” (John 3:12).** The finite mind is not capable of completely understanding the infinite reward that God has prepared for us.

Let us narrow our focus to the contrast between our physical birth and our spiritual birth by observing that virtually all life comes from seeds. This is true of grass, flowers, trees, and even animals and people. As you also know, every seed reproduces after its own kind. Jesus

reminded Nicodemus of this by saying: **“Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit give birth to spirit” (John 3:6)**. We have physical life because our earthly father planted a physical seed in the physical womb of our physical mother. As we have already said, the majestic complexity of our physical bodies is beyond human comprehension. But our human bodies, as wonderful as they are, are destined for destruction. By comparison with the spiritual our physical bodies are “lowly” (Phil. 3:21), “perishable” and “weak” (1 Cor. 15:42 - 43). While our physical life is perishing, our spiritual life can be renewed every day (2 Cor. 4:16).

As in the case of our physical birth, when we are “born again” God writes a “new covenant” in our minds and hearts (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:8 - 10; 10:16). The Greek word translated as “write” is “epigrapho”. It is not a writing in progress, but a writing that has been completed.

- In Matt. 22:20 it is used of writing on a coin.
- In Mk., 15:26 it is used of writing upon the cross that Pilate refused to change.
- In Acts 17:23 it refers to writing on the idol to the unknown god.
- In Rev. 21:12 it refers to the names of the 12 apostles written upon 12 gates.
- Obviously these “writings” were done once and completed.
- Since this same word is used to describe God’s writing in our minds and hearts it seems logical to assume that the “new covenant:” is also written once and completed at the time of our conversion. We do not change the “covenant”, the “covenant changes us”.
- Little babies need nourishment or they will die. The nourishment, however, is not the covenant, nor does it change the covenant.
- New Christians also need nourishment from the Scriptures. The Scriptures, however, are not the covenant, nor do they change the covenant.

Just as a woman can take tests to determine if she is pregnant, here are six characteristics of those who are begotten by God.

- They do what is right (1 Jn. 2:29).
- They do not continue to sin (1 Jn. 3:9).
- They love (1 Jn. 4:7).
- They love others who are born of God (1 Jn. 5:1).
- They overcome the world (1 Jn. 5:4).
- They do not continue to sin and the evil one cannot harm them (1 Jn. 5:18).
- If none of these characteristics are present, that person is not begotten of God.

Since we are focusing on “love” note how many times John makes a direct connection between being this and being “born again”.

- God’s love is made complete in the believer (1 Jn. 2:5).
- Anyone who hates his brother is in darkness (1 Jn. 2:9).
- If anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him (1 Jn. 2:15).
- We have an “anointing” from the Father that teaches us all things (1 Jn. 2:27).
- God has lavished His love upon us so that we can be His children (1 Jn. 3:1).
- We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren (1 Jn. 3:14).
- We understand God’s love because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 Jn. 3:16).
- The love of God does not dwell in someone who does not love his brother (1 Jn. 3:17).
- We are to prove our love by our actions (1 Jn. 3:18).
- Our loving actions assure us that we are of the truth (1 Jn. 3:19).
- God commands us that if we believe in Jesus that we also love one another (1 Jn. 3:23).
- Whoever loves has been born of God (1 Jn. 4:7).

- Whoever does not love does not know God (1 Jn. 4:8).
- If God loved us we ought also to love one another (1 Jn. 4:11).
- If we love one another God lives in us (1 Jn. 4:12).
- Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in him (1 Jn. 4:16).
- If our love is complete we will have confidence on the Day of Judgement (1 Jn. 4:17).
- Perfect love drives out fear (1 Jn. 4:18).
- We love because He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19).
- Whoever claims to love God and hates his brother is a liar (1 Jn. 4:20).
- We have a commandment that whoever loves God also love his brother (1 Jn. 4:21).
- Everybody who loves the Father also loves His children (1 Jn. 5:1).
- We know that we love the children of God when we carry out His commandments (1 Jn. 5:2).
- This is to love God to obey His commandments (1 Jn. 5:3).
- Note that this is only a brief and partial survey of 1 John.

Our transformation from the works of the flesh to the fruit of the Spirit is absolutely miraculous.

- It is like a heart of stone being turned into flesh (Ez. 36:26).
- It is like life from the dead (Rom. 11:15).
- It is like being raised with Christ (Col. 3:1).
- It is like becoming a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
- It is like a living organism producing fruit (Gal. 5:22 - 23).
- It is like a metamorphosis (Rom. 12:2, 2 Cor. 3:18).
- It is like being in heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3).
- It is like having your name written in heaven (Lk. 10:20, Heb. 12:23).
- Again we emphasize that this short list in no way approximates the vast amount of information that God puts in our minds and writes on our hearts when we are “born again”.

IF PRINTING OUT THE GENETIC CODE OF OUR PHYSICAL LIFE WOULD TAKE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PAGES - I AM CONFIDENT THAT PRINTING OUT THE GENETIC CODE OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE WOULD TAKE EVEN MORE!

Remember, both Jesus and the Scriptures are called a “seed” (See Gen. 3:15; 2:18; Gal. 3:16, etc. Since every seed reproduces after its own kind (Gen. 1:11), the spiritual seed which we receive by faith contains the DNA of Jesus. When that seed takes root in our hearts and minds we become a new creation.

- Jesus summarized the essence of Scripture in two brief commandments, and both of them involve love. # 1 - We are to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind. # 2 - We are to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37 - 38). Thus the seed of Scripture will obviously produce love when it is planted in good soil.
- It is also obvious that the Incarnate Christ is the very personification of love. In 1 Cor. 13 we could easily substitute “Jesus” for “love” and the Scriptural message would still be true: “Jesus is patient, Jesus is kind, Jesus does not envy, Jesus does not boast” etc.
- When the “Seed” of love is planted we should not be surprised when love grows.

The utter complexity of this new covenant, or code, is also beyond the grasp of the finite mind. **“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable**

his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!” (Rom 11:33)

INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE

Note that Jesus did not say the world would believe because of what His disciples “knew”, but because of their love. The failure of intellectual knowledge to produce unity is vividly illustrated in the life of the late Victor Serebriakoff. He was born Oct. 17, 1912 in the slums of East London, the son of a Russian father and cockney mother. Victor dropped out of school at an early age and was hired as an office clerk by a lumber company. Unfortunately, he soon lost that job for lack of attention to detail. Poor Victor spent the first 30 years of his life in poverty doing odd jobs and manual labor. Then came World War II. He was late getting involved in the war effort, but the Army did at least provide him with a life transforming insight into his own ability. When Victor took the standardized Army intelligence test, his IQ was off the chart. They did not anticipate testing anyone with an IQ over 161 and Victor was somewhere beyond that. Consequently, the Army did not assign him the manual labor he was used to, but rather made him a part of the Teaching Corps and placed him in the classroom.

With his new found identity Victor went back to the lumber business when the war was over, but this time he became the manager of the sawmill. This time he applied his genius to the inventing of machines and the writing of books. In 1950 he joined the prestigious Mensa Society. This is a society of geniuses. You cannot belong unless your IQ is in the top 2% of the population. Not only did Victor belong to Mensa, He became its president. Under his able leadership they grew from a small irrelevant group with only 4 members to a powerful international organization with over 100,000 members.

But now, let us focus our attention on intellectual achievements as they relate to unity. In 1960 Mr. Serebriakoff granted an interview with the New York Times Magazine and said: *“When I joined Mensa I thought, ‘now I am joining a bunch of very bright people: therefore everyone will agree with me’ Alas, this turned out not to be so. Then I married a member and began to learn the full extent, breadth and profundity of human disagreement”*

By his own admission, being married to a fellow genius did not produce agreement. In fact, his marriage rather revealed to him the *“full extent”* of the breadth and profundity of human disagreement. This, however, did not mean that he did not have a happy marriage. The unity he experienced with his wife, however, was not based upon intellectual knowledge but love.

Victor’s wife passed away in 1995 and he died on Jan. 1, 2000. Among his many other achievements, Victor leaves us a lasting legacy reminding us that even smart people do not necessarily agree with one another. This is true, not only in secular society, but also in the church. This is true, not only in secular society, and the church, but also in the home. Now you can see why Jesus emphasized love as the ingredient that makes unity possible.

A LESSON FROM IGNAZ PHILLIP SEMMELWEIS

Ignaz Phillip Semmelweis was born July 1, 1818. He was born in Hungary, the fifth son of a prosperous German shop keeper. Sir Wm. Joppa Sinclair, professor of Gynecology and Obstetrics at the University of Manchester wrote of him: *“The great revolution of modern times in Obstetrics as well as in Surgery is the result of the one idea that, complete and clear, first arose in the mind of Semmelweis, and was embodied in the practice of which he was the pioneer . . .”*

In July 1846 Dr. Semmelweis became the titular house officer of the First Obstetrical Clinic in Vienna, Austria. The Encyclopedia Britannica places the mortality rate at that hospital as high as 25 - 30%. That which killed these women and children was called “childbed fever” or “puerperal

fever". Dr. Semmelweis achieved a break through in understanding this illness in 1847 when his friend and colleague, Jacob Kolletschka, died of it. Semmelweis discovered that the fatal infection came from a cut on Kolletschka's finger and had nothing to do with pregnancy.

In that age of ignorance, the daily routine of doctors was to first go into the dissecting room and do autopsies on those who had died during the preceding day, and then proceed to the hospital to make pelvic examinations on expectant mothers - without washing their hands.

Dr. Semmelweis began requiring all doctors to wash in a chlorine solution before entering the hospital. In 1848 he increased his washing protocol to include all instruments coming in contact with patients. He carefully documented the success they were having over puerperal fever.

Morton Thompson, in his book, "The Cry and the Covenant" records the words of Dr. Semmelweis from the third lecture he delivered to a medical society - the date was June 15, 1848

"I have now shown, on three occasions before this body, that puerperal fever is caused by decomposed material conveyed to a wound. I have shown that it is a pyemia, a pus in the blood. I have shown that a man can infect a woman with this pyemia and that a man can infect another man with it - for so Kolletschka died. I have shown that it can arise after surgery as well as after childbirth and in the non-pregnant as well as the pregnant. I have shown that it can be prevented. I have shown how it can be prevented. I have proved all that I have said with facts, with records, with laboratory experiments, and with human beings,. I have talked a great deal. But while we talk and talk, gentlemen, women are dying, and doctors are killing them,. There is no lying-in hospital where women are not dying of childbed fever, and their children with them. And we talk, gentlemen. We talk and talk and talk. And it is not necessary to talk. I am not asking anything worldshaking. I am asking only that you wash. In the name of pity - stop the murder of mothers, gentlemen. Wash your hands! Wash everything that contacts a patient! Stop this murder! For God's sake wash your hands!"

In 1849 Dr. Semmelweis was fired.

At this point Dr. Semmelweis returned to Hungary and during the next eleven years supervised the delivery of 8,537 babies with the loss of only 184 mothers. This mortality rate compares favorably with that of our own day. In 1861 Dr. Semmelweis published his findings in a 500 page book titled "*The Etiology, Concept, and Prophylaxis of Childbed fever*".

In 1865 Dr. Semmelweis went stark raving mad. According to Morton Thompson, the last thing he did was rush out on the street and hand our printed literature about the cause and cure of childbed fever. Then he rushed into the dissecting room, slashed his own finger with a scalpel and rubbed that open wound in the contamination of a corpse. Then they led him away to an insane asylum where he died two weeks later on Aug. 13, 1865. He died with his hand rotting off and the death rattle of a thousand women ringing in his ears.

His son Bela committed suicide at the tender age of twenty-five, despairing that his father's teachings would never be accepted.

CONCLUSION

The love and unity for which Christ prayed are not the result of human wisdom and physical effort. Both love and unity come as a direct result of the work of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:3). It is a natural thing for those who are born again to love everyone else who is born again. This is specifically taught in 1 John 5:1: "**Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born**

of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.”

The “new covenant” which God has put in our minds and written on our hearts has made us new creations in Christ Jesus. As we have born the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. If Jesus, our Spiritual Seed, is allowed to mature within us, He will help us make progress toward the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

God made special provision so that no one could tamper with the Old Covenant. It was placed in the Ark of the Covenant and anything that dared to touch that ark, or look inside of it died in the process. What makes us think that we have a right to tamper with the hearts and minds of believers where God has written His New Covenant? The Christian Scriptures are inspired by God but are not a legalistic code. They are like spiritual food. Both physical and spiritual life requires nourishment, but the nourishment we receive does not change the DNA code that began with our birth. Jesus Himself said, repeating the words of Moses in Deuteronomy, **“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3)**

The late Seth Wilson said: “Everyone has a right to FIND a meaning in Scripture. No one has a right To GIVE it meaning” May God give us the wisdom to allow His children to feed on and grow from His Holy Word without contaminating their hearts and minds with our own preconceptions and prejudice. Remember: to their own Master they will stand or fall, not to us! When someone is “born again” God begins His work in their lives and He will complete it. We dare not thrust our calloused and contaminated hands into the inner recesses of their hearts and minds. When we stand before God in Judgement, we will not be called upon to give an account for our neighbors, we will give an account of ourselves. Remember! By this all men will know that we belong to Jesus - if we love one another - and we can know that we have passed from death to life because we have loved the brethren!