Irenaeus Commentary Summary

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Chapter 1: His Purpose in Writing

In his introduction to Book 5, Irenaeus tells us the purpose of his writings.

Irenaeus' purpose includes at least these five points:

- Expose the heretics and their doctrines
- Show the preaching of the Church
- Reclaim the wanderers and convert them to the Church of God
- Confirm the minds of the neophytes and guard them from false doctrine
- Help his readers to become followers of the only true and steadfast Teacher, the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ

Chapter 2: His Life and Character

He was born between A.D. 115 and 125. He enjoyed the instruction of the venerable Polycarp of Smyrna, the pupil of John, and of other "Elders," who were mediate or immediate disciples of the apostles.

After the martyrdom of Pothinus he was elected bishop of Lyons (178), and labored there with zeal and success, by tongue and pen, for the restoration of the heavily visited church, for the spread of Christianity in Gaul, and for the defence and development of its doctrines.

He is reported by later tradition (since the fourth or fifth century) to have died a martyr in the persecution under Septimus Severus, A.D. 202, but the silence of Tertullian, Hippolytus, Eusebius, and Epiphanius makes this point extremely doubtful.

Chapter 3: The Gospel According to Irenaeus

Book 3: Chapter IX.—One and the same God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is He whom the prophets foretold, and who was declared by the Gospel. Proof of this, at the outset, from St. Matthew's Gospel.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus affirms "This, therefore, having been clearly demonstrated here (and it shall yet be so still more clearly), that neither prophets, nor the apostles, nor the Lord Christ in His own person, did acknowledge any other Lord or God, but the God and Lord supreme: the prophets and the apostles confessing the Father and the Son; but naming no other as God, and confessing no other as Lord:"

To summarize, Irenaeus explains that Jesus was both man and God. To repeat, Irenaeus states, "For inasmuch as the Word of God was man from the root of Jesse, and son of Abraham, in this respect did the Spirit of God rest upon Him, and anoint Him to preach the Gospel to the lowly. But inasmuch as He was God, He did not judge according to glory, nor reprove after the manner of speech. For "He needed not that any should testify to Him of man for He Himself knew what was in man." This is a clear affirmation by Irenaeus of the true identity of the Son of God who was both God and man as the Scriptures testify.

Chapter 4: Irenaeus' Statement of Faith

Book 1: Chapter X.—Unity of the faith of the Church throughout the whole world.

In paragraph one, he begins by affirming that, “The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: [She believes] in”:

1.) “one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them;”
2.) “and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation;”
3.) “and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets” the following:

- “the dispensations of God,”
- “and the advents,”
- “and the birth from a virgin,”
- “and the passion,”
- “and the resurrection from the dead,”
- “and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord,”
- “and His [future] manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father”

4.) This was done in order “to gather all things in one,” referring to Ephesians 1:10, “and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess,” to Him,” referring to Philippians 2:10,11.
5.) “and that He should execute just judgment towards all;”
6.) In order “that He may send “spiritual wickednesses,” referring to Ephesians 6:12, “and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire;”
7.) “but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory.”

Irenaeus shows us that faith in the Father and the Son has been established by all as the one means of salvation for those who believe. Those who do not believe are fairly judged as enemies of the truth, while those who do believe are judged as its friends. It is Irenaeus’ strong statement of faith that “He, therefore, who was known, was not a different being from Him who declared “No man knoweth the Father,” but one and the same, the Father making all things subject to Him; while He received testimony from all that He was very man, and that He was very God, from the Father, from the Spirit, from angels, from the creation itself, from men, from apostate spirits and demons, from the enemy, and last of all, from death itself.”

Irenaeus futher testifies that “the Son, administering all things for the Father, works from the beginning even to the end, and without Him no man can attain the knowledge of God.” Irenaeus teaches us that the Father was known from the beginning of creation as he says that the words “shall reveal” were not said “with reference to the future alone, as if then [only] the Word had begun to manifest the Father when He was born of Mary, but it applies indifferently throughout all time. For the Son, being present with His own handiwork from the beginning, reveals the Father to all; to whom He wills, and when He wills, and as the Father wills.” It is the Father who sent His Son that He might be further known to man. And so Irenaeus concludes this section with a final statement of faith as he says, “Wherefore, then, in all things, and through all things, there is one God, the Father, and one Word, and one Son, and one Spirit, and one salvation to all who believe in Him.”

In paragraph two, Irenaeus asserts, “As I have already observed, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it.” Irenaeus continues as he further asserts, “She also believes these points [of doctrine] just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth.” Not only so, but Irenaeus continues as he asserts further, “For, although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything

different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world."

His perception of the unity of the Churches throughout the world as upholding the same doctrine and handing down nothing different is evidence of the Churches' early reliance on tradition.

Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures

Book 2: Chapter XXVIII.—Perfect knowledge cannot be attained in the present life: many questions must be submissively left in the hands of God.

In paragraph 2 Irenaeus says, "If, however, we cannot discover explanations of all those things in Scripture which are made the subject of investigation, yet let us not on that account seek after any other God besides Him who really exists. For this is the very greatest impiety. We should leave things of that nature to God who created us, being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit;" We see here that Irenaeus believed the Scriptures to be the word of God.

Book 3: Chapter II.—The heretics follow neither Scripture nor tradition.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus records, "But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth."

Irenaeus concludes by saying, "It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition."

So Irenaeus is saying that he believes in both the Scripture and tradition as valid sources of truth, as long as that tradition originated from an apostle, being "preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches."

Book 4: Chapter XXVI.—The treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ; the true exposition of the Scriptures is to be found in the Church alone.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "If any one, therefore, reads the Scriptures with attention, he will find in them an account of Christ, and a foreshadowing of the new calling (*vocationis*). For Christ is the treasure which was hid in the field, that is, in this world (for "the field is the world"), but the treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ, since He was pointed out by means of types and parables."

Irenaeus points out in this chapter that the Scriptures speak of Christ in both the Old and New Testaments. Thus, Irenaeus here proves the unity of the Scriptures. Irenaeus also encourages us to "read the Scriptures."

Book 4: Chapter XXXII.—That one God was the author of both Testaments, is confirmed by the authority of a presbyter who had been taught by the apostles.

Irenaeus mentions two testaments here. This is an evidence of the canon being formed during his time, but not closed as we have seen with his mention of the passage in the Shepherd of Hermas as Scripture in **Book 4: Chapter XX, paragraph 2,** covered in this **Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures**. I believe Irenaeus did not know whether all of the apostolic writings had been collected yet. This is, I believe, what motivated him

to place such emphasis on maintaining the apostolic succession of the presbyters. We will look in detail at this belief in **Chapter 20: The Teaching of Apostolic Succession**.

Book 5: Chapter VIII.—The gifts of the Holy Spirit which we receive prepare us for incorruption, render us spiritual, and separate us from carnal men. These two classes are signified by the clean and unclean animals in the legal dispensation.

In this paragraph four, Irenaeus composes an allegory using the clean and unclean animals as his metaphors. I like his little parable but mostly because of the place he gives to the word of God in the believer's life. He is to meditate on it, to stand firm on it, to produce good works by holding it steadfastly, and by doing the things it says. This is commendable, and is the rightful place of the word of God in the lives of all believers, and not just the presbytery. The word of God is for every believer, and every child of God as we read in **Psalm 1 (ESV):**1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Chapter 6: His Teaching on The Resurrection

Book 3: Chapter XII.—Doctrine of the rest of the apostles.

Irenaeus then rebukes the Gnostics as he testifies, "Thus the apostles did not preach another God, or another Fulness; nor, that the Christ who suffered and rose again was one, while he who flew off on high was another, and remained impassible; but that there was one and the same God the Father, and Christ Jesus who rose from the dead; and they preached faith in Him, to those who did not believe on the Son of God, and exhorted them out of the prophets, that the Christ whom God promised to send, He sent in Jesus, whom they crucified and God raised up."

Irenaeus here quotes the Scriptures in context, and leaves us in no doubt that he believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Book 5: Chapter III.—The power and glory of God shine forth in the weakness of human flesh, as He will render our body a participator of the resurrection and of immortality, although He has formed it from the dust of the earth; He will also bestow upon it the enjoyment of immortality, just as He grants it this short life in common with the soul.

Irenaeus then reasons, "And surely it is much more difficult and incredible, from non-existent bones, and nerves, and veins, and the rest of man's organization, to bring it about that all this should be, and to make man an animated and rational creature, than to reintegrate again that which had been created and then afterwards decomposed into earth (for the reasons already mentioned), having thus passed into those [elements] from which man, who had no previous existence, was formed." Irenaeus then argues, "For He who in the beginning caused him to have being who as yet was not, just when He pleased, shall much more reinstate again those who had a former existence, when it is His will [that they should inherit] the life granted by Him."

Book 5: Chapter V.—The prolonged life of the ancients, the translation of Elijah and of Enoch in their own bodies, as well as the preservation of Jonah, of Shadrach, Meshach,

and Abednego, in the midst of extreme peril, are clear demonstrations that God can raise up our bodies to life eternal.

Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter V

In summary, Irenaeus' goal in this chapter is to show that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. Indeed, as Irenaeus points out, the prolonged lives of those mentioned in Genesis of up to nine hundred years and more are a testimony to God's power to give life as long as He wills. And as Irenaeus affirms, Enoch was truly translated bodily to the place that God had provided for the righteous dead according to the Scriptures as we read in **Genesis 5 (ESV**):24 Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

And the writer of Hebrews also records this event in **Hebrews 11 (ESV):**5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

And also Elijah was translated bodily as we read in **2 Kings 2 (ESV):**11 And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

The word heaven in this verse probably means the first heaven of the clouds, for the way into heaven itself was not made known yet as we read in **Hebrews 9 (NIV):**8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning.

The writer of Hebrews explains that Christ entered heaven by His own blood in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

This is further explained in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**24 For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. 25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.

It was not possible for man to enter heaven until Jesus entered by His own blood to obtain eternal redemption for man.

Another thing to note in this chapter is Irenaeus' use of the word "assumption" as a synonym for the word translation. He says, "For by means of the very same hands through which they were moulded at the beginning, did they receive this translation and assumption." He is speaking of the body being transferred at death to paradise. We only find two occurrences of translation, or assumption, in Scripture, and both are mentioned by Irenaeus, that is, Enoch and Elijah. Translation, or assumption, is not the norm for the righteous. Otherwise there would not be a need for a resurrection. But translation will be similar to what happens when Jesus returns. Paul says we shall not all sleep, or die, but we shall all be changed in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):**50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This same event is spoken of in **1 Thessalonians 4 (ESV):**13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And

the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

So we see that, according to the Scriptures, those who are alive on earth when the Lord comes will be changed and caught up to be with the Lord. This would correspond to the translations of Enoch and Elijah. But when the Lord comes with those "who have fallen asleep in Jesus," those who are alive on earth will be not be raised before them. "The dead in Christ will rise first," and "then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them," and "so we shall always be with the Lord." Hallelujah!

And finally, in reference to the translations of Enoch and Elijah, Irenaeus asserts that these events are an anticipation of the translation of the just. Irenaeus says, "For Enoch, when he pleased God, was translated in the same body in which he did please Him, thus pointing out by anticipation the translation of the just." This is a valid assertion. Enoch and Elijah are a type of the saints on earth who are alive when Jesus comes, and will be caught up to be with Jesus without seeing death when He comes.

However, Irenaeus also mentions the testimony of the elders, the disciples of the apostles, who "tell us that those who were translated were transferred to that place (for paradise has been prepared for righteous men, such as have the Spirit; in which place also Paul the apostle, when he was caught up, heard words which are unspeakable as regards us in our present condition)."

Irenaeus believed that the righteous dead, even after Christ died, go to an intermediate place until the time of the resurrection.

It is true that Enoch and Elijah were translated bodily to the intermediate place, that is, to paradise or Abraham's bosom. However, they did not go to an intermediate place as Irenaeus supposes the paradise that Paul was caught up to in a vision was. Rather, they went to the lower paradise in Sheol, where the righteous dead were kept until Jesus made a way for them, and us, into heaven itself by His own blood. And since the paradise that Paul was caught up to was actually heaven itself, and not an intermediate place, Irenaeus is only right in part. The righteous dead, before Jesus died and rose from the dead and entered heaven for us, went to Abraham's bosom, which is also called paradise by Jesus when he was dying on the cross for us. The thief on the cross was with Jesus in this paradise, that is in Abraham's bosom, on the day that Jesus died. But after three days, Jesus entered heaven for us by His own blood, and all in Abraham's bosom, or the lower paradise, were then removed to the heavenly paradise when our Lord took captivity captive. And it was this paradise in heaven that Paul was caught up to. We will talk more about this later.

Irenaeus' reference to the testimony of elders is an instance where he is relying solely on tradition. What the elders told the disciples at that time is impossible for us to repeat. And even if it was possible to repeat, it is still not the testimony of Scripture. It is hearsay, and it is valuable in so much as it bears witness and supports the truth of the Scriptures. It appears that Irenaeus might have misunderstood the elders in this case, for the Scriptures teach that the righteous dead go to be with Jesus in heaven itself.

The Scripture says that to die is gain for we will be with Christ as we read in **Philippians 1 (ESV):**21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

This is why God will bring with Him when He returns those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, that is, those who died in Christ before His return just as 1 Thessalonians 4:14 relates. The reason He will bring them with Him is because they are already with Him in paradise, that is, in heaven itself.

To summarize again, in this chapter of his writing, Irenaeus reminds us of those saints who lived long ago, that is, "our predecessors," who lived to an advanced age "beyond seven hundred, eight hundred, and nine hundred years of age," and "their bodies kept pace with the protracted length of their days, and participated in life as long as God willed that they should live." He does this to show the reasonability of the resurrection. Irenaeus also mentions the translations of Enoch and Elijah, who were taken up to heaven, or paradise as he calls it, in their bodies. This, he says, is prophetic of "the assumption of those who are spiritual." Irenaeus recounts the fall of Adam, and his consequent banishment from the garden "into this world." But, he says, the

"disciples of the apostles tell us that those who were translated were transferred to that place (for paradise has been prepared for righteous men, such as have the Spirit; in which place also Paul the apostle, when he was caught up, heard words which are unspeakable as regards us in our present condition." So Paul also, he says, was caught up to paradise, the same place from which Adam was banished. Irenaeus says also that all those "righteous men, such as have the Spirit," will be translated and remain there until "the consummation [of all things], as a prelude to immortality."

Book 5: Chapter XII.—Of the difference between life and death; of the breath of life and the vivifying Spirit: also how it is that the substance of flesh revives which once was dead.

Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter XII

Irenaeus is trying to show the reasonability of the resurrection of our bodies. But what would have helped him greatly to interpret the Scriptures is if he would have understood that man has a spirit of his own, in addition to his soul and body. In paragraph two, Irenaeus begins as follows:

"For the breath of life, which also rendered man an animated being, is one thing, and the vivifying Spirit another, which also caused him to become spiritual. And for this reason Isaiah said, "Thus saith the Lord, who made heaven and established it, who founded the earth and the things therein, and gave breath to the people upon it, and Spirit to those walking upon it," referring to Isaiah 42:5, "thus telling us that breath is indeed given in common to all people upon earth, but that the Spirit is theirs alone who tread down earthly desires. And therefore Isaiah himself, distinguishing the things already mentioned, again exclaims, "For the Spirit shall go forth from Me, and I have made every breath," referring to Isaiah 57:16. Thus does he attribute the Spirit as peculiar to God which in the last times He pours forth upon the human race by the adoption of sons; but [he shows] that breath was common throughout the creation, and points it out as something created."

Just to note, if we follow Irenaeus' line of reasoning here, it is only the New Testament saints who will be resurrected since it was they who have the Spirit poured out upon them in "the last times." This is not what Irenaeus believes, but it is the logical conclusion of his statements.

In paragraph two, we see that Irenaeus is careful to distinguish between the breath of life and the vivifying Spirit. And in his writing in general he seems to say that a man is composed of just flesh and soul until he receives the Spirit. We see this most clearly when Irenaeus writes in **Book 5: Chapter XII, paragraph 3,** "For it is not one thing which dies and another which is quickened, as neither is it one thing which is lost and another which is found, but the Lord came seeking for that same sheep which had been lost. What was it, then, which was dead? Undoubtedly it was the substance of the flesh; the same, too, which had lost the breath of life, and had become breathless and dead. This same, therefore, was what the Lord came to quicken, that as in Adam we do all die, as being of an animal nature, in Christ we may all live, as being spiritual, not laying aside God's handiwork, but the lusts of the flesh, and receiving the Holy Spirit; as the apostle says in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth."

In other words, man does not have a spirit of his own in Irenaeus' thinking, but just a body and a soul. Man is just of an animal nature before Christ, Irenaeus says. But what do the Scriptures say regarding the makeup of man's being?

The Scriptures indicate that man has three parts to his being, that is, spirit, soul, and body, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (ESV):**23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

That there is a division between our spirit and our soul is stated in **Hebrews 4 (ESV):**12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

That there is a difference between our spirit and the Holy Spirit is indicated in **Romans 8 (ESV):**16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Then again Paul speaks of his own spirit in **2 Corinthians 2 (ESV):**13 my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

And again when Jesus raised a dead girl back to life we see that her own spirit returned in **Luke 8 (ESV):**52 And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." 53 And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." 55 And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. 56 And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

As we read the writings of Irenaeus, we find that he is attributing the term spirit in almost all cases in the Old Testament to the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. It does not seem to me he allows for a spirit in man, except for the Holy Spirit. I believe the Bible teaches that God made man with spirit, soul, and body. We will discuss this more as we go. However, we should not lose sight of Irenaeus' main goal here, and that is to show that the Scriptures teach that man's body will be resurrected by God.

Book 5: Chapter XXXI.—The preservation of our bodies is confirmed by the resurrection and ascension of Christ: the souls of the saints during the intermediate period are in a state of expectation of that time when they shall receive their perfect and consummated glory.

In paragraph 1, Irenaeus says, "Since, again, some who are reckoned among the orthodox go beyond the prearranged plan for the exaltation of the just, and are ignorant of the methods by which they are disciplined beforehand for incorruption, they thus entertain heretical opinions."

He hints here of purgatory.

Chapter 7: Inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven

Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter IX

To summarize Irenaeus' thinking in **Book 5: Chapter IX** of his writing, he is defending the resurrection of the body. He testifies that the heretics point to a single verse of Paul, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," referring to 1 Corinthians 15:50, and adduce from this that "the handiwork of God is not saved." He then argues against the heretics that "do not take this fact into consideration, that there are three things out of which, as I have shown, the complete man is composed —flesh, soul, and spirit." His thinking is that since man before faith in Christ is dead spiritually, he possesses only flesh and blood. He seems to say that when any have faith in Christ, "and who through faith do establish the Spirit of God in their hearts," the Holy Spirit enters the one who believes and gives him or her spiritual life. But if the one who initially has faith does not maintain "communion of the Spirit," but walks "frivolously and carelessly" as if he "were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood," he could "lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses" him or her. His main point is that it is the Spirit of God that raises us from the dead. Therefore he says that "as many as they be, who have not that which saves and forms [us] into life [eternal]," that is the Holy Spirit, they "shall be, and shall be called, [mere] flesh and blood; for these are they who have not the Spirit of God in themselves."

The heretics were the first however to take 1 Corinthians 15:50 out of context, saying that there would be no resurrection of the body. Irenaeus has done well to defend the resurrection of the dead. However his defense is weak in that he has taken Scripture out of context. Irenaeus would have done much better if he would have put verse 50 in context with the rest of chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians.

Irenaeus actually begins his argument from chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians here in verse 48, as he says in paragraph three, "The flesh, therefore, when destitute of the Spirit of God, is dead, not having life, and cannot possess the kingdom of God: [it is as] irrational blood, like water poured out upon the ground. And therefore he

says, “As is the earthy, such are they that are earthy,” referring to 1 Corinthians 15:48. Again, Irenaeus testifies, "But where the Spirit of the Father is, there is a living man;”

However, we see that Irenaeus takes verse 48 out of context for Paul is not talking about who will go into heaven, but about what kind of body they will have when they get there. The “earthy” refers to what is of the earth. Our bodies, being made of dust, are of the earth and therefore are earthy. But the resurrection shall make them heavenly. That is, the life of the body will no longer be in the blood but of the Spirit which is eternal. Paul then explains that our earthy body, which is perishable, will be changed to be a heavenly and imperishable body when it is raised from the dead as he continues in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):**50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Irenaeus defends the resurrection of the dead, but he does not correct the error of the heretics who took the verse in 1 Corinthians 15:50 out of context, and said there was no resurrection of the dead. Again the verse read as in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):**50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Just reading the rest of the sentence in verse 50 proves the fact that Paul is not talking about who will inherit the kingdom of God, but about what kind of body will inherit the kingdom of God. Irenaeus’ defense has introduced a method of interpretation that does not rightly divide the word of God. He is confusing 1 Corinthians 15:50 with Paul’s words in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):**8 But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers! 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

In this verse, Paul is talking about who will inherit the kingdom of God, not what kind of body they will have when they get there. The unrighteous, Paul simply says, will not inherit the kingdom of God. We must be washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of God to become righteous, or we will not inherit the kingdom of God. This all happened for the Corinthians when they believed that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and they confessed Him as Lord of their lives.

There are five main points of concern in this chapter of Irenaeus’ writing:

1. His method of interpretation of Scripture.
2. His teaching on the composition of man.
3. His teaching on the inheritance of the Holy Spirit.
4. His teaching on losing the Spirit.
5. His teaching on losing life by losing the Spirit.

In Irenaeus’ thinking, he seems to have believed that the born again experience was a birth of the Holy Spirit in the believer. The presence of the Holy Spirit gave the one who had faith life. He does not see the born again experience as a change in the person themselves. The Holy Spirit merely takes up residence in the hearts of those who have believed, and resides there as long as the believer does not live “frivolously and carelessly.” His thinking is based on his assumption that man does not have a spirit of his own. Since man has no spirit of his own and is merely flesh and blood without the Holy Spirit, he is only spiritually alive when the Holy Spirit is present in him, according to Irenaeus.

However, the new birth is simply not described by the Scriptures in this way. That man has a spirit is

plainly stated by the Scriptures. That this new birth takes place in man's spirit is made plain by the fact that man is described as being dead in sin before the new birth, and that he is made alive by being born again. Saying that the new birth is the Holy Spirit taking up residence in our hearts is not describing the new birth as Jesus described it in John, chapter 3. Jesus says that that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit as we read in **John 3 (ESV):**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

This new birth then takes place in our spirit. It is our spirit that is born again, or regenerated. Being thus reborn, we delight to do the will of God in our inner man, or spirit. Being thus reborn, we are a new creation, created in righteousness and true holiness, and made partakers of the divine nature. The law of the Spirit of life is the law of our inner self, our spirit. Our spirit now has eternal life. Being thus born again, we are children of God. This is the doctrine of Regeneration. Now as we yield ourselves a living sacrifice, the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts.

And we are His sons and daughters being redeemed by His blood. As such, we are not our own as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):**19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

As far as the resurrection of our bodies is concerned, our earthly body will not be changed until the resurrection. The resurrection will not occur until Jesus returns. When our bodies are resurrected, they will at that point bear the image of the heavenly. Until then we bear the image of the earthy on the outside in our flesh, but we are already changed on the inside where we have this new life in our spirit. So we who have believed in Jesus will not bear the image of the heavenly until we are raised from the dead at the resurrection. We bear the image of the earthy now, but when we are face to face with Jesus we shall be like Him, a heavenly man or woman.

And so Irenaeus confuses the time when the believer is resurrected with the time when he believes and receives the Holy Spirit as a pledge. What is the pledge for except eternal life? In this life on earth, when we believe we receive the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our future home with the Lord and He will never leave us. He is the seal of the purchased possession guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession, to the praise of his glory.

Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter X

Irenaeus here in this chapter is continuing his argument for the resurrection of the body, but he is now encouraging us to live a holy life and not give in to the lusts of the flesh. He reiterates his main point in the middle of paragraph one as he says, "Admirably therefore does the apostle exhibit our nature, and God's universal appointment, in his discourse about flesh and blood and the wild olive." In this statement we see that Irenaeus is joining two main passages of Scripture in his discourse. The first passage states that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" as in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):**50 I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

And the second is the passage of the olive tree analogy as in **Romans 11 (ESV):**13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry 14 in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. 15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? 16 If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. 19 Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare

you. 22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

Irenaeus' concern in the previous chapter, **Book 5: Chapter IX,** is that we "may not lose life by losing the Spirit which possesses us." That is, that if we "shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood," we "cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

Irenaeus' concern in the current **Book 5: Chapter X** is that we "progress by faith towards better things, and receive the Spirit of God, and bring forth the fruit thereof," so that we "shall be spiritual, as being planted in the paradise of God." He again touches on the possibility of losing the Spirit as he says, "But if they cast out the Spirit, and remain in their former condition, desirous of being of the flesh rather than of the Spirit, then it is very justly said with regard to men of this stamp, "That flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God; just as if any one were to say that the wild olive is not received into the paradise of God."

Irenaeus' intent is to encourage us to live a holy life. This is good. But in his effort to argue his points from the Scriptures, he joins together two disparate themes.

The Scripture in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, relates to the resurrection of our body, and not to the works of the flesh. When Paul refers to "flesh and blood" here he is talking about what type of body will inherit the kingdom of God, and the fact that by itself, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Paul's whole point in 1 Corinthians 15:12-58 is the resurrection. The Holy Spirit is not even mentioned in this passage except possibly in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):**45 Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned in other passages in regards to the resurrection as in **Romans 1 (NASB):**4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Also in **Romans 8 (ESV):**11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Paul gives us hope and he explains in this verse that if the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, we can be assured that He will raise us up also when the time comes. However, the term "flesh and blood" in 1 Corinthians 15:50 relates to the type of body that will inherit eternity, and does not relate to our works. The type of body that will inherit eternity will not be flesh and blood, that is a perishable body, but it will be a heavenly or imperishable body that will remain for eternity having it's life principle as the Holy Spirit. It will thus be s spiritual body as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15 (ESV):**44 It is sown **a** natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

Now the Scripture in Romans, chapter 11 is Paul's analogy of the olive tree, and this analogy relates to the current status of Israel. The theme of Romans, chapter 11 relates only indirectly to the works of the flesh. Paul explains in chapter 11 of Romans that Israel is currently in a state of apostasy. He uses the analogy of the olive tree to explain the state of Israel in the Church age. Israel is like a good olive tree that has become uncultivated. The trunk is still good but the branches have become like the wild olive and are not able to bear their valuable fruit. For this reason they have been cut off from the good olive tree so that other branches might be grafted in to produce the precious fruit of the olive, that is, the oil.

Now in order to understand what Paul is talking about in Romans, chapter 11, we must understand the symbolism he uses. The olive tree was well known to Jews in Paul's time. **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** (ISBE) says on pages 2184 through 2185 that the olive tree is indigenous in the land of Palestine. The cultivation of the olive goes back to the earliest times in Canaan. When Israel entered the land they acquired olive trees which they did not plant as in **Deuteronomy 6 (ESV):**10 "And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, 12 then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Also in **Joshua 24 (ESV):**13 I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.'

"When the young trees are three years old they are grafted from a choice stock and after another three or

four years they may commence to bear fruit, but they take quite a decade or more before reaching full fruition," the **ISBE** says on page 2184. The analogy that Paul makes about the olive tree would be immediately understood by a Jewish believer. And Paul was encouraging Gentile believers to not give up on Jews who had not accepted Christ yet. Paul himself was a Jew so he knew there would be some who would accept Christ still. And Paul says at the present time there is a remnant as we read in **Romans 11 (ESV):**5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

Paul does not mention the Holy Spirit as engrafting anything in chapter 11 of his epistle to the Romans, or anywhere else in Scripture. In fact, the Holy Spirit is not mentioned at all in this chapter of Romans. Paul does say that God broke off the branches which are symbolic of Israel in unbelief. If they abide not still in unbelief God is able to graft them in again as we see in **Romans 11 (ESV):**23 And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.

As for the wild olive that is grafted in, it stands for the Gentile believer who is now a member of the people of God. This believer stands by his faith, for it is by grace through faith that we are saved as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

It is through this same grace and faith that the Jewish believer is saved as we see in **Romans 11 (ESV):**4 But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

Also, Paul does not mention the word "flesh" or the word "fruit" in the whole chapter 11 of Romans. He is simply telling us that God's plan for Israel isn't finished yet, and when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, all Israel will then be saved when the deliverer comes to Zion as we read in **Romans 11 (NASB):**25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; 27 "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." 28 As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

With this in mind, in paragraph one we see that Irenaeus is encouraging us not to be wild olives and remain in our "former condition." If we do so, he warns, we will be "cut off, and cast into the fire." Rather, he exhorts us to become "a fruit-bearing olive, planted as it were in a king's park." We are not to reject "the engrafting of the Spirit while pampering the flesh." We are encouraged to "progress by faith towards better things, and receive the Spirit of God, and bring forth the fruit thereof." In short, we are to become spiritual. Irenaeus sees us "planted in the paradise of God" in this state of being spiritual.

However, his next statement in paragraph one is "But if they cast out the Spirit of God and remain in their former condition, desirous of being of the flesh rather than of the Spirit," then the justice of God will not allow them to inherit the Kingdom of God." This reminds me again of his statement in **Book 5: Chapter IX,** paragraph four, where he speaks of losing life by "losing that Spirit which possesses us." However, once we are born again and have life, we have the Spirit of God. We cannot lose the Spirit of God or cast Him out for He possesses us. We are His possession, and we are not our own as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):**19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

It is true that we can grieve the Holy Spirit as the children of Israel did in **Isaiah 63 (ESV):**10 But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them.

Also when we as children of God, having the Holy Spirit and the power to put to death the lusts of the flesh and yet we do not put them to death, we grieve the Holy Spirit as we see in **Ephesians 4 (ESV):**30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

But we cannot change our nature as if we were changing back and forth from a wild olive to a good olive and then when we sin, be turn back into a wild olive again. When we become a child of God, we receive a new nature in our spirit as Peter tells us in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):**4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And so God deals with us as sons and daughters. He then disciplines every child He whom receives as we read in **Hebrews 12 (ESV):**4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." 7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

When we sin as His sons and daughters, we have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (ESV):**1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

And when we say we have fellowship with Him who is light, and yet we walk in darkness we are not practicing the truth as we read in **1 John 1 (ESV):**5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

As we walk in the light of God's word and confess our sins as we become aware of them, we are cleansed from all sin by His blood as we read in **1 John 1 (ESV):**7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

This is why reading and studying the Word of God is so important. As we become aware of more truth, we are then responsible to walk in the light of that truth. This is how we grow up in Him and become spiritual. In one sense we are spiritual, that is in the Spirit and not in the flesh, when we are born again because we have the Holy Spirit from that point on as Irenaeus himself quotes Paul in **Romans 8 (ESV):**9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

And we belong to Him when we have faith in Jesus Christ, that He is God's Son, that He came in the flesh and died on the cross for our sins, and that He rose again from the dead.

But in another sense we become spiritual when we have learned to put off the old man, and the works of the flesh, and have received the pure milk of the word, and have brought forth the fruit of the Spirit. As we discipline ourselves to continue in prayer and in the word of God, this growth will happen. If we don't discipline ourselves God, being a good Father, He will discipline us. His discipline even includes sickness and death as with those who ate the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner in Corinth as in **1 Corinthians 11 (ESV):**26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

Paul says that we are disciplined by the Lord so that we are not condemned with the world as we see in **1 Corinthians 11 (ESV):**31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. 33 So then, my

brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— 34 if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

So we are not to "become careless, and bring forth for fruit the lusts of the flesh like woody produce," as Irenaeus says. If we do so, we will be disciplined by the Lord, but we will not be cast out or lose our salvation. God deals with us as His sons and daughters from the moment we have faith in Him.

Now in paragraph two Irenaeus shows us that "those who are in the flesh cannot please God," as we read in context in **Romans 8 (ESV):**8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Irenaeus says we are not by the Scripture prohibited from living our lives in the flesh, but it is the lusts of the flesh we must put off for they "bring death upon a man."

Now also in paragraph two, where Irenaeus says "And again, those persons who are not bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and are, as it were, covered over and lost among brambles, if they use diligence, and receive the word of God as a graft, arrive at the pristine nature of man—that which was created after the image and likeness of God.," he seems to be referring to those who at first believed but then fell into sin and the former conversation again. He allows for their repentance I can see. But I do not see that he understands the responsibility which we have as children of God of putting on the new man and putting off the old man. It is not a matter of changing our nature again or being born again, again. We have a new man, and therefore a new nature, when we are born again. But we still have the old man in our flesh, and therefore a sinful nature, as well. Our responsibility in this new life is to put on the new man, and to put off the old.

Now the analogy of the olive tree is just a method Paul uses to explain the truth about the current state of Israel. It is only an analogy. When we get to heaven we will not all line up in the shape of an olive tree. The olive tree is just a way to illustrate the truth about Israel and the Church. No one is really engrafted into an olive tree. It is just figurative language of the relationship of the believer in the Church to the believer who is of Israel. And so there is no engrafting of the Spirit into an olive tree. It is just an analogy. And so we cannot "lose the Holy Spirit which possesses us," as if we held on to Him by our works. It is He who possesses us. And yet if we wish to find our lives, we must lose them for His sake. In this way we will live the abundant life that Jesus promises to all who believe in Him.

Chapter 8: On the Nature of Man

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII

To summarize, in this chapter Irenaeus is defending the Church against the Gnostics who believed God to be deficient because man was created imperfect. Irenaeus has invented an argument to combat this heresy. His argument states that man is infantile because he is a created being. Man could not receive perfection at the first because he was infantile. Man also has power over himself since he is made in the image of God. Thus man is in his own power. In the course of his argument, he sees that Paul gave the Corinthians milk to drink which he interprets to be Paul's teaching about the "advent of our Lord as a man." According to Irenaeus, although Jesus was the "perfect Bread of the Father," He "offered Himself to us as milk, [because we were] as infants." By receiving "such a course of milk nourishment," we "become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God," and are then "able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father."

Now Irenaeus sees the Spirit as "strong meat," that is, "the food of life eternal," which he does not

believe the Corinthians have received as yet because they were carnal, and therefore not "capable of receiving it, because they had the sentient faculties of the soul still feeble and undisciplined in the practice of things pertaining to God." The reason he believes this to be so is because he sees that "in like manner, God had power at the beginning to grant perfection to man; but as the latter was only recently created, he could not possibly have received it, or even if he had received it, could he have contained it, or containing it, could he have retained it." This is important to understand in Irenaeus' thinking because he then says that, "It was for this reason that the Son of God, although He was perfect, passed through the state of infancy in common with the rest of mankind, partaking of it thus not for His own benefit, but for that of the infantile stage of man's existence, in order that man might be able to receive Him."

Irenaeus is a worthy workmen in his defense of the faith. However, in his zeal to defend the faith, he has exceeded the bounds of the Scriptures. We will now address the following issues:

- Was man created infantile?
- Had the Corinthians received the Spirit of God?
- Do we have to be perfect with no "imperfection and shortcomings" of our "walk in life" in order to receive the Holy Spirit?
- Do the "sentient faculties" of our soul really have to be disciplined "in the practice of things pertaining to God" in order to receive the Holy Spirit?
- Having received Him, can we retain Him or is it possible to lose Him?

First of all we see that Irenaeus is very logical in his thought process, and it is admirable that he wishes to defend the faith against the Gnostic heresy that believed that God was deficient when he created man because man is imperfect. They even posited another god who they say created God. However, Irenaeus would have been more effective in his defense if he would have rightly divided the Scriptures. The Scripture says that when God finished making man, He said all that He had created was very good as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):**31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Man was created good, and he was able to converse with God in the garden. Man gave names to all the creatures that God brought before him. We see that man was an intelligent being and not infantile in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. 18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Now before man fell in disobedience to God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he was in a state of innocence, but he was put on probation because sin was already in the universe. Dr. Albert Grimes talks about why man was put on probation in his book, Doctrines of Salvation, in The Doctrine of Man. He says the following:

"This is understandable because sin was already in the universe. A being whom God had created before Adam, who was exalted to a high position in heaven, had fallen. This being called Lucifer is referred to in Ezekiel 28:l5, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

The iniquity spoken of was rebellion against God. He with other angels led a revolt against God. This is spoken of in Isaiah l4:l2-15, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning...For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon

the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

The time of this sin is spoken of as in the beginning. l John 3:8, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning..."

Man would no doubt sooner or later come under the influence of Satan and have to make his own choice. He must then be tested in regards to his obedience to God." **Doctrines of Salvation**, **The Doctrine of Man, pg. 2, by Dr. Albert Grimes.**

Now before man fell in disobedience to God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he was in a state of innocence, but he was put on probation because sin was already in the universe.

Man was in a state of innocence until he fell in the Garden of Eden. The imperfection in man came when man sinned. The result of sin was death to all men and women as Paul tells us in in **Romans 5 (KJV**):12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Not only so, but man inherited a sin nature. Paul explains that man without the Spirit of God cannot please Him in **Romans 8 (KJV**):5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Paul tells us that the mind set on the flesh is not even able to subject itself to the law of God. And Paul explains the conflict of the two natures in the Christian in **Romans 7 (KJV**):14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Sin dwells in us, that is, in our flesh. It is this sin in our flesh that makes us not able to please God. We need a change in our nature in order to please Him. This happens in our spirit at the new birth.

It is sin that has corrupted man's nature and rendered man as fruit that is spoiled rotten as we see in **Romans 3 (KJV**):12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

The Greek word for "unprofitable" is ἠχρεώθησαν (pronounced echreothesan) which is in the third person plural, aorist 1, indicative passive case of ἀχρειόω (pronounced achreao) meaning to be rendered useless, unprofitable, to be rendered worthless. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition by Moulton, page 63**.

Paul is quoting from **Psalm 14 (KJV**):1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. 2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

The Hebrew word for "filthy" is **נֶאֱלָחוּ** (pronounced naelachoo) from **חלַאָ** (pronounced alach), and is in the niphal form, and means "to be corrupted, to become sour, as milk." **Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, LL.D., page 50.**

In order to become pleasing to God again, man must have a new nature which is able to please Him. This new nature is given man when he is regenerated, or born again. This word "regeneration" is found in **Titus 3 (KJV**):5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The Greek word for "regeneration" is **παλιγγενεσία** (pronounced paliggenesia) and means "new birth (palin, again, genesis, birth). It is used of spiritual regeneration, Tit. 3:5, involving the communication of a new life, the two operating powers to produce which are "the word of truth," Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23, and the Holy Spirit, John 3:5,6." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 267.**

When we are born of the Spirit, we are given new life in our spirit for whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit as Jesus said in **John 3 (KJV**):5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Our spirit is the new inner self that joyfully concurs with the law of God as Paul reveals in **Romans** 7 **(KJV**):22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

And in **Ephesians 4 (KJV**):24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

And in **Colossians 3 (KJV**):9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

In order to become pleasing to God again, man must have a new nature, which is able to please Him. This new nature is given man when he is regenerated, or born again.

The old self is the old Adamic nature that is still in the members of our flesh as Paul tells us in **Romans** 7 **(KJV**):23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

It is our responsibility as believers to put aside this old nature in our flesh, and put on the new nature of the Spirit of God in our spirit. It is by this new nature that we have escaped the corruption in the world as Peter says in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):**4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Irenaeus does not seem to realize that man will not be perfect in this life, even when he receives the Spirit of God. Man still has a sinful nature in his flesh. This sinful nature will not be eradicated in the believer until the resurrection. It is now our responsibility as regenerated believers to put aside this old nature, and put on the new nature. This however does not make the Spirit of God imperfect or sinful. The Spirit of God is a gift, and is given to us by the grace of God. We do not have to attain a certain level of perfection or maturity to receive Him. He is given freely to those who ask as Jesus said in **Luke 11 (KJV**):13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

There is no waiting time or self-improvement that must be done in order to receive the Holy Spirit as God demonstrates when He baptized the believers in the house of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, while Peter was still preaching the Gospel to them in **Acts 10 (KJV**):44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

The reason there is no waiting time or self-improvement necessary in order to receive the Holy Spirit is because when we believe, we enter God's courtroom as it were, and as soon as God sees our faith, He justifies us as Paul tells us in **Romans 5 (KJV):**1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The word justified in the Greek in this verse is **Δικαιωθέντες** (pronounce dikaiothentes) from δικαιόω (pronounced dikaioō), and it is in the nominative, plural, masculine, participle, aorist 1, passive voice. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition by Moulton, page 100**.

It means "primarily to deem to be right, signifies, in the N.T., (a) to show to be right or righteous; in the Passive Voice, to be justified, Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:35; Rom. 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:16; (bn) to declare to be righteous, to pronounce righteous." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 285.**

In other words, in Romans 5:1, Paul is saying that we have been set at one with God, and are at peace with Him after He has justified us, that is, after He has declared us righteous. And Paul tells us that our justification was part of God's plan from the beginning in **Romans 8 (KJV):**29 For whom he did foreknow, he

also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

And speaking of Abraham, Paul tells us that righteousness was imputed or credited, that is, put down to his account in **Romans 4 (KJV):**22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

The reason there is no waiting time or self-improvement necessary in order to receive the Holy Spirit is because when we believe, we enter God's courtroom as it were, and as soon as God sees our faith, He justifies us as Paul tells us in **Romans 5 (KJV):**1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The word peace in Romans 5:1 in the Greek is εἰρήνη (pronounced eirēnē). This word comes from the verb eiro which means "to bind together that which has been separated." **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume 1, Romans in the Greek New Testament, pg.77**.

And this is why Paul tells us that nothing in the whole universe can separate the believer from the love of God because it is God who justifies as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If we have faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, all these things are true of us, and nothing can separate us from His love. Now we must understand that the Corinthians had been washed, sanctified, and justified as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):**9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

It was because the Corinthians had believed in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead that they had been justified. And this is the reason that, though there were divisions among them and disputes, Paul still addresses them as brethren in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

The Corinthians may have been acting like infants in their behavior, but they were infants in Christ, and Paul addressed them as such as he began his epistle in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):**1 Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's: 3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ: 8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul addresses the Corinthians as the church of God in Corinth who had been sanctified in Christ Jesus, who were saints by calling, and he includes them with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their *Lord* and ours. Paul thanks God for the grace of God that was given them in Christ Jesus, because they were enriched in Him, and the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them. They also were not lacking in any gift as he says in verse seven above. The word for gift in the Greek is χάρισμα (pronounced charisma) and it is the same word that is used in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

Vine's says that the word charisma means "a gift of grace, a gift involving grace" (*charis*) on the part of God as the donor." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 147**. In other words we could say that a charisma is a free gift from God.

Now as to the fact that the Corinthians were in Christ, Paul also concludes in **1 Corinthians 1 (NASB):**30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

Not only so but he calls them saints in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):**1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

Paul includes himself with the Corinthians when he says, "we will judge angels." Being a saint does not mean you are perfect in this life, as the Corinthians proved when they were going to law before the unrighteous, and taking each other to court. This is what Paul was correcting them for. Being a saint simply means one who has been justified, that is, one who has been declared righteous. And again, Paul says that the Corinthians were at one time unrighteous, but now they have been washed, sanctified, and justified in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):**9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The word "washed" in verse 11 speaks of a bath, and this is what Jesus spoke of in **John 13 (NIV):**10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you."

The Corinthians had already had a bath, just as the apostles, when they believed in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They now just needed to wash their feet. So without doubt, the Corinthians were in Christ. Being in Christ is where God places us when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord of our lives. When we believe in Jesus Christ and repent of our sins, and confess Jesus as Lord of our lives, God sovereignly makes us members of the body of Christ by baptizing us into His body as Paul tells the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):**13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

The baptism spoken of here is not water baptism for this baptism is done by the Spirit. The Spirit places us into the body of Christ when we believe in Jesus Christ and accept Him as our Lord and Savior. We do not become members by joining a specific church or group of believers, but by believing in Jesus Christ which begins such an intimate relationship with Him that it is described as being in His body. And so this baptism into the body of Christ is not a gradual thing, but it is a sovereign work of God as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):**18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

The Scripture says that God places us in the body just as He desired. We don't earn our place in the body. It is a sovereign act of God after we believe in Jesus Christ. And Paul tells the Corinthians that they are the body of Christ as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):**27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

How is it that Irenaeus did not see that Paul was speaking to those who were in Christ as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV**):1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, [even] as unto babes in Christ.

And also as in **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):**1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.

The Corinthians may have been infants but they were infants "in Christ." That is, they were infants in the body of Christ. There can be no doubt that the Corinthians were saved men and women. When we are born again, we start off as new born babes as Peter reveals in **1 Peter 2 (KJV**):1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

And Peter encourages us to grow as we read in **2 Peter 3 (KJV**):18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

And Paul also encourages us in **Ephesians 4 (KJV**):14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

What is not stated by Irenaeus in this chapter is that man does not have power on his own to receive anything from God. In this chapter of his writing, Irenaeus is really continuing his philosophical argument for free will which he began in the previous chapter. This has bearing on the nature of man. His argument there states that God has given man the ability to choose the good and reject the bad as he states in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII**, "But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good." Again, I will discuss free will further in **Chapter 30: Free Will**. However we just note here that in the context of his writing in this chapter that Irenaeus is arguing for free will, and his arguing has led him to assert that the Corinthians were in an infant state, and had received the milk of the word of God, but not the Spirit of God.

Irenaeus seems to expect man to better himself a little with the free will that he has been given, and thus prove himself a little worthy of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. However, the unalterable consequence of Irenaeus' assertion that the Corinthians "were not capable of receiving it," that is, the "strong meat" of the Holy Spirit, "because they had the sentient faculties of the soul still feeble and undisciplined in the practice of things pertaining to God," is that the Corinthians were as yet unsaved and not Christ's. Paul says we are none of His if we do not have the Spirit of Christ as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV**):9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 3:3 that they are still fleshly, or carnal, in the way they are behaving. Paul describes their behavior, but again calls them brethren in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):**10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Paul tells the Corinthians that when they act this way, they walk like they were mere men without the Spirit of God in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Irenaeus does not understand that when we come to Christ, we are born again not as mature spiritual men and women, but as babes in Christ. Being a babe is to be a newborn. A newborn has just as much life as a mature spiritual man or woman. But the newborn will grow up to be a spiritual man or woman first by receiving milk of the word, and then the solid food.

Now Peter writes in his first epistle encouraging believers to be holy as we read in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):**14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: 18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Those Peter was writing to were born again as we continue in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):**20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. 22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you

Peter didn't expect perfection in these believers. Rather, he encourages them to grow in respect to salvation as we read again in **1 Peter 2 (NASB):**1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

The apostle John also talks about this growth process in **1 John 2 (KJV):**12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

The apostle John was not writing to little boys and girls in age, but to believers who were children in their Christian experience. When we first hear the Gospel and repent of our sins and believe in Jesus Christ, it is as if all heaven has been poured into us because of the new life of Christ in our spirit. We experience great joy in our relationship with God who is now our Father by a spiritual rebirth. We thus rejoice that our sins have been forgiven for His name's sake. As we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God, we grow to know our authority in Christ over the evil one. We may even cast out spirits in Jesus name. This is why John says he is writing to those who are as young men in their Christian experience by the fact that they have overcome the evil one. John also writes to the fathers in their Christian experience. These are those who have grown up in Him in all things. They are not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

So the milk we must have to grow spiritually is the word of God. It has nothing to do with Jesus' flesh. As new converts, that is, those who have just believed in Jesus Christ and have been born again, we are babes in Christ. And babes need milk. The Corinthians still had much that was fleshly in their behavior, but this did not make them unrighteous or unbelievers. Paul tells us that there was immorality of the grossest sort, that is incest, as we see in 1 Corinthians, chapter 5, and brother was taking brother to court in 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, and they were also eating the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner in 1 Corinthians, chapter 11. There were divisions among them, and envy and strife in 1 Corinthians, chapter 3. This is why Paul called them carnal. But they were still washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

They were still saved, and had received the Holy Spirit, but in their behavior they were acting as babes, that is, new converts.

So Paul was not telling the Corinthians that they did not have the Holy Spirit when he called them carnal, or still fleshly. And this assertion by Ireaneus that the Corinthians did not yet have the Spirit flies in the face of what Paul specifically states in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV**):19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Paul was not asking them if the Holy Spirit was in them. He was telling them that He was in fact in them, and that they should know it. The reason that they had the Holy Spirit in them was because they were in Christ.

Now the Scriptures also explain what is meant by strong meat, or solid food as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):**11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

What Peter is saying is that we must walk in the light of what we have already received. In this way God cleanses us from all sin, and adds more light by His word.

We must have our senses trained to discern good and evil. We do this by walking in the light of the word of God which we have received. God does not expect us to know everything in His word right away when we first come to Him. In just reading His word, we are depositing in our spirits the milk of the word of God. And God Himself begins to teach us by His Spirit as John tells us in **1 John 2 (KJV**):27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

This is why the Spirit of God is called our helper by Jesus in **John 14 (NASB**):16 I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

And again in **John 14 (NASB**):26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

It is the Spirit of God who revealed truth to the apostles, and who illuminates our minds so that we might know the truth as well, as John reveals in **John 16 (NIV**):13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Now the milk of the word of God, that is, the elementary principles, are revealed in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):**1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do, if God permits.

The Spirit is not the strong meat. The strong meat is the deeper teachings of the word of God. The truths such as our justification by faith, our election and calling, and the second coming of Christ, are some examples of strong meat in the word of God. The strong meat is only obtained by study of the word of God, and is what makes it possible for us to stand against the strong winds of false doctrine that blow against the Church such as they were doing in Irenaeus' day. Without the Spirit's help and guidance, we would never be able to grow to understand these truths. Irenaeus has it the other way around. We don't make ready our lives so that we can receive the Spirit. We receive the Holy Spirit so that we can grow in the Spirit, producing the fruit of the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit. Being led by the Spirit, we grow in grace knowledge as Peter says in **2 Peter 3 (KJV**):17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works that we should walk in them. The Holy Spirit is our Helper and our guide into all truth. We can do nothing spiritually without Him.

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXIX

To summarize again, Irenaeus points out that man has received the knowledge of good and evil. Although he acknowledges that death was the result of Adam's sin, he seems to feel that man is not good or bad but does need discipline. Man learned in the garden that disobeying God is an evil thing and causes death. Man now has a "surer and an undoubted comprehension" of "matters submitted to him." He has the mental power to know both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience. Now he knows that obedience to God preserves life. Man has a "twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds," that "with discipline he may make choice of the better things." Man must choose the good to preserve his life or suffer death for disobedience to God. God is creating in man His workmanship. Man must not "become hardened and lose the impression of His fingers." And "by preserving the framework" man shall "ascend to that which is perfect." If however man is ungrateful to God, he loses "at once" both "His workmanship and life." "To be created is that of human nature," Irenaeus says. Man must deliver up what is his, that is, "his faith towards Him and subjection," in order to "receive His handiwork and be a perfect work of God." God does not "exercise compulsion upon anyone unwilling to accept the exercise of His skill." If man perishes, it is through his own fault because he rejects the "exercise of His skill," and has "apostatized from the light given by the Father." Those who submit to God find "eternal rest." Those who shun the light "justly incur punishment, and cause themselves to inhabit eternal darkness, destitute of all good things."

First of all, to see how great was the effect of the fall of man, we start at the beginning. We know that the knowledge of good and evil is first mentioned in **Genesis 2 (NIV):**9 The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And we know that the LORD God commanded Adam not to eat of this tree as in **Genesis 2 (NIV):**15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

The only other time the words knowledge, good, and evil are mentioned together in the Scriptures is in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):**39 Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

Therefore, children under the age of accountability have no knowledge of good or evil. However, man above the age of accountability has this knowledge, but this awareness of good and evil alone cannot save him.

And God did create man innocent. Yet, when Adam and Eve sinned, they became sinners and fell short of the glory of God as stated by Paul in **Romans 3 (KJV):**23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Paul explains that through Adam, all men became helpless, ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God in **Romans 5 (KJV):**6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Paul explains that all of this came about by one man's sin in **Romans 5 (KJV):**12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Our innocence was lost when Adam sinned. Not only so, but as sinners, we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins, and have a sin nature, and are by this nature children of wrath as Paul tells us in **Ephesians**

2 (KJV):1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

We walked according to the course of this world, and according to the prince of the power of the air. And the death Paul refers to here is not only spiritual death, but physical death was a result of Adam's sin as well as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Man without Christ is dead in trespasses and sins, and his body is mortal and death doomed. Not only so, but man in this condition is said to suppress or hold down the truth about God in unrighteousness as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):**18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Being in this condition as an unbelieving sinner, man's mind and conscience are said to be defiled as we see in **Titus 1 (KJV):**15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

The problem for man is that his conscience is defiled as a result of sin, and he does not have the right standards by which to judge by, having gone his own way in unbelief. This is true of all men and women without exception. Not only so, but man's heart is said to be deceitful above all things by the prophet Jeremiah as we read in **Jeremiah 17 (NASB):**9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

The heart is the center of man's emotions. It is from the heart of man that God wants our worship to come from as we read in **Isaiah 29 (ESV**):13 Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote.*

And in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):**10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

It is what comes out of our heart that defiles us as we read in **Matthew 15 (KJV):**18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

When we have not repented and come to Christ, our heart remains in sin. When we are in this condition, we are said to be without excuse before God, having rejected the knowledge of God as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):**28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Man knows the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, yet still chooses to do evil. As a result of man's rejection of the knowledge of God, he is alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance in him as Paul says in **Ephesians 4 (NASB**):17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

Man shows that the work of the law of God is written in his heart when his conscience is seen to be judging right and wrong as we see in **Romans 2 (KJV):**14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

All men and women without exception are said to be under sin and unrighteous as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):**9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

I believe Irenaeus' whole argument in this section is summed up here when he says in paragraph one, speaking of man, "Wherefore he has also had a twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds, that with discipline he may make choice of the better things."

Irenaeus believed that God created man as a free agent, and in possession of power over himself to make good choices and bad choices. According to Irenaeus, man is not good or bad but he has the power to become good or bad by the choices he makes. Man is the workmanship of God, and if he is obedient to God, and preserves His workmanship or framework or the imprint of His fingers which is within him as moist clay, he will become perfect. According to Irenaeus, if man disciplines himself to choose the good, and be obedient to God, giving God his faith and subjection, man will become immortal. But is this what the Scriptures teach us?

Does man preserve his life by obedience to God, or forfeit his life by disobedience to God? That is, does man live or die by the choices he makes? We have already shown that man is sinful, and a sinner with a sinful nature. Free will is an issue here as well as man's nature. However, we will deal with free will in **Chapter 30: Free Will**, and deal with man's nature here.

Now if man is neither good or bad, and has power over the choices he makes, then it would be reasonable to conclude, as Irenaeus says, that man could achieve perfection by submitting himself to God and obeying His commandments. Ultimately then man would deserve immortality based upon his good choices. But is the nature of man fully described by what Irenaeus says here? Or is there more that the Scriptures have to say about the nature of man?

When Irenaeus says that man must deliver up what is his, that is, "his faith towards Him and subjection," in order to "receive His handiwork and be a perfect work of God," does man have faith of his own to give God? Certainly another man's faith would not suffice for us, and we do need a faith of our own. But the Scriptures tell us that the faith that saves us is a gift of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Paul tells us plainly that the faith that saves us in not of ourselves, but is the gift of God. Again Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing the word preached as we read in **Romans 10 (NASB):**17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Again, Paul says that we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. We have to first be in Christ Jesus in order to do the good works He created us for. It is at the time when we accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior that we are in Christ Jesus, that is, we are placed into the body of Christ as we read again in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

It is God who places the members in the body as it pleases Him as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

It is at the time when we repent and believe in Jesus Christ that we are made alive together with Christ Jesus as Paul says in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

God made us alive when we obeyed Him, and believed in His Son. Being thus born of the Spirit we are

created anew in our spirit in righteousness and true holiness as Paul says in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

This creative act of God in our spirit resulted in a new nature of holiness and truth in our spirit. It is a finished work, and it is not something that is happening gradually as we make good choices. The "moist clay," or framework of His workmanship, or impression of His fingers is in our Spirit the moment we believe in Jesus Christ. It is in our soul that we are changed from glory to glory. Our soul is made up of our mind, will, emotions, and conscience. This is where our obedience to God's word comes in to play. It is through His word that we are progressively sanctified in our mind, our will, our emotions, and in our conscience as Jesus prayed in **John 17 (NIV):**17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

And in **John 15 (KJV):**3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

As we are obedient to the word of God, we are progressively sanctified in our souls. This is where our good choices have effect. As we put off the former conversation, the old self, and put on the new self, and walk in the light of the word of God, we are cleansed in our soul, and our character is changed to be more like Jesus as we read in **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

As we trust in God's word, our conscience is cleansed and we begin to have right standards by which to judge by. And our mind, will, and emotions are also cleansed as we hear and do the word of God. When we accept Christ, it is as though we took a bath as Jesus explained to Peter in **John 13 (NIV):**5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." 9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" 10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

Once we have bathed by accepting Jesus Christ by faith, and we have believed that He died on the cross for our sins and rose again, and we confess Him as Lord, we are clean. To put it another way, Paul says we are saved as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):**8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

We do not need to take a bath all over again to be clean, or to be saved. We are saved and cleansed of all our sins the moment we accept Christ. From then on we will just need to wash our feet and we are completely clean.

There is still more to Irenaeus' thinking on the nature of man.

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XL

Irenaeus does not say a lot here about the nature of man, but he is preparing us for his statements in the very next chapter. It is important to note here that Irenaeus states that God "took compassion upon man, who, through want of care no doubt, but still wickedly [on the part of another], became involved in disobedience;" Irenaeus seems to say here that man was merely "involved in disobedience," and was not directly responsible. Irenaeus then also asserts that God "turned the enmity by which [the devil] had designed to make [man] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent." To substantiate his assertion, Irenaeus quotes from Genesis, chapter three, as we read in **Genesis 3 (NIV):**15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

By asserting that God "turned the enmity by which [the devil] had designed to make [man] the enemy of God, against the author of it, by removing His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent," Irenaeus is trying to answer the question why God could forgive man's

disobedience but not Satan's. Irenaeus seems to assert that since Satan was the one who tried to make man the enemy of God, man's disobedience was less than that of Satan's disobedience. I believe there is some truth in that assertion. I would also suggest that it could also be that Satan disobeyed God of his own volition, and was the instigator of the other one third of the angelic disobedience as is stated in **Revelation 12 (KJV):**4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

And in **Revelation 12 (KJV):**9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

In other words, Satan was not tempted by an outside source as man was. However, when Irenaeus says that God removed "His own anger from man, turning it in another direction, and sending it instead upon the serpent," he does not qualify his statement with the rest of what God says in Genesis, chapter three. As we look in Genesis, chapter three, we note that God judged Adam and Eve as well, and not just the serpent. In other words, God did not leave Adam and Eve unpunished for their sin.

The first thing we note after Adam sinned is that they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. In other words, they felt shame as we read in **Genesis 3 (NIV):**8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" 10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." 11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" 12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

The Lord then gave judgment on the serpent as we read in **Genesis 3 (NIV):**13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." 14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

The serpent's identity is revealed in **Revelation 12 (KJV):**9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The promised seed that would bruise the head of the serpent, the devil, refers to Christ, our redeemer. Possibly because man was not the instigator of his sin in the garden, but the devil was the tempter, God provided a redeemer for man whereas God held the devil responsible and irredeemable. The heel of Christ was bruised as it were on the cross, but the devil's head was bruised by Christ on that same cross. So Genesis 3:15 is a prophetic announcement of our Savior, Jesus Christ, which Irenaeus correctly identifies.

In Genesis, chapter three we see that the Lord also turned to the woman and spoke as in **Genesis 3 (KJV):**16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

And the Lord also then turned to Adam and spoke as in **Genesis 3 (KJV):**17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Death came about because of Adam's sin as God promised in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Not only was physical death a result of Adam's sin, but spiritual death was a result as well. The necessity of a redeemer is seen in the promise itself of Genesis 3:15. God had to send His only Son to die a horrible death to save us. All who have faith in Jesus will be saved. But until we have faith, we are already judged and destined for hell to be with the devil and his angels as John tells us in **John 3 (NIV):**18 Whoever

believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

So the parable of the tares does not really illustrate anything about the fall of man, because man is already a "tare" until he comes to Christ. The tares in the parable are actually symbolic of the self-righteous religious ones in our churches who from all outward appearances look like the wheat, but inwardly there has been no change. It is not clear that Irenaeus understood this entirely.

Irenaeus then says "And the Lord summed up in Himself this enmity, when He was made man from a woman, and trod upon his [the serpent's] head, as I have pointed out in the preceding book."

Irenaeus also uses the phrase, "summed up," in **Book 4: XXXVIII**, **paragraph one**, when he says, "And for this cause our Lord in these last times, when He had summed up all things into Himself, came to us, not as He might have come, but as we were capable of beholding Him." Without doubt, Irenaeus is speaking of our Lord's advent in the flesh, promised in Genesis 3:15. And by making reference to Genesis 3:15, Irenaeus shows some understanding of the fall of man. Again, we will summarize Irenaeus' thoughts on the nature of man at the end of this section.

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XLI

Now the gist of Irenaeus' argument in **Book 4: Chapter L** and **Book 4: Chapter LI** is to show that man is not a tare or a child of the wicked one by nature. He argues first that we were all created by God and that, "According to nature, then—that is, according to creation, so to speak— we are all sons of God, because we have all been created by God." And again, speaking of those who then disobey God, he says, "According to nature, then, they are [His] children, because they have been so created; but with regard to their works, they are not His children." And Irenaeus says that there are two kinds of sons. One is "born so" and another is "made so." The first kind "is indeed born from the person referred to," while the second "is made so by Him, whether as respects His creation or by the teaching of His doctrine." So Irenaeus argues that those "who believe in Him and do His will" are sons of God, and those "who do not believe, and do not obey His will are sons and angels of the devil, because they do the works of the devil." And in paragraph three, Irenaeus argues that those who disobey their fathers among men "are still their sons in the course of nature, but by law are disinherited." It is the same with God, he says. And Irenaeus argues that even those who be as sinful as the Sodomites, if they "should be converted and come to repentance, and cease from evil, they should have the power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him."

The crux of Irenaues thinking about the nature of man is that man was not made wicked by nature, and that man is by nature a son of God, having been created by God. Man then has the power to believe and obey God. Man has the "power also to act rightly," Irenaeus says. It is then a matter for man to "be converted, and come to repentance, and cease from evil," in order that they "should have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him." What he means is that we are all sons of God of the first kind of sons, having been created by God, but in order to be a son of God of the second kind of sons, and so "receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him," we must believe and obey, that is, believe and do the works of obedience to "the teaching of His doctrine." Again, only those "who believe in Him and do His will" are truly sons of God in the second sense according to Irenaeus.

However, I would suggest that there is a third kind of son. But before we talk about that, let us see what the Scriptures say about man's nature.

Now to Irenaeus' argument about the two kinds of sons, the Scriptures teach us plainly that God created all things, and they were all good when He created them as in **Genesis 1 (NASB):**31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

However, when the devil sinned, God judged him and he became Satan, the "evil one." That is, after God's judgment, his nature was changed to evil because of his sin. Jesus tells us that the devil is a liar by nature and the father of lies in **John 8 (NASB):**44 "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature,* for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The word “nature” is not used in this verse, but it is implied by the context. The devil speaks from his own, that is, it is his inherent in his character to lie. There is no truth in him. Though Satan was created by God, in no sense can we claim that he is a son of God.

Now God also gave man a command in the garden not to eat of the tree of good and evil in **Genesis 2 (NASB):**16 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

God’s command, if disobeyed, would result in death on the very day of the disobedience. So on the very day that man disobeyed God, death came upon the human race as the Scripture says in **Genesis 3 (NASB):**19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

Not only physical death but spiritual death also came upon the human race. Man also died spiritually as we see in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sin.

And in **Romans 5 (NASB):**12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Man was not just “involved in disobedience,” but came under the judgment of God, just as the devil came under judgment when he sinned. Being spiritually dead, man became a sinner by nature when he fell as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Paul includes himself when he says, “we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh” and “were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.” Being a child of wrath by nature excludes us also from being a child of God, even though we were created by God. Although we were created by God, when Adam sinned, he and all his descendants died spiritually and became children of wrath. This is why Adam had to be born again to have fellowship with God once more. And we also must be born again or we will in no wise enter the kingdom of God.

Now to Irenaeus point about the second kind of son, we see this in Paul’s relationship to Timothy in **1 Timothy 1 (NASB):**2 Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

What Paul is saying is he became the spiritual father of Timothy when Timothy believed the gospel message that Paul preached. Paul also explains to the Corinthians that they had this same relationship in **1 Corinthians 4 (NASB):**15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet *you would* not *have* many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 15 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

Now I have suggested that there is another kind of son which Irenaeus did not consider. Irenaues seems to believe that man does not have a spirit of his own. In his thinking, the new birth happens when one repents and believes and the Holy Spirit comes and takes up residence in him or her. By doing good, one kept the Holy Spirit. By doing bad, one could lose the Holy Spirit and join the apostasy. Irenaeus did allow for repentance again from the apostasy. However, the Scriptures describe a totally different experience in man. When one receives Christ, the apostle John says they are born of God in **John 1 (NASB):**12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John describes a time when Nicodemus met with Jesus and talked about the new birth in **John 1 (NASB):**3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born

again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Jesus said that which was born of the Spirit was spirit. Being born of God in this way speaks of a spiritual birth. This happens in our spirit. When we receive Christ, and this new birth happens, we receive eternal life as John explains to us in **1 John 1 (NASB):**1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

And in **1 John 1 (NASB):**10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. 11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Having eternal life is the result of being born again. Being born of the Spirit of God, we receive a new nature. To get a clear understanding of what this means, we will look at the word for "nature" in the Greek which is φύσις (pronounced phusis). **Strong's Concordance** says that this word means growth (by germination or expansion). i.e. (by impl.) natural production (lineal descent); by extens. A genus or sort; fig. native disposition, constitution or usage: ([man-]) kind, nature ([-al]).

Strong's Concordance also says that the Greek word φύσις (pronounced phusis) comes from φύω (pronounced phuo) which means to "puff" or blow, i.e. to swell up; but only used in the impl. sense, to germinate or grow (sprout, produce), lit. or fig.; spring (up).

Also, Vine's tells us that φύσις (pronounced phusis) means "to bring forth, produce, signifies (a) the nature (i.e. the natural powers or constitution of a person or thing, Eph. 2:3, James 3:7 ("kind"); 2 Pet. 1:4; (b) origin, birth, Rom 2:27, one who by birth is a Gentile, uncircumcised, in contrast to one who, though circumcised, has become spiritually uncircumcised by his iniquity; Gal. 2:15; (c) the regular law or order of nature, Rom. 1:26, against nature (para, against);" **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 103.**

The following verses use the Greek word φύσις (pronounced phusis), which is translated as nature. The wild olive tree differs from the cultivated olive tree in that its innate properties make it different as we see in **Romans 11 (NASB):**24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural *branches* be grafted into their own olive tree?

In this next verse, nature is the sum of the forces in the universe. It is the way things are in the physical realm as in **1 Corinthians 11 (NASB):**14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him,

In this next verse, nature is a kind of class that is distinguished by fundamental and essential characteristics as in **Galatians 2 (NASB):**15 "We *are* Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;

In this next verse we see that it was we ourselves who, before we accepted Christ, indulged the desires of our flesh and of our mind as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

We were children of wrath by nature. That is, we were under His wrath as Jesus states in **John 3 (NASB):**15 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

We were all without exception under sin as Paul tells us in **Romans 3 (NASB):**9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

And in **Galatians 3 (NASB):**22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

As such we were helpless to save ourselves from this condition as Paul says in **Romans 5 (NASB):**6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

It was God reaching out to man, and not man reaching out to God as Paul says in **Romans 5 (NASB):**8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

As sinners, Paul says we were enemies of God in **Romans 5 (NASB):**10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved

by His life.

It is not that we were created this way by God, but that we became sinners by nature when Adam sinned. This was a direct result of the judgment of God as Jesus says in **John 3 (NASB):**18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Paul tells us that before Christ we are spiritually dead in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

This death by sin before we accepted Christ was because of the judgment of God. This is the reason that in Adam, we all died as in **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB):**22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

Paul emphatically states that all men and women are sinful by nature and fall short of the glory of God in **Romans 3 (NASB):**23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

This is why we need a change in our nature in order to please God. This happens at the new birth. When I accept my condition as a helpless sinner before God, and receive His Son, Jesus Christ, believing in His resurrection from the dead, I am born again of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God gives birth to my spirit and produces a change in my nature. But Peter describes this change in our nature, or basic constitution, when we believe. We become sharers of the divine nature he says in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):**4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Now we are commanded to put on the new man as Paul says in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

And we are commanded to put off the old man, the sinful Adamic nature in our flesh which we still have until the resurrection, and put on the new in **Colossians 3 (NASB):9** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

While it is true that all that God created is good, yet when Adam sinned, he polluted the human race at its source, and death passed to all men as a result of his sin as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):**12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Irenaeus believes that men and women were not created bad or good, but given the power of choice to become one or the other. By choosing the good and doing it we become good. The good we must choose is to repent and submit to God and be obedient to Him. By rejecting these things, we are choosing the bad and doing the bad, and we join the apostasy and become bad. And we can switch back and forth if we repent. Irenaeus most certainly does not believe we are bad by nature. However, the Scriptures are clear that all men and women without exception are under sin before they come by faith and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Paul tells us that man is in possession of a nature that is on the downgrade and from which it is impossible to free himself apart from Christ in **Romans 3 (NASB**):9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; 12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." 13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; 14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; 15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, 16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, 17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN." 18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

Because of this sin nature that we have inherited from Adam, we do not have power to act rightly as

Jeremiah says in **Jeremiah 13 (NASB):**23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? *Then* you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.

This is why we need a Savior, Christ Jesus. It is only after we come to Christ that we have power to act rightly and do His will. And this is why Jesus said we needed to be born again for He knew that we needed a change in our nature so that we would be able to do good as in **John 3 (NASB):**5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

When we are born again our spirit is renewed and our nature is changed by the Spirit of God. This is why we can now be called truly children of God. We cannot trust in our works to make us born again, as if we could be good enough to attain the righteousness of God. God's righteousness reaches to the heavens as the Psalmist says in **Psalm 71 (NASB):**19 For Your righteousness, O God, *reaches* to the heavens, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You?

Because God is perfect in righteousness, man, being a sinner, can never attain His righteousness without God's grace, no matter how obedient he is. Neither can man boast of having kept the law, for he is already a sinner in Adam. Man must accept the free gift of God's justification by faith in order to have fellowship with God, for God has demolished all boasting by man as Paul tells us in **Romans 3 (NASB):**21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, *I say,* of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. 29 Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. 31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

The righteousness which comes by faith in Jesus Christ that Paul is speaking of is the "righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe" in verse 22. In other words, it is God's righteousness that is imputed to the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. The word impute means to put down to one's account. The one God justifies has a standing before Him as a righteous one, with a righteousness not based on his or her own merit. The one God justifies has the righteousness of God given by the declaration of God for the one who has faith in Jesus Christ.

Commentary Summary : On the Nature of Man

We saw in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII**, **paragraph four,** that Irenaeus believed that **"**we were possessed of power over ourselves," and in **Book 4: Chapter XXXIX**, **paragraph three,** that Irenaeus believed that man has been created "free agents, and possessed of power over themselves." In **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII**, which we will discuss in **Chapter 30: Free Will,** Irenaeus says in paragraph one, "This expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God."

And also in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII**, **paragraph two**, Irenaeus says, "But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good**."**

And again in **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII, paragraph seven**, Irenaeus says, **"**for God has displayed long-suffering in the case of man's apostasy; while man has been instructed by means of it, as also the prophet says, "Thine own apostasy shall heal thee;"

We will discuss these paragraphs of **Book 4: Chapter XXXVII** in **Chapter 30: Free Will**. However, they help us here understand more fully Irenaeus' thinking on the nature of man. Irenaeus saw man as infantile and imperfect, but not bad or good. Man is a free agent and under his own power and able to choose good and to do it. Irenaeus points out that man has received the knowledge of good and evil. Although he acknowledges that death was the result of Adam's sin, he seems to feel that man is not good or bad but does need discipline. Man learned in the garden that disobeying God is an evil thing and causes death. Man now has a "surer and an undoubted comprehension" of "matters submitted to him." He has the mental power to know both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience. Now he knows that obedience to God preserves life. Man has a "twofold experience, possessing knowledge of both kinds," that "with discipline he may make choice of the better things." Man must choose the good to preserve his life or suffer death for disobedience to God. God is creating in man His workmanship. Man must not "become hardened and lose the impression of His fingers." And "by preserving the framework" man shall "ascend to that which is perfect." If however man is ungrateful to God, he loses "at once" both "His workmanship and life." "To be created is that of human nature," Irenaeus says. Man must deliver up what is his, that is, "his faith towards Him and subjection," in order to "receive His handiwork and be a perfect work of God." God does not "exercise compulsion upon anyone unwilling to accept the exercise of His skill." If man perishes, it is through his own fault because he rejects the "exercise of His skill" and has "apostatized from the light given by the Father." Those who submit to God find "eternal rest." Those who shun the light "justly incur punishment, and cause themselves to inhabit eternal darkness, destitute of all good things."

Irenaeus seems to feel that God gave man the mental power to know good and evil apparently in the Garden of Eden. Man seems to have suffered no ill effects from the fall, in Irenaeus' mind, other than physical death. Man simply gained knowledge and experience of disobedience in the Garden of Eden so that going forward he would have the ability to "know both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience." Man must now "with judgment make choice of better things." Now man knows that obedience to God preserves his life. Man also now knows by experience that disobedience "deprives him of life." Man now must cast away "by means of repentance, disobedience, as being something disagreeable and nauseous." If he does not but shuns the knowledge of good and evil, "he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being."

Irenaeus mentions "the apostasy" of which the devil is the ringleader. He seems to see that the devil began his apostasy when he tempted man in the garden of Eden, and that man was the first-fruits of his own apostasy as he says in **Book 3: Chapter XXIII, paragraph eight**, that "the serpent also did not profit when persuading man [to sin], except to this effect, that he proved him a transgressor, obtaining man as the first-fruits of his own apostasy." Again Irenaeus says in **Book 1: Chapter XXVII**, **paragraph four**, speaking of the Gnostic heretics, he states that Satan is the author of the apostasy as he says, "Although they do not confess the name of their master, in order all the more to seduce others, yet they do teach his doctrines. They set forth, indeed, the name of Christ Jesus as a sort of lure, but in various ways they introduce the impieties of Simon; and thus they destroy multitudes, wickedly disseminating their own doctrines by the use of a good name, and, through means of its sweetness and beauty, extending to their hearers the bitter and malignant poison of the serpent, the great author of apostasy."

Again Irenaeus says in **Book 5: Chapter XXIV, paragraph four**, that man exposed the apostasy of Satan as he says, "Just as if any one, being an apostate, and seizing in a hostile manner another man's territory, should harass the inhabitants of it, in order that he might claim for himself the glory of a king among those ignorant of his apostasy and robbery; so likewise also the devil, being one among those angels who are placed over the spirit of the air, as the Apostle Paul has declared in his Epistle to the Ephesians, becoming envious of man, was rendered an apostate from the divine law: for envy is a thing foreign to God. And as his apostasy was exposed by man, and man became the [means of] searching out his thoughts (*et examination sententiæ ejus, homo factus est*), he has set himself to this with greater and greater determination, in opposition to man, envying his life, and wishing to involve him in his own apostate power. The Word of God, however, the Maker of all things, conquering him by means of human nature, and showing him to be an apostate, has, on the contrary, put

him under the power of man. For He says, "Behold, I confer upon you the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy," in order that, as he obtained dominion over man by apostasy, so again his apostasy might be deprived of power by means of man turning back again to God.

Irenaeus did not believe that man is born into "the apostasy" but that man can join it even from birth as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XLI, paragraph three**, "For as, among men, those sons who disobey their fathers, being disinherited, are still their sons in the course of nature, but by law are disinherited, for they do not become the heirs of their natural parents; so in the same way is it with God,—those who do not obey Him being disinherited by Him, have ceased to be His sons. Wherefore they cannot receive His inheritance: as David says, "Sinners are alienated from the womb; their anger is after the likeness of a serpent."

Again Irenaeus felt that sinners are sinners through their own fault as they set themselves apart on the left hand as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XL, paragraph one**, "It is therefore one and the same God the Father who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and who remain in subjection to Him; and who has the eternal fire for the ringleader of the apostasy, the devil, and those who revolted with him, into which [fire] the Lord has declared those men shall be sent who have been set apart by themselves on His left hand."

But Irenaeus did not think that God made angels or men apostate by nature as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XLI, paragraph one,** "Inasmuch as the Lord has said that there are certain angels, [viz. those] of the devil, for whom eternal fire is prepared; and as, again, He declares with regard to the tares, "The tares are the children of the wicked one," it must be affirmed that He has ascribed all who are of the apostasy to him who is the ringleader of this transgression. But He made neither angels nor men so by nature."

In Irenaeus' thinking, those who remain in a state of apostasy are sons of the devil as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XLI, paragraph two**, "Since, therefore, all things were made by God, and since the devil has become the cause of apostasy to himself and others, justly does the Scripture always term those who remain in a state of apostasy "sons of the devil" and "angels of the wicked one" (*maligni*)."

Again Irenaeus says in **Book 4: Chapter XLI, paragraph four**, "When, however, they believe and are subject to God, and go on and keep His doctrine, they are the sons of God; but when they have apostatized and fallen into transgression, they are ascribed to their chief, the devil—to him who first became the cause of apostasy to himself, and afterwards to others."

Now Irenaeus did see that man was under the power of sin as he says in **Book 3: Chapter XVIII, paragraph two**, "For as it was not possible that the man who had once for all been conquered, and who had been destroyed through disobedience, could reform himself, and obtain the prize of victory; and as it was also impossible that he could attain to salvation who had fallen under the power of sin,—the Son effected both these things, being the Word of God, descending from the Father, becoming incarnate, stooping low, even to death, and consummating the arranged plan of our salvation, upon whom [Paul], exhorting us unhesitatingly to believe, again says, "Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring down Christ; or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to liberate Christ again from the dead.""

Irenaeus also says that man had sin in himself in **Book 3: Chapter XVIII, paragraph seven**, "But the law coming, which was given by Moses, and testifying of sin that it is a sinner, did truly take away his (death's) kingdom, showing that he was no king, but a robber; and it revealed him as a murderer. It laid, however, a weighty burden upon man, who had sin in himself, showing that he was liable to death. For as the law was spiritual, it merely made sin to stand out in relief, but did not destroy it. For sin had no dominion over the spirit, but over man. For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death."

While Irenaeus did see that man had "sin in himself," he did not see that man had a sin nature. This is important for us to note for the Scriptures clearly state that man was sinful by nature.

Although Irenaeus did not think man was apostate by nature, he does see that man needs to be redeemed from his sin, and from captivity, and from the power of death, and from being tyrannized unjustly by the apostasy as he says in **Book 5: Chapter I, paragraph one,** "We —who were but lately created by the only best and good Being, by Him also who has the gift of immortality, having been formed after His likeness (predestinated, according to the prescience of the Father, that we, who had as yet no existence, might come into

being), and made the first-fruits of have received, in the times known beforehand, [the blessings of salvation] according to the ministration of the Word, who is perfect in all things, as the mighty Word, and very man, who, redeeming us by His own blood in a manner consonant to reason, gave Himself as a redemption for those who had been led into captivity. And since the apostasy tyrannized over us unjustly, and, though we were by nature the property of the omnipotent God, alienated us contrary to nature, rendering us its own disciples, the Word of God, powerful in all things, and not defective with regard to His own justice, did righteously turn against that apostasy, and redeem from it His own property, not by violent means, as the [apostasy] had obtained dominion over us at the beginning, when it insatiably snatched away what was not its own, but by means of persuasion, as became a God of counsel, who does not use violent means to obtain what He desires; so that neither should justice be infringed upon, nor the ancient handiwork of God go to destruction. Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God,—all the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin."

The Scriptures specifically state that all men and women are, according to Ephesians 2:1-3, "dead in trespasses and sins," "walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air," are "children of disobedience, and are "by nature children of wrath."

Irenaeus is to be commended for what he did see. And he did see that all men and women have sinned and are under sin as Paul tells us **Romans 3 (NASB):**9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "there is none righteous, not even one; 11 there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for god; 12 all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one." 13 "their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving," "the poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"; 15 "their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 destruction and misery are in their paths, 17 and the path of peace they have not known." 18 "there is no fear of god before their eyes."

Man is not only under sin, but dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, living in the lusts of his flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, is by nature a child of wrath, helpless, ungodly, a sinner, an enemy of God, having no hope and without God in the world, walking in the futility of his mind, darkened in his understanding, excluded from the life of God because of his ignorance and hardness of heart, callous, and given over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. His mind and conscience are also defiled. Though he has the knowledge of good and evil, he has no power over his fleshly nature not to sin. In his flesh, he cannot do good or please God and is held captive by sin. Irenaeus understood some of the effects of sin upon man, but he did not understand that man has sin as a nature. It is important for us to understand this today.

Chapter 9: The Name Chreistos

Book 1: Chapter 15. —Sige relates to Marcus the generation of the twenty-four elements and of Jesus. Exposure of these absurdities.

Here in an ellipsis of paragraph one, Irenaeus states that the name of the Saviour is Jesus, Christ the Son, and Alpha and Omega.

The historian, Tacitus (c. A.D. 55 - c. A.D. 117), quotes this name in Annals, book XV:

Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea,

the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.

Chapter 10: Baptismal Regeneration

Commentary Summary Book 3: Chapter XVII

When Irenaeus says in paragraph one, “And again, giving to the disciples the power of regeneration into God He said to them, “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” he is indicating that he believed in baptismal regeneration which is the belief that we are born again when we are baptized with water. This belief is based on **Mark 16 (NASB):**15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

However this Scripture must be taken in context with the rest of Scripture. It is true that baptism is commanded by the Lord, and we, as believers, should obey that command. But we are also commanded to love one another as in **John 13 (NASB):**34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Fulfilling the commandment to love one another does not save us, just as fulfilling the command to be baptized does not save us. Baptism itself has no saving power, just as loving one another has no saving power. When we love one another, it is evidence that the Spirit is in us and that we have been born again. Likewise, baptism itself is only an outward sign of an inward work, which is the new birth. We only get baptized after we believe, which is when we are born again since the new birth occurs when a person believes the word of God, the Gospel. That is, when we believe that Jesus came in the flesh, died for our sins, and rose again, and we confess Him as our Lord, we are saved as in **Romans 10 (NASB):**8 But what does it say? "the word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"--that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Paul then tells us where this belief, this saving faith, comes from when he asks in **Romans 10 (NASB):**14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!" 16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "lord, who has believed our report?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Hearing comes by the word of Christ, and our faith comes from hearing that word. Paul himself did not claim any saving power in baptism. He said that Christ did not send him to baptize but to preach the Gospel. He would never have said this if there were any saving power in baptism as he says in **1 Corinthians 1 (NASB):**11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. 12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." 13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. 16 Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

James tells us that it was by God’s will that we were brought forth by the word of truth of the Gospel as in **James 1 (NASB):**18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

And Peter tells us that the new birth was by the eternal word of God as in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):**22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one

another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. the grass withers, and the flower falls off, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word which was preached to you.

So it was the word of God that inspired faith in us and gave us eternal life. This faith that saves us was not of ourselves or the result of works we do, but the gift of God as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

This word of God ministered to us by the Holy Spirit inspired faith by which our hearts were opened and we believed as in **Acts 16 (NASB):**14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

The word "respond" in verse 14 above is the Greek word προσέχειν (pronounced prosechein). It means literally to hold the mind towards, to take heed. Lydia gave her heart to Jesus and was saved. It was only after her heart was opened that she responded to the Gospel message that Paul preached. And it was only after she had believed Paul's message that she was baptized. We must understand that there is no good work that we could do before or after we are saved that can atone for our sin. It is our faith in Jesus that saves us. This is because the only work that can atone for sin is the work of Christ on the cross, and this work has been finished as Jesus said in **John 4 (NASB):**34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

And then in **John 17 (NASB):**4 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

And again in **John 19 (NASB):**30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

What was Jesus' work that He was sent by the Father to accomplish? His work was the redemption of mankind by the perfect sacrifice of the cross. We cannot add to or take away from the work of the cross. For this reason He is able to save us forever as in **Hebrews 7 (NASB):**25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

A work is something that we do, or an action that we take. There is nothing that we can do, nor any action that we can take, including being baptized, that can make us any more born again than we already are after we believe. Being baptized is a step of obedience that we take after we believe, just like loving one another as Jesus also commanded us to do.

Peter also explains that it is not the physical washing of baptism that saves but the answer of a good conscience before God. The King James version is the most literal translation of the Greek as we read in **1 Peter 3 (King James Version):**15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. 17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. 18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

What Peter is saying here is that we have a good conscience because of Christ's suffering for our sins, "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." After Christ died, "being put to death in the flesh," Peter tells us that "He went to preach to the spirits in prison." The prison he is referring to is where the righteous dead went after they died. They could not go into heaven yet since the way into heaven had not yet been made by

Jesus' death on the cross. This prison is called Abraham's bosom, which we have fully explained in **Chapter 6: His Teaching on The Resurrection,** under the heading **Book 5: Chapter V** of Irenaeus' writing.

Abraham's bosom is where the righteous dead went before Jesus accomplished our salvation by dying on the cross for us. This is mentioned in a parable Jesus told us in Luke 16:19-31. To summarize, when the righteous died, they went to Abraham's bosom, also called paradise by Jesus in Luke 23:39-43. Jesus describes a great chasm fixed there which could not be crossed, and which separated the unrighteous from the righteous.

So after Christ died, He went to preach to the spirits in prison, that is, to those in Abraham's bosom or Paradise where the righteous dead were kept until the way into the holiest was made known. Noah and his family are the eight souls that were saved by water, as it were, in the days of Noah and the ark. What Jesus did was to proclaim freedom to those righteous dead who had died in faith, and then he lead captivity captive into heaven itself as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 4 (King James Version):**8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Now the writer of Hebrews explains that the first tabernacle was a figure to those under the first covenant signifying that the way into the holiest, that is heaven itself, was not yet made known or manifest while the first tabernacle, made with hands was still standing as in **Hebrews 9 (King James Version):**1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing. 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

However Christ has come as a high priest of a more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, speaking of heaven itself which He has now entered by His own blood once as in **Hebrews 9 (King James Version):**11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Now back to Peter's epistle in chapter three, the phrase, "the like figure" in the Greek is αντιτυπον (pronounced antitupon), as in **1 Peter 3 (Textus Receptus):**21 ὸ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀντίτυπον νῦν σῴζει βάπτισμα οὐ σαρκὸς ἀπόθεσις ῥύπου ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν δι᾽ ἀναστάσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

The most literal rendering of this verse if found in **1 Peter 3 (King James Version):**21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The word αντιτυπον (pronounced antitupon) in the Greek is translated "like figure" in this verse. Here is what Wuest's **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament** has to say about this verse.

Verse twenty-one

"The words "the like figure" are in the Greek *ho antitupon.* The question as to whether the word "figure" refers back to the word "ark" or the word "water," is easily settled by the Greek grammar involved in this expression, for the relative pronoun *ho* is neuter, the word "ark" is feminine, and the word "water" neuter. The relative pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender. Therefore the word "figure" which is neuter and construed grammatically with the pronoun *ho* goes back to the word "water." The word "figure" is the translation of *antitupon* which means "the counterpart of reality." The Greek word "baptism" is in apposition with the word "figure." Our translation so far reads, "Which (water) also (as a) counterpart now saves you, (namely) baptism." Water baptism is clearly in the apostle's mind, not the baptism by the Holy Spirit, for he speaks of the waters of the flood as saving the inmates of the ark, and in this verse, of baptism saving believers. But he says that it saves them only as a counterpart. That is water baptism is the counterpart of the reality, salvation. It can only save as a counterpart, not actually. The Old Testament sacrifices were counterparts of the reality, the Lord Jesus. They did not actually save the believer, only in type. It is not argued here that these sacrifices are analogous to Christian water baptism. The author is merely using them as an illustration of the use of the word "counterpart." So water baptism only saves the believer in type. The Old Testament Jew was saved before he brought the offering. That offering was only his outward testimony that he was placing his faith in the Lamb of God of whom these sacrifices were a type. The moment he conceived in his heart that he would bring his offering to the Tabernacle, his faith leaped the centuries to the time when God would offer the Sacrifice that would pay for his sin. Our Lord said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56). The act of bringing the sacrifice was his outward expression and testimony of his inward faith. Water baptism is the outward testimony of the believer's inward faith. The person is saved the moment he places his faith in the Lord Jesus. Water baptism is his visible testimony to his faith and the salvation he was given in answer to that faith.

Peter is careful to inform his readers that he is not teaching baptismal regeneration, namely, that a person who submits to baptism is thereby regenerated, for he says, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." Baptism, Peter explains, does not wash away the filth of the flesh, either in a literal sense as a bath for the body, nor in a metaphorical sense as a cleansing for the soul. No ceremonies really affect the conscience. But he defines what he means by salvation, in the words "the answer of a good conscience toward God," and he explains how this is accomplished, namely "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" in that the believing sinner is identified with Him in that resurrection." **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume II, First Peter in the Greek New Testament, page 108-109.**

So it is the "answer," or more literally, "appeal" (**Greek** ἐπερώτημα pronounced eperotema), to God for a good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ that saves us as in **1 Peter 3 (NASB) :** 21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Chapter 11: The Teaching of Marcion and the Gnostics

Book 1: Chapter XXVII.—Doctrines of Cerdo and Marcion.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies that "Cerdo was one who took his system from the followers of Simon, and came to live at Rome in the time of Hyginus, who held the ninth place in the episcopal succession from the apostles downwards." Irenaeus continues as he records that "He taught that the God proclaimed by the law and the prophets was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the former was known, but the latter unknown; while the one also was righteous, but the other benevolent."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus then testifies against the Gnostics as he records:

- "Marcion of Pontus succeeded him, and developed his doctrine. In so doing, he advanced the most daring blasphemy against Him who is proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, declaring Him to be the author of evils, to take delight in war, to be infirm of purpose, and even to be contrary to Himself."
- "But Jesus being derived from that father who is above the God that made the world, and coming into Judæa in the times of Pontius Pilate the governor, who was the procurator of Tiberius Cæsar, was manifested in the form of a man to those who were in Judæa, abolishing the prophets and the law, and all the works of that God who made the world, whom also he calls Cosmocrator."
- "Besides this, he mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most dearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father."
- "He likewise persuaded his disciples that he himself was more worthy of credit than are those apostles who have handed down the Gospel to us, furnishing them not with the Gospel, but merely a fragment of it."
- "In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of Paul, removing all that is said by the apostle respecting that God who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetical writings which the apostle quotes, in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies that Marcion also taught:

- "Salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation."
- "In addition to his blasphemy against God Himself, he advanced this also, truly speaking as with the mouth of the devil, and saying all things in direct opposition to the truth,—that Cain, and those like him, and the Sodomites, and the Egyptians, and others like them, and, in fine, all the nations who walked in all sorts of abomination, were saved by the Lord, on His descending into Hades, and on their running unto Him, and that they welcomed Him into their kingdom."
- "But the serpent was in Marcion declared that Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and those other righteous men who sprang from the patriarch Abraham, with all the prophets, and those who were pleasing to God, did not partake in salvation. For since these men, he says, knew that their God was constantly tempting them, so now they suspected that He was tempting them, and did not run to Jesus, or believe His announcement: and for this reason he declared that their souls remained in Hades."

Clearly Cerdo and Marcion were in error, and Irenaeus rightly rebuked them.

Book 3: Chapter XVI.—Proofs from the apostolic writings, that Jesus Christ was one and the same, the only begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect man.

In this chapter of his writing, Irenaeus gives us a telescopic view into the Gnostic teachings of his time. By understanding how he responds, we get a clear picture of the Gnostic doctrine.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "But there are some who say that Jesus was merely a receptacle of Christ, upon whom the Christ, as a dove, descended from above, and that when He had declared the unnameable Father He entered into the Pleroma in an incomprehensible and invisible manner:"

Irenaeus continues as he records the Gnostic teaching about Jesus:

- "for that He was not comprehended, not only by men, but not even by those powers and virtues which are in heaven,"
- "and that Jesus was the Son, but that Christ was the Father, and the Father of Christ, God;
- "while others say that He merely suffered in outward appearance, being naturally impassible."
- "The Valentinians, again, maintain that the dispensational Jesus was the same who passed through Mary, upon whom that Saviour from the more exalted [region] descended, who was also termed Pan, because He possessed the names (vocabula) of all those who had produced Him;"
- "but that [this latter] shared with Him, the dispensational one, His power and His name; so that by His means death was abolished, but the Father was made known by that Saviour who had descended from above, whom they do also allege to be Himself the receptacle of Christ and of the entire Pleroma;"
- "confessing, indeed, in tongue one Christ Jesus, but being divided in [actual] opinion:"
- "for, as I have already observed, it is the practice of these men to say that there was one Christ, who was produced by Monogenes, for the confirmation of the Pleroma;"
- "but that another, the Saviour, was sent [forth] for the glorification of the Father;"
- "and yet another, the dispensational one, and whom they represent as having suffered, who also bore [in himself] Christ, that Saviour who returned into the Pleroma."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus testifies to Jesus as he records:

- "That John knew the one and the same Word of God, and that He was the only begotten, and that He became incarnate for our salvation, Jesus Christ our Lord, I have sufficiently proved from the word of John himself," referring to John 1:1, 14, 18, 3:16, and 3:18.
- "And Matthew, too, recognizing one and the same Jesus Christ, exhibiting his generation as a man from the Virgin, even as God did promise David that He would raise up from the fruit of his body an eternal King, having made the same promise to Abraham a long time previously, says: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," referring to **Matthew 1 (NIV)**:1 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:
- "Then, that he might free our mind from suspicion regarding Joseph, he says: "But the birth of Christ was on this wise. When His mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost," referring to **Matthew 1 (NIV)**:18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.
- "Then, when Joseph had it in contemplation to put Mary away, since she proved with child, [Matthew tells us of] the angel of God standing by him, and saying: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins," referring to referring to **Matthew 1 (NIV)**:20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").
- "Now this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, God with us," referring to referring to **Matthew 1 (NIV)**:24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Irenaeus then clearly testifies as follows:

- "clearly signifying that both the promise made to the fathers had been accomplished,"

- "that the Son of God was born of a virgin, and that He Himself was Christ the Saviour whom the prophets had foretold;"
- "not, as these men assert, that Jesus was He who was born of Mary, but that Christ was He who descended from above."
- "Matthew might certainly have said, "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise;" but the Holy Ghost, foreseeing the corrupters [of the truth], and guarding by anticipation against their deceit, says by Matthew, "But the birth of Christ was on this wise;""
- "for "not by the will of the flesh nor by the will of man, but by the will of God was the Word made flesh," referring in context to **John 1 (NIV**):12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- "and that we should not imagine that Jesus was one, and Christ another, but should know them to be one and the same."

Irenaeus then explains Paul as he affirms the following:

- "plainly indicating one God, who did by the prophets make promise of the Son,"
- "and one Jesus Christ our Lord, who was of the seed of David according to His birth from Mary;" "and that Jesus Christ was appointed the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, as being the first begotten in all the creation;"
- "the Son of God being made the Son of man, that through Him we may receive the adoption,— humanity sustaining, and receiving, and embracing the Son of God."

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus then testifies," By which is made manifest, that all things which had been foreknown of the Father, our Lord did accomplish in their order, season, and hour, foreknown and fitting, being indeed one and the same, but rich and great. For He fulfils the bountiful and comprehensive will of His Father, inasmuch as He is Himself the Saviour of those who are saved, and the Lord of those who are under authority, and the God of all those things which have been formed, the only-begotten of the Father, Christ who was announced, and the Word of God, who became incarnate when the fulness of time had come, at which the Son of God had to become the Son of man."

Irenaeus unequivocally confesses his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ with these words.

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus affirms that, "All, therefore, are outside of the [Christian] dispensation, who, under pretext of knowledge, understand that Jesus was one, and Christ another, and the Only-begotten another, from whom again is the Word, and that the Saviour is another, whom these disciples of error allege to be a production of those who were made Æons in a state of degeneracy." Irenaeus informs us that "Such men are to outward appearance sheep; for they appear to be like us, by what they say in public, repeating the same words as we do; but inwardly they are wolves," referring to **Matthew 7 (NIV**):15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

Irenaeus does not mince words when he testifies, "Their doctrine is homicidal, conjuring up, as it does, a number of gods, and simulating many Fathers, but lowering and dividing the Son of God in many ways."

Chapter 12: Teaching on the Atonement

Book 3: Chapter XVIII.—Continuation of the foregoing argument. Proofs from the writings of St. Paul, and from the words of Our Lord, that Christ and Jesus cannot be considered as distinct beings; neither can it be alleged that the Son of God became man merely in appearance, but that He did so truly and actually.

Irenaeus intention here in this chapter was not to write the doctrine of the atonement, but to destroy the arguments of the Gnostics. In his defense of the faith, Irenaeus gives us more understanding of what he was fighting against. It is helpful to understand what Irenaeus was fighting against so that we understand his arguments more clearly. Here are some of the Gnostic beliefs revealed in this chapter which are as follows:

- In paragraph one, some Gnostics said that Christ could have no previous existence if he was actually born a man.
- In paragraph three, some Gnostics said that Christ was above but "extended himself through Horos." We will discuss Horos in **Chapter 16: The Gnostic Doctrine of the Seed**.
- In paragraphs four and five, we find that the Gnostics were "averse to the idea of His suffering."
- In paragraph five also, some Gnostics believed that the Christ flew away from Jesus on the cross. They also believed that the Christ did not take up the cross, but "relinquished the dispensation of suffering."
- And also in paragraph five, we find that the Gnostics expounded that Christ only exhorted His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him "with reference to the acknowledging of the Stauros (cross) above."
- Also in paragraph five, we find that some of the Gnostics "proceeded to such a degree of temerity, that they even pour contempt upon the martyrs, and vituperate those who are slain on account of the confession of the Lord, and who suffer all things predicted by the Lord, and who in this respect strive to follow the footprints of the Lord's passion, having become martyrs of the suffering One." These "have cast a slur upon their martyrdom."
- In paragraph six we find that there were some Gnostics "who maintain that He suffered only in appearance."
- And in paragraph seven we find that some Gnostics "assert that He appeared putatively, and was neither born in the flesh nor truly made man."

Book 5: Chapter I.—Christ alone is able to teach divine things, and to redeem us: He, the same, took flesh of the Virgin Mary, not merely in appearance, but actually, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, in order to renovate us. Strictures on the conceits of Valentinus and Ebion.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus then gives us the essence of the atonement as he says, "Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God,—all the doctrines of the heretics fall to ruin."

Book 5: Chapter XVII.—There is but one Lord and one God, the Father and Creator of all things, who has loved us in Christ, given us commandments, and remitted our sins; whose Son and Word Christ proved Himself to be, when He forgave our sins.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "Now this being is the Creator (*Demiurgus*), who is, in respect of His love, the Father; but in respect of His power, He is Lord; and in respect of His wisdom, our Maker and Fashioner; by transgressing whose commandment we became His enemies, referring to Romans 5:10. Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "And therefore in the last times the Lord has restored us into friendship through His incarnation, having become "the Mediator between God and men;" referring to 1 Tomothy 2:5, "propitiating indeed for us the Father against whom we had sinned, and cancelling (consolatus) our disobedience by His own obedience," referring to Romans 3:25, 1 John 2:2.

Chapter 13: Refutation of the Teaching of the Transmigration of Souls

Book 3: Chapter XXXIII.—Absurdity of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

This is a good example of the method of Irenaeus and how he effectively demolishes a heresy. In paragraph one, Irenaeus basically is arguing against reincarnation. He says that the soul has memory even in a dream state and therefore would remember a past life experience. This flies in the face of the heresy of the transmigration of souls which says that there is no remembrance whatever of events that took place in a previous state or states of existence.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus effectively demolishes the myth, whether started by Plato, or Pythagoras, or the Egyptians, that when a soul reincarnates or transmigrates into another existence, it is caused to drink a cup of oblivion. Irenaeus argues that this would wipe out all memory, and therefore is unproveable by any in existence currently, since they themselves who argue this position could not remember their former state because the cup of oblivion would have wiped it away from their memory.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus turns the argument that the body is the cup of oblivion on its heels and throws it crashing down, saying that there could be no memory at all if the body was the cup of oblivion, and that there would be no remembrance of divine things. He contrasts the Old Testament prophets who, after returning from a trance or a vision, remembered everything they saw spiritually and related these things to others.

Then in paragraph four, Irenaeus explains that the soul is the possessor of the body, not the other way around. As a musical instrument in the hands of a musician, so the body is played by the soul. Irenaeus says that an artist may have a burst of inspiration and creativity yet must he work out his composition at the pace allowed by his instrument which is not perfectly pliable. Thus are the rapidity of his ideas slowed by the medium by which they are expressed. So also, Irenaeus says, is the soul impeded by the body. The soul is the artist but the body is the instrument which does not prohibit movement, but moderates it so that the soul may be seen working out its expression through the body. The soul does not lose “its own peculiar powers” but shares its life with the body.

Chapter 14: The Gospel of Judas a Fake

Book 1: Chapter XXXI.—Doctrines of the Cainites.

Irenaeus testifies here that the Gnostics claimed that Cain, Esau, Korah, and the Sodomites were derived from “the Power above.” Irenaeus also testifies that they claim that the Creator assailed them but “no one of them has suffered injury.” Irenaeus also testifies that they claimed that Judas “accomplished the mystery of the betrayal,” and knew the truth “as no others did.” Irenaeus records that the Gospel of Judas is a “fictitious history.”

It is evident that the Gospel of Judas is a false Gospel.

Chapter 15: Intelligent Design in Creation

Book 2: Chapter II.—The world was not formed by angels, or by any other being, contrary to the will of the most high God, but was made by the Father through the Word.

Here in this chapter of his writing, Irenaeus’ clear thinking echoes even our present day theories of

intelligent design. In paragraph one, he points out the absurdity of saying that the Supreme God did not know what the angels were doing when He created the world. Even a man knows what is being done to the things he possesses.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus again argues it is absurd to say that the Supreme God has an end, or that something is done beyond Him, behind His back as it were.

In paragraph three, he adds that even if God were only the cause of the formation of the world, and that someone else formed it, it is still caused by His will since He began the succession of events that led to its existence. Even if He only prepared for its formation, He is still its Author.

Irenaeus says that tools don't exist without a purpose and a designer. Likewise, "we do not say that it was the axe which cut the wood, or the saw which divided it; but one would very properly say that the man cut and divided it who formed the axe and the saw for this purpose, and [who also formed] at a much earlier date all the tools by which the axe and the saw themselves were formed." By this statement I see that Irenaeus understood the basis of the argument for intelligent design. Intelligence to form a saw implies intelligence to use a saw. And intelligence implies a designer.

Chapter 16: The Gnostic Doctrine of the Seed

Book 2: Chapter XIX.—Absurdities of the heretics as to their own origin: their opinions respecting the Demiurge shown to be equally untenable and ridiculous.

Here are the basic tenets of Gnosticism that are stated there:

- Matter is evil and spirit is good.
- The true God, Bythus, relating to the abyss, is unknowable.
- The Demiurge, creator of the earth and God of the Old Testament and of the Jews, is inferior to Bythus.
- The Pleroma is where the aeons dwelt.
- The aeons are beings born of Bythus and a consort.

To summarize, in paragraph one we learn that the Demiurge received a deposit of seed within himself without his knowledge, and that he would deposit a seed in a human being, and that it would ripen into perfection so to speak, and form in the soul he had filled with seed, that is, that he had deposited seed in.

And in paragraph nine, Irenaeus thunders as he states, "For who that has any intelligence, and possesses only a small proportion of truth, can tolerate them, when they affirm that:"

- "there is another god above the Creator;"
- "and that there is another Monogenes as well as another Word of God, whom also they describe as having been produced in [a state of] degeneracy";
- "and another Christ, whom they assert to have been formed, along with the Holy Spirit, later than the rest of the Æons;"
- "and another Saviour, who, they say, did not proceed from the Father of all, but was a kind of joint production of those Æons who were formed in [a state of] degeneracy, and that He was produced of necessity on account of this very degeneracy?

Chapter 17: The Passion of Christ

Book 2: Chapter XX.—Futility of the arguments adduced to demonstrate the

sufferings of the twelfth Æon, from the parables, the treachery of Judas, and the passion of our Saviour.

In paragraph three, Ireaneus contrasts the "passion of Christ" with "the passion of the Aeon," as he testifies, "But, in truth, the passion of Christ was neither similar to the passion of the Æon, nor did it take place in similar circumstances." Irenaeus then makes the following observations about the differences between the "the passion of the Aeon" and the "passion of Christ":

The following attributes may be discerned concerning the "the passion of the Aeon":

- the "Æon underwent a passion of dissolution and destruction, so that she who suffered was in danger also of being destroyed."
- The "Æon, again, underwent passion while she was seeking after the Father, and was not able to find Him;"
- The "search into the greatness of the Father became to her a passion leading to destruction;"
- "Her passion, as they declare, gave origin to a female offspring, weak, infirm, unformed, and ineffective;"
- "their Æon, when she had suffered, established ignorance, and brought forth a substance without shape, out of which all material works have been produced—death, corruption, error, and such like."

The following attributes in contrast may be discerned concerning the "passion of the Christ":

- the "Lord, our Christ, underwent a valid, and not a merely accidental passion; not only was He Himself not in danger of being destroyed, but He also established fallen man by His own strength, and recalled him to incorruption."
- the "Lord suffered that He might bring those who have wandered from the Father, back to knowledge and to His fellowship."
- the "Lord, having suffered, and bestowing the knowledge of the Father, conferred on us salvation."
- "His passion gave rise to strength and power. For the Lord, through means of suffering, "ascending into the lofty place, led captivity captive, gave gifts to men," referring to Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8, "and conferred on those that believe in Him the power "to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy," referring to Luke 10:19 and Mark 16:17-18, "that is, of the leader of apostasy."
- "Our Lord also by His passion destroyed death, and dispersed error, and put an end to corruption, and destroyed ignorance, while He manifested life and revealed truth, and bestowed the gift of incorruption."

Irenaeus points out in paragraph three that Jesus' passion was real.

The Gnostics, just like thieves and robbers, have lied in wait to deceive by using Christian phrases out of context. Their words sound holy but they have taken Biblical terms completely out of context and used them to have an appearance of godliness, as it were in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Chapter 18: Irenaeus Believed Jesus' Age about 50 Years

Book 2: Chapter XXII.—The thirty Æons are not typified by the fact that Christ was baptized in His thirtieth year: He did not suffer in the twelfth month after His baptism, but was more than fifty years old when He died.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus testifies that, "Being thirty years old when He came to be baptized," referring to **Luke 3 (ESV):**23 Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli.

Irenaeus then argues from the traditions of his time, "Now, that the first stage of early life embraces

thirty years, and that this extends onwards to the fortieth year, every one will admit; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while He still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the Gospel and all the elders testify; those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, [affirming] that John conveyed to them that information."

Jesus Himself also tells us a parable that hints at His age as we see in **Luke 13 (KJV):**6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? 8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

So Jesus was 33 years old when He was crucified.

History records that Pontius Pilate's retirement will not allow Jesus to have reached the age of years that would include Him in Trajan's reign who reigned as Roman Emperor from 98 A.D. until his death in 117 A.D. We know that Pilate was relieved from duty in 36 A.D. Jesus had to have been crucified before this.

Chapter 19: Spiritual Gifts

Book 2: Chapter XXXII.—Further exposure of the wicked and blasphemous doctrines of the heretics.

Irenaeus again testifies that the Holy Spirit was very much present in the church of his day, as he begins by arguing in defense of the faith here in paragraph four, "If, however, they maintain that the Lord, too, performed such works simply in appearance, we shall refer them to the prophetical writings, and prove from these both that all things were thus predicted regarding Him, and did take place undoubtedly, and that He is the only Son of God." Irenaeus gives strong testimony to his faith when he says, "He is the only Son of God."

Irenaeus then also testifies that evil spirits evidently were still around as well, for such believers were driving them out, as he records, "For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have thus been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe [in Christ], and join themselves to the Church."
Not only so, but Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions, and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years."

Irenaeus then asks as he testifies, "And what shall I more say? It is not possible to name the number of the gifts which the Church, [scattered] throughout the whole world, has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exerts day by day for the benefit of the Gentiles, neither practising deception upon any, nor taking any reward from them [on account of such miraculous interpositions]."

The Holy Spirit was still manifesting in the time of Irenaeus, according to Irenaeus' testimony.

Book 3: Chapter XI.—Proofs in continuation, extracted from St. John's Gospel. The Gospels are four in number, neither more nor less. Mystic reasons for this.

Irenaeus continues as he testifies, "Others, again (the Montanists), that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that *aspect* [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John's Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete," John 14:16,26, 15:26,27, 16:7,13, "but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit."

Book 5: Chapter VI.—God will bestow salvation upon the whole nature of man, consisting of body and soul in close union, since the Word took it upon Him, and adorned with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, of whom our bodies are, and are termed, the temples.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus then testifies, "In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostle terms "spiritual," they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit, and not because their flesh has been stripped off and taken away, and because they have become purely spiritual."

Chapter 20: The Theory of Apostolic Succession

Commentary Summary Book 3: Chapter III

So to summarize his argument in this chapter, Irenaeus believed that, since this apostolical tradition is common to all the churches, Rome may be taken as representative of them all. And, since Rome is central to the empire and a "potent principality," making communication more feasible, and since the church was founded by "the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul," and since the church in Rome has maintained a verifiable list of its succession of bishops, Rome should have the preeminence of authority and all the churches should agree with Rome. And, since Rome's episcopal succession is firmly established and known, why try to maintain another list of episcopal succession of all the churches, since Rome's succession list is in itself the "most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth."

Now Irenaeus shows us his concern here that not only would the truth of the Scriptures be acknowledged, but that the Scriptures would be interpreted correctly, and not misinterpreted as the Gnostics were doing. However, Irenaues does not encourage the churches or believers to listen to the Holy Spirit for guidance into all truth. Instead, he resorts to the tradition of the church in Rome as a guarantee, a "most abundant proof" he says, that "there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth."

At this point, we might ask ourselves why Irenaeus would not resort to the Scriptures exclusively instead of relying on the slippery slope of tradition. We will never know everything Irenaeus was thinking and feeling. However, Irenaeus may have taken the following into account:

- The winds of heresy were blowing vehemently within the churches themselves as Gnostic believers were reportedly among the very brethren in the churches themselves.
- The church had gone through persecutions under Nero and Trajan before Irenaeus was born. Irenaeus knew himself what persecution was like for he was appointed bishop of Lyons after the former bishop was martyred, and he lived under the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180), the Roman emperor under whom the martyrdom of Polycarp is recorded. Irenaeus himself may have known persecution again under the Roman emperor, Septimus Severus (202-210), and it is possible he was himself martyred during that persecution.
- It is very probable that the illiteracy rate was very high in the early church. Paul himself did not ask everyone in every church to read his letters themselves, but that they should be read to the churches by the overseers, the bishops.

Looking back we might also note that it is evident that doctrinal knowledge of the word of God did not go much beyond the creedal statements of the time. It is also evident that leaven was creeping into the churches in the forms of legalism and sacerdotalism. This was of course all based on "apostolical tradition" that "has been

preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere."

All of this may have played a part in what Irenaeus was feeling and thinking, and could be reasons for his relying on the "apostolical tradition" in addition to the Scriptures as sources of truth. Irenaeus definitely saw that the threat of Gnosticism was real. He himself in his mind is contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, as he perceived it, against the Gnostics who "are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another god beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things." Irenaeus points out in paragraph two that the "apostolical tradition" of the Church is much older than the Gnostic heresies. He is trying to show that the consistent teaching of the Church, that is, the "apostolical tradition," was being followed and adhered to from the beginning by all the churches which were planted by apostles. That is, he is trying to show that the faith of these churches planted by apostles is the same, and that it has nothing to do with these new doctrines of heresy that are being propagated by the Gnostics. And this "apostolical tradition" could be clearly seen, Irenaeus thought, by examining that tradition which the Church in Rome "had lately received from the apostles, proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spake with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels." He also adds here that "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches." Irenaeus seems to emphasize that Rome is an example of "the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere." For the rest of what this apostolical tradition might include, see the sections under **Chapter 4: Irenaeus' Statement of Faith**.

Irenaeus is to be applauded for overturning this idea of hidden knowledge, or gnosis, which the Gnostics claimed the Apostles imparted to the "perfect," but which was actually a perversion of the Gospel. However, he is following the tradition of his time which dictated that a list of bishops appointed by apostles be kept by all churches who were planted by apostles. He seems to feel that this was some sort of guarantee that the church was preaching and teaching the truth.

Irenaeus also speaks of "the inheritance of the episcopate" by which I believe he means "the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth." In other words, the apostles handed down how to do church, that is the "tradition from the apostles," and the truth of the Gospel message in their writings to the bishops they appointed. Irenaeus felt that this succession of bishops was the "most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth." We will talk more about what Irenaeus means by "the inheritance of the episcopate" in the next section.

Irenaeus admits that "it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches." And so he concludes that the Church in Rome should be the Church to look to as the representative and central authority of all the Churches. And so, any Church that meets together but does not agree with Rome is not authorized and is unlawful, "for it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre-eminent authority" or "more potent principality," whichever you prefer. Irenaeus' argument runs this way.

1. The "tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul" has been preserved by the succession of their bishops, and their list of successive bishops is known and continuous to the time of Irenaeus writing.
2. The apostles, Peter and Paul, appointed Linus to be their successor at Rome.
3. Rome's succession list, which he names here, "is most abundant proof that there is one and the same vivifying faith, which has been preserved in the Church from the apostles until now, and handed down in truth."
4. Clement was bishop of Rome from 88 A.D. to 97 A.D. and he "might be said to have the preaching of the apostles still echoing [in his ears], and their traditions before his eyes."
5. The office of bishop holds the inheritance of the episcopate as Irenaeus clearly says in paragraph three when he states, "Eleutherius does now, in the twelfth place from the apostles, hold the inheritance of the episcopate."

6. Irenaeus states “In this order, and by this succession, the ecclesiastical tradition from the apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us.”

Irenaeus is right to defend the Church, but in his zeal to defend the church against the false doctrine of the Gnostics, he is validating a form of Church government that is not found in the Scriptures. He has in essence recommended a new head in Rome, when Jesus Christ is the sole head of the Church, and is its central authority, as Paul states in **Ephesians 5 (NASB):**23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

And in **Colossians 1 (NASB):**18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Commentary Summary Book 3: Chapter IV

In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, “Since therefore we have such proofs, it is not necessary to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth: so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life,” referring in part to Revelation 22:17. Irenaeus then asserts, “For she is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers,” referring in part to John 10:1.

Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John, chapter 10, that He is the door into the sheepfold. All who came before Him are thieves and robbers. For Irenaeus to apply this metaphor to the church is to obscure the original meaning of Jesus’ words. The Church didn’t die for the sheep, but Jesus did. The water of life Irenaeus mentions comes from Jesus, not the Church as we read in **John 4 (NASB):7** There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9 Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." 11 She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? 12 "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?" 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

And Jesus taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV)**:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXVI

Now again, Irenaeus says in paragraph five, “Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behooves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech.”

So far, Irenaeus’ argument for the theory of apostolic succession in this chapter runs this way:

We should obey the good presbyters and the bishops who are in the Church. The reasons are because Irenaeus perceived that the good presbyters and bishops have the following qualifications:

- “possess the succession from the apostles” - paragraph two
- “received the certain gift of truth” - paragraph two

- “hold the doctrine of the apostles” - paragraph four
- “display sound speech and blameless conduct for the confirmation and correction of others.” - paragraph four
- The Church nourishes good presbyters - paragraph five
- Paul taught us where to find such good presbyters, when he says, “God hath placed in the Church, first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers.” - paragraph five
- “Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behooves us to learn the truth, ,[namely,] from those who possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles, and among whom exists that which is sound and blameless in conduct, as well as that which is unadulterated and incorrupt in speech.” - paragraph five
- These then who “possess that succession of the Church which is from the apostles” do as follows:
    - “also preserve this faith of ours in one God who created all things;” - paragraph five
    - “and they increase that love [which we have] for the Son of God, who accomplished such marvellous dispensations for our sake” - paragraph five
    - “and they expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God, nor dishonouring the patriarchs, nor despising the prophets.” paragraph five

Irenaeus wanted to protect the Church from the bad presbyters and bishops who do the following:

- “depart from the primitive succession” - paragraph two
- “assemble themselves together in any place whatsoever” - paragraph two
- Are either
    - “heretics of perverse minds,” - paragraph two
    - “schismatics puffed up and self-pleasing,” - paragraph two
    - “hypocrites, acting thus for the sake of lucre and vainglory” - paragraph two
- “have fallen from the truth” - paragraph two
- “bring strange fire to the altar of God— namely, strange doctrines” - paragraph two
- “shall be burned up by the fire from heaven, as were Nadab and Abiud” - paragraph two
- “rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God” - paragraph two
    - shall “remain among those in hell (apud inferos), being swallowed up by an earthquake, even as those who were with Chore, Dathan, and Abiron” - paragraph two
- “cleave asunder, and separate the unity of the Church” - paragraph two
    - “shall receive from God the same punishment as Jeroboam did” - paragraph two
- “are believed to be presbyters by many, but”
    - “serve their own lusts” - paragraph three
    - “do not place the fear of God supreme in their hearts” – paragraph three
    - “conduct themselves with contempt towards others” - paragraph three
    - “are puffed up with the pride of holding the chief seat” - paragraph three
    - “work evil deeds in secret, saying, “No man sees us,” - paragraph three
    - “shall be convicted by the Word, who does not judge after outward appearance (secundum gloriam), nor looks upon the countenance, but the heart” - paragraph three
    - “shall hear those words, to be found in Daniel the prophet: “O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust perverted thy heart. Thou that art waxen old in wicked days, now thy sins which thou hast committed aforetime are come to light; for thou hast pronounced false judgments, and hast been accustomed to condemn the innocent, and to let the guilty go free, albeit the Lord saith, The innocent and the righteous shalt thou not slay.”” – paragraph three
    - “Of whom also did the Lord say: “But if the evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite the man-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the

unbelievers.””

Clearly Irenaeus was concerned about preserving the unity of the Church. He was concerned about preserving the truth as it had been taught by the apostles. He was concerned about protecting the Church from false doctrine. He wanted to preserve the faith in the one God who created all things. And he wanted the Church to increase in love for the Son of God. These are all noble goals.

Maintaining the list of successive bishops was being done apparently in Irenaeus' day. He himself is able to list those of Rome. However, when he says that these successive bishops "received the certain gift of truth," this statement is unverifiable. No such statement is found in Scripture concerning it. Again, when he says that these bishops in the succession from an apostolic appointment "hold the doctrine of the apostles," this is again unverifiable. Whether one holds the doctrine of the apostles depends on whether one has been taught this doctrine. It is not absorbed by the laying on of hands. Gifts of the Spirit were imparted in this way as we see in **1 Timothy 4 (NASB):**14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

And in **2 Timothy 1 (NASB):**6 For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

And in **Romans 1 (NASB):**11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;

But doctrinal knowledge is not obtained by the laying on of hands. Paul encourages Timothy to give diligence to show Himself approved to God in **2 Timothy 2 (NASB):**15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Doctrinal knowledge comes as we walk in the light of God's word. And knowledge is something we grow in as Peter tells us in **2 Peter 3 (NASB):**17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Spiritual growth comes only by walking in the truth as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

When we are born again, we are babes in Christ. As we are nourished on the milk of the word, we grow up spiritually. There is no way to instantaneously grow. Paul says as much in **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):**6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

Irenaeus leaves us with the impression that the bishops in apostolic succession have received the truth by their very appointment. They hold the doctrine of the apostles because of the very fact that they are bishops in apostolic succession. Paul's encouragement to Timothy was to set an example of those who believe as in **1 Timothy 4 (NASB):**12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

A Summary of Irenaeus' Vision of the Heretics

- "Now all these [heretics]"
  - "are of much later date than the bishops to whom the apostles committed the Churches;"
  - "since they are blind to the truth,"
  - "and deviate from the [right] way,"

    - "will walk in various roads;"
    - "and therefore the footsteps of their doctrine are scattered here and there without agreement or connection."

- "Those, therefore, who desert the preaching of the Church,"
    - "call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters, not taking into consideration of how much greater consequence is a religious man, even in a private station, than a blasphemous and impudent sophist."
    - "Now, such are all the heretics,"
    - "and those who imagine that they have hit upon something more beyond the truth,"
    - "so that by following those things already mentioned, proceeding on their way variously, inharmoniously, and foolishly, not keeping always to the same opinions with regard to the same things, as blind men are led by the blind, they shall deservedly fall into the ditch of ignorance lying in their path, ever seeking and never finding out the truth."
    - "For these men do profess that they have themselves the knowledge of good and evil; and they set their own impious minds above the God who made them."
    - "They therefore form opinions on what is beyond the limits of the understanding."

Those who eat "of the "knowledge" of these men (that knowledge which knows more than it should do)" will be cast forth "from the paradise of life."

A Summary of Irenaeus' Vision of the Church

- "The path of those belonging to the Church circumscribes the whole world,"
- "as possessing the sure tradition from the apostles,"
- "and gives unto us to see that the faith of all is one and the same,
    - "since all receive one and the same God the Father, "
    - "and believe in the same dispensation regarding the incarnation of the Son of God,"
    - "and are cognizant of the same gift of the Spirit,"
    - "and are conversant with the same commandments, "
    - "and preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution,"
    - "and expect the same advent of the Lord,"
    - "and await the same salvation of the complete man, that is, of the soul and body."
- "And undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and steadfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world."
- "For to her is entrusted the light of God;"
- "and therefore the "wisdom" of God,"
    - "by means of which she saves all men,"
    - "is declared in [its] going forth;"
    - "it uttereth [its voice] faithfully in the streets, "
    - "is preached on the tops of the walls, "
    - "and speaks continually in the gates of the city."
- "For the Church preaches the truth everywhere, "
- "and she is the seven-branched candlestick which bears the light of Christ."
- It behooves us "to flee to the Church, and be brought up in her bosom, and be nourished with the Lord's Scriptures."
- "For the Church has been planted as a garden (paradisus) in this world;"
    - "therefore, says the Spirit of God, "Thou mayest freely eat from every tree of the garden," so those in the Church can eat from every Scripture of the Lord, but not with an uplifted mind, nor touching any heretical discord."

- In this way those in the Church will not be "cast forth by eating of the "knowledge" of these men (that knowledge which knows more than it should do) from the paradise of life. "
- "Into this paradise the Lord has introduced those who obey His call, "summing up in Himself all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth;""
- "but the things in heaven are spiritual, while those on earth constitute the dispensation in human nature (secundum hominem est dispositio)."

All of Irenaeus' encouragement is good as it concerns heresy, and as it concerns those who preach heresy, or false doctrine, or things contrary to Scripture. However, Irenaeus forbids even to "call in question the knowledge of the holy presbyters." This differs with Paul's instructions to Timothy in **1 Timothy 4 (NASB):**19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. 20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful *of sinning.*

Elders, that is presbyters, or bishops, that is overseers, are accountable to God for their actions. If two or three witnesses are found, they may be rebuked before all if they continue in known sin. Such a rebuke may also be given for teaching strange doctrines as Paul says in **1 Timothy 1 (NASB):**3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, 4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than *furthering* the administration of God which is by faith.

Elders are to be held accountable for what they teach. Our teaching must be in agreement with the Scripture in all ways.

Now, in regards to the Church, Irenaeus is very zealous to protect the Church from heresy. However, in his zeal to defend the faith, he exceeds the teaching of the Scriptures in regards to the Church. This may seem harmless and trivial at first, but it must be understood that any deviation from the Scriptures gives room for wide interpretation.

For example, the Church is never characterized in the Scriptures as being entrusted with "the light of God, and therefore the "wisdom" of God, by means of which she saves all men." The Scriptures say that the Living God, and He alone, is the Savior of all men as in **1 Timothy 4 (NASB):**10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

To say that the Church saves all men by means of the wisdom of God with which she is entrusted is to obscure the message of salvation. The message of salvation, that is the Gospel, is about relationship with the living God through His Son, Jesus Christ. To place anything or anyone in between God and man, other than Jesus Christ, is to hinder the believer's intimacy with his Savior.

The Church also is not the instrument of salvation. The Church is the body of Christ. It is the members of the body of Christ who are the instruments or vessels that the Lord uses to preach the message of salvation. The members of the Church, which is Christ's body, are fellow workers with God as in **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):**5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

The Holy Spirit, working through individuals in the body of Christ, is saving souls by acting through the word that is preached as in **1 Corinthians 1 (NASB):**21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

It is when we believe the truth that we are born again as in in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):**22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is,* through the living and enduring word of God.

The born again experience of the believer is a work of the Spirit as Jesus says in **John 3 (NASB):**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be amazed that I said to

you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

I realize that Irenaeus wants to differentiate between the heretic's vision of the Church and what he perceived to be the Church of his day, but to say that the Church is the light of God, and therefore the wisdom of God is to give the Church a corporate identity which is not mentioned in the Scriptures.

When Jesus started His preaching ministry, the people saw great light as in **Matthew 4 (NASB):**12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; 13 and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 15 "the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles— 16 "the people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light, and those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a light dawned." 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Jesus said He was the light of the world, and that those who follow Him would have the light of life as in **John 8 (NASB):**12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Then also Jesus told His disciples in the sermon on the Mount to let their light shine before men so that they might glorify our Father in heaven as in **Matthew 5 (NASB):**14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

The light of life is in believers. Irenaeus reasons that the Church possesses "the sure tradition from the apostles," and also their writings, the Scriptures, and so the Church has been entrusted with "the light of God, and therefore the wisdom of God, by means of which she saves all men." In so doing, he is making the church the means by which its members possess the light of life, as if this light of life was somehow dependent on obedience to the Church, and the teaching of the Church. But the opposite is true. We don't become members of the Church until we have the light of life which is given us when we believe and are born again. The Church is composed of its members who have the light of life. It is only these who compose the Church, which is Christ's body.

Irenaeus is giving the Church a corporate identity which she does not have. His goal is to protect the unity of the Church, and to protect the doctrine of the Church from heresy. But in so doing, he has made the Church something that she is not. Irenaeus is making salvation dependent on believing what the Church preaches instead of what the word of God actually says. The Church does not save any man or woman, and neither do we as believers. What saves men and women is faith in the word of God as it is spoken by the Holy Spirit. It is this very word that brings about faith as in **Romans 10 (NASB):**14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!" 16 however, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" 17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Also, the Church is never pictured as a mother nourishing her children with the Scriptures from her bosom, nor "planted as a garden in this world." It is not pictured as a paradise in this world. The Church is pictured as a field and as a building as in **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):**9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

The Church is also pictured as a "chaste virgin" as the bride of Christ as in **2 Corinthians 11 (NASB):**2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin.

The marriage relationship is analogous to the relationship of Christ to His church as we read in **Ephesians 5 (NASB):**22 Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her,

having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.

The Church is to be subject to Christ. And speaking of this oneness in marriage, the Church is also pictured as the body of Christ in **Ephesians 1 (NASB):**22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Believers are so intimately connected to their Lord that they are pictured as the members of His body, and are even performing specific functions such as the hands and feet as in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):**12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

So the Church is the body of Christ, and we are individually members of it as in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):**27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.

It is important to understand what the Scripture says that the Church is, and what it is not. It is not an institution with offices holding knowledge and authority which can be received and dispensed simply by holding the office. The bishops and presbyters and all church leaders must be diligent to show themselves approved to God and handling the word of God accurately as in **2 Timothy 2 (NASB):**15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

The words "accurately handling" are literally "cutting straight." Wuest Words Studies says that this may refer to "the stone mason's art of cutting stones fair and straight to fit into their places in a building." **Words Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume II, pager 135**. Paul's exhortation to Timothy was to make haste or give diligence to apply himself to the Scriptures so that he would be equipped for every good work as in **2 Timothy 3 (NASB):**14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

We must be careful how we handle the word of God. This does not mean that we should not read it, but just to be careful how we hear it. If a "holy presbyter" is teaching false doctrine, we must not be afraid to call him or anyone else who teaches false doctrine in the Church to account. All believers are commanded to hear and do the word of God, not just the presbyters. The presbyters should be equipping the Church to do just that.

Commentary Summary: The Theory of Apostolic Succession

To summarize, Irenaeus is seeking to establish a stable government in the church in his time. Since he believes the apostles handed their authority to the bishops, he sees a transition from apostolic government to

government by bishops. He sees this government maintaining its validity when the bishop is appointed by a church that can show apostolic succession. Clearly, Irenaeus thinks it is an impossible task to try to validate every church's list of episcopal succession. Therefore, he sees the Church of Rome as the Church who should carry the authority of apostolic succession, since it has maintained a list of bishops from the beginning and was founded by the "two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul." Therefore, the Church of Rome is in a position to mediate and settle all questions of doctrine. Interestingly, Irenaeus does not mention Matthew 16:18 in all his writing. Of course, this was the solution to finally establish the Church of Rome's preeminent authority beyond all doubt. But this was not part of Irenaeus' solution. It came at a later time.

So we see a development here in the thinking of Irenaeus and the early Church in how the church should be governed. He was earnestly trying to work this out in his zeal to defend the faith because of the winds of Gnostic doctrine blowing through the church, which was subverting the saints. However, the problem, I feel, with apostolic succession is fivefold.

1. apostolic succession requires dependence on man
2. apostolic succession hinders accountability
3. apostolic succession keeps the Church divided
4. apostolic succession gives tacit apostolic authority to bishops
5. apostolic succession is not supported by the Scriptures

First of all, apostolic succession requires dependence on man in the following ways:

1. We must have faith in the apostle who made the appointment originally.
2. We must have faith in the Church, or a man somewhere, who is keeping a list of a succession of bishops.
3. We must have faith in the Church to appoint a faithful and blameless man.
4. We must have faith in the Church to exercise the proper discipline when a bishop or presbyter is unfaithful. Irenaeus discouraged even questioning the knowledge of a "holy presbyter."

Second, apostolic succession hinders accountability. How can someone be accountable if they have received a "certain gift of truth" because they are in an episcopal line of succession? This reasoning places them beyond the accountability of the body of Christ. To say that their knowledge may not be questioned because of their appointment is not Scriptural. No one can claim perfection until Jesus comes. And no one in the body of Christ is beyond accountability for what they teach. Not even Peter the apostle was beyond accountability as we read in **Galatians 2 (NASB):**11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. 13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

If the apostle Peter, or Cephas as he was also called, can be held accountable in this way to the truth of the gospel, then anyone in the Church, be he presbyter, bishop, overseer, elder, or a new convert, can be held accountable to the truth of the gospel.

Third, apostolic succession keeps the Church divided. In Irenaeus' teaching of apostolic succession, he made the churches who could trace their bishop back to an appointment by an apostle autonomous while appointing Rome as the Church they should all "agree" with. Diversity is good but division is not good as Paul said when he corrected the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 1 (NASB):**10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people,* that there are quarrels among you. 12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." 13 Has Christ been divided?

Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. 16 Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

Is Paul just speaking just to the Corinthians? Is he not speaking to us as well, that is, to the whole Church? The only thing that should divide us is truth, but that is also what will eventually unite us. We must all be on a quest for truth. The point is this. To have faith in the apostle is to have faith in a man, and therefore, to be dependent on a man. The Scriptures say that the one who trusts in man is cursed as in **Jeremiah 17 (NASB):**5 Thus says the LORD, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD.

And in **Psalm 118 (NASB):**8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD Than to trust in man.

And in **Proverbs 3 (NASB):**5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.

We are saved because we trust in the Lord, and have believed in the word of God about Jesus. We are not saved because that word was from an apostle, or any other man or woman, or church for that matter. We are saved because that word which the apostle spoke, or any other man or woman spoke, was the word of God about Jesus, spoken to us by the Holy Spirit. The word of God is what has been handed down, or passed on to us. This is what we believe, and it is what saves us as in **James 1 (New International Version):**18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

And yes we are to correctly handle the word of truth as in **2 Timothy 2 (New International Version):**15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

We are not to blindly accept just what the Church teaches. We must hold men accountable for what they teach in the Church. We are not to place our faith in men, but the word of God for it is the truth and through belief in the truth we are saved as in **2 Thessalonians 2 (New International Version):**13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Our faith is not in man, nor is it in the Church. Our faith is in Jesus Christ and Him alone. We do not believe because it is the word of an apostle. We believe because we are convinced it is the word of God. And we don't believe because the apostle spoke a word to a bishop or presbyter, and that word has somehow been passed down through a line of successive bishops and presbyters. That is only tradition. We believe the message of the word of God in the twenty-seven books of the New Testament and the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. It is this word that leads us to Christ, the Son of the Living God, and it is He who saves us. It is this word that leads us to a real relationship with Him who is above all. He is my God, my Savior, and my Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourth, apostolic succession gives tacit apostolic authority to bishops. Irenaeus himself was a bishop. By asserting that the apostles delivered up their place of government to the bishops they committed the churches to, Irenaeus has implied without saying it directly that the bishops who are in apostolic succession now have the same authority as the apostles. If this were true, then why did Paul teach as in **1 Corinthians 12 (King James Version):**28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

If God had set bishops to be first in the Church, why does he say that God set some in the church, first apostles? Being an apostle is not up to man, or any human organization or institution. It is a ministry gift given by God alone as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Notice He gave each one grace according to the measure of Christ's gift to that individual. Again we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**8 Therefore it says, "when he ascended on high, he led captive a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." 9 (Now this *expression,* "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had

descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

The giving of these gifts occurred after He ascended on high and led the righteous dead into heaven. He gave the twelve to be apostles first as we read in **Luke 6 (NASB):**13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.

But after He ascended, he gave more gifts as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**11 And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

These gifts are given until we all attain the unity of the faith, of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. We are not there yet. We still need these gifts to function in their place in the body of Christ.

When the ministry gifts are allowed their proper place in the Church, we will see the following results as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Fifth, apostolic succession is not supported by the Scriptures. There is no place in the Scriptures where it distinctly says that the apostles delivered their own place of government to the bishops they committed the churches to. Rather, the Scriptures support the individuality of every believer in Christ, and the possession of a measure of grace to fulfill a specific function in the body of Christ. When believers are allowed to take their God given place in the body of Christ, according to the measure of grace God has given each one, the body will grow to the measure of the stature of Christ.

Because of Irenaeus' assertion that the bishops have received the apostles' place of government, he has given himself the authority of an apostle. Whether he intended this or not, and whether he actually had the apostolic gift, God only knows. He certainly has defended the Church against the Gnostic heresy. But because of his allegiance to the tradition of the Church in his day, and specifically to the tradition of apostolic succession, it is certain that he did not reach the full potential of his gifting. Irenaeus set the Church on a course that will not be corrected until the time of the Reformation in the 1500s. And even in our day, the Church must complete the recovery which the Reformation only started.

Chapter 21: The Church

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXIII

Now Irenaeus started off by saying that, "True knowledge is [that which consists in] the doctrine of the apostles." He contrasts true knowledge with knowledge which is not true as Paul does in **1 Timothy 6 (NASB):**20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly *and* empty chatter *and* the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"— 21 which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.

Now when Irenaeus says that true knowledge is "the distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ according to the successions of the bishops, by which they have handed down that Church which exists in every place, and has come even unto us," it is clear that he is unquestioningly defending the Church as it existed in his time. To say this about the Church in apostolic succession is to say that everything they do presently in the time of Irenaeus has been handed down by the apostle's teaching, and is therefore right and in accordance with true knowledge. Irenaeus believed that a "certain gift of truth" had been passed down through the succession of the bishops, as we saw in **Chapter 20: Apostolic Succession**, under the heading **Book 4: Chapter XXVI**.

Apparently Irenaeus believed this to be true, regardless of the obedience of the bishops to the word of God. Irenaeus simply believed that apostolic succession is the mark of the true Church.

Irenaeus also maintains that the fidelity of each Church is "being guarded and preserved without any forging of Scriptures, by a very complete system of doctrine, and neither receiving addition nor [suffering] curtailment [in the truths which she believes]."

In the context of his writing, which was against Gnostic doctrines, Irenaeus is overstating his case for the purpose of defending the Church. Irenaeus wishes to exclude any and all of the Gnostic writings, which were error and heresy, just as he affirms. While it is true that the Church possessed all of the New Testament, which would encompass the entire teaching of the apostles, this did not mean that the bishops and presbyters understood everything it contained. In fact, it is quite evident by Irenaeus' writing that the Church did not completely understand all of the truth that they possessed in the New Testament. The Church in Irenaeus' time had fallen into legalism as we shall see in **Chapter 24: The Law**. There was also an adjunct order of priesthood which we will look at in **Chapter 23: The Priesthood**, which would soon take over the ministry of the Church. It is quite evident that the early church did not retain a lot of the apostolic doctrine though they possessed all of their writings that God in His providence has given us as His word.

It is the adherence to the apostolic doctrine, that is, adherence to the word of God, that keeps one safe and in the will of the Lord, and not just the possession of it. Irenaeus does not make this clear in his writing. Israel possessed the oracles of God as Paul says in **Romans 3 (NASB):**1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. 3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? 4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written, "that you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged."

Just possessing the word of God, that is, the oracles of God, did not keep Israel from going astray. It was through keeping the word of God that they continued in God's blessing. The Lord counseled Joshua to meditate on it day and night so that he would be careful to do all of it as in **Joshua 1 (NASB):**9 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Joshua did not have a gift of truth handed down to him from Moses. Joshua had to do what we all are also encouraged to do, and that is to fill ourselves with the word of God as in **Colossians 3 (NASB):**16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Jesus Himself said we must continue in His word to be His disciples as in **John 8 (NASB):**31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Irenaeus also says that true knowledge is "reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy." In **Chapter 5: His Reliance on the Scriptures**, under the heading **Book 4: Chapter XXXII**, paragraph one, Irenaeus gives more meaning to these words as he says, "And then shall every word also seem consistent to him, if he for his part diligently read the Scriptures in company with those who are presbyters in the Church, among whom is the apostolic doctrine, as I have pointed out." It seems that Irenaeus felt it was unsafe for anyone who was not a presbyter to even read the word of God on their own without the company of those who were "presbyters in the Church, among whom is the apostolic doctrine."

Irenaues makes the believer dependent on a presbyter for knowledge of the Scriptures. However, the apostle John wrote the following to all believers in **1 John 2 (NASB):**27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

This does not mean that we should not receive teaching from a teacher who knows the Scriptures. This just means that all believers have the anointing of the Holy Spirit within them, and are able thereby to discern truth from a lie. This takes practice as the writer of Hebrews says in **Hebrews 5 (NASB):**14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Before we get the solid food we must have the milk. It is a good idea then to receive teaching from the Scriptures from a presbyter, or other mature believer, who can guide us until we are able to digest the meat of the Scriptures. But just reading the Scriptures, or hearing the Scripture read to us, is getting the milk and prepares us for the meat.

Irenaeus says finally that true knowledge is "the pre-eminent gift of love, which is more precious than knowledge, more glorious than prophecy, and which excels all the other gifts [of God]." Irenaeus refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):**8 I Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of* prophecy, they will be done away; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away.

And **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):**13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

This is why love exceeds knowledge as in **Ephesians 3 (NASB):**19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

And it is true that without love, we are nothing as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):**2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

However, love is not knowledge. Love is a fruit of the Spirit just as faith is as in **Galatians 5 (NASB):**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

In paragraph nine, Irenaeus says that "the Church does in every place, because of that love which she cherishes towards God, send forward, throughout all time, a multitude of martyrs to the Father." Noted historian Philip P. Schaff says, "The persecutions of Christianity during the first three centuries appear like a long tragedy: first, foreboding signs; then a succession of bloody assaults of heathenism upon the religion of the cross; amidst the dark scenes of fiendish hatred and cruelty the bright exhibitions of suffering virtue; now and then a short pause; at last a fearful and desperate struggle of the old pagan empire for life and death, ending in the abiding victory of the Christian religion. Thus this bloody baptism of the church resulted in the birth of a Christian world. It was a repetition and prolongation of the crucifixion, but followed by a resurrection." **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter II, page 32, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff summarizes as he says, "Finally, while the Christian religion has at all times suffered more or less persecution, bloody or unbloody, from the ungodly world, and always had its witnesses ready for any sacrifice; yet at no period since the first three centuries was the whole church denied the right of a peaceful legal existence, and the profession of Christianity itself universally declared and punished as a political crime. Before Constantine the Christians were a helpless and proscribed minority in an essentially heathen world, and under a heathen government. Then they died not simply for particular doctrines, but for the facts of Christianity. Then it was a conflict, not for a denomination or sect, but for Christianity itself. The importance of ancient martyrdom does not rest so much on the number of victims and the cruelty of their sufferings as on the great antithesis and the ultimate result in saving the Christian religion for all time to come. Hence the first three centuries are the classical period of heathen persecution and of Christian martyrdom. The martyrs and confessors of the ante-Nicene age suffered for the common cause of all Christian denominations and sects, and hence are justly held in reverence and gratitude by all." **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter II, page 80, Philip P. Schaff.**

Irenaeus himself was personally acquainted with persecution. Schaff states that there were "bloody persecutions under the Antonines, which raged in Asia Minor, and caused the death of Polycarp (155)." **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter X, page 418, Philip P. Schaff.** These events would have been during Irenaeus' lifetime. Schaff also states that, "The Gallic Christians, then severely tried by persecution, took a conciliatory posture, and sympathized at least with the moral earnestness, the enthusiasm for martyrdom, and the chiliastic hopes of the Montanists. They sent their presbyter (afterwards bishop) Irenaeus to Eleutherus in Rome to intercede in their behalf." **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter X, page 419-20, Philip P. Schaff.** So Irenaeus could speak from personal experience about martyrdom.

There is no doubt that the martyrdom of these Christians was of inestimable value to the Church. And all Christians are deeply indebted to them. Their martyrdom showed their integrity and their deep conviction of the truth, not only of the "facts of Christianity," but also of the Gospel message itself.

Commentary Summary: The Church

Irenaeus' goal in his writing is to try to show the identity of the true Church in order to differentiate it from any other religious entity. Irenaeus was desperate in his effort to defend the Church against the Gnostic teachings, which were threatening the very existence of the Church as Irenaeus knew it. He most probably grew up in the Church and received his faith from the Church. As no one else before him, he gives the Church a corporate identity. He exaggerates the unity of the Church in order to unite and strengthen the Church against the Gnostic peril, which he saw as immanent. But Irenaeus idealizes the Church in order to unite the Church. For example, the "preaching of the Church" was not "everywhere consistent" as Irenaeus asserts in **Book 3: Chapter XXIV, paragraph one**. One only has to refer to the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD to understand that there were disagreements, disputes, and debates between churches of different regions. These may not have been known to exist in Irenaeus' time, but certainly they were brewing. The historian, Philip Schaff, says that the Council of Nicaea "was called by Constantine the Great, for the settlement of the Arian controversy." **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter V, page 349, Philip P. Schaff.** Schaff also states that "in the year 325, the twentieth of his reign (therefore the festive vicennalia), the emperor summoned the bishops of the empire by a letter of invitation, putting at their service the public conveyances, and liberally defraying from the public treasury the expenses of their residence in Nicaea and of their return. Each bishop was to bring with him two presbyters and three servants. They travelled partly in the public post carriages, partly on horses, mules, or asses, partly on foot. Many came to bring their private disputes before the emperor, who caused all their papers, without reading them, to be burned, and exhorted the parties to reconciliation and harmony." **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 623, Philip P. Schaff.**

Not only so, but Schaff also records the address of the emperor which is telling as to why the emperor called this council. Schaff states, "After a brief salutatory address from the bishop on the right of the emperor, by which we are most probably to understand Eusebius of Caesarea, the emperor himself delivered with a gentle voice in the official Latin tongue the opening address, which was immediately after translated into Greek, and runs thus:

"It was my highest wish, my friends, that I might be permitted to enjoy your assembly. I must thank God that, in addition to all other blessings, he has shown me this highest one of all: to see you all gathered here in harmony and with one mind. May no malicious enemy rob us of this happiness, and after the tyranny of the enemy of Christ [Licinius and his army] is conquered by the help of the Redeemer, the wicked demon shall not persecute the divine law with new blasphemies. Discord in the church I consider more fearful and painful than any other war. As soon as I by the help of God had overcome my enemies, I believed that nothing more was now necessary than to give thanks to God in common joy with those whom I had liberated. But when I heard of your division, I was convinced that this matter should by no means be neglected, and in the desire to assist by my service, I have summoned you without delay. I shall, however, feel my desire fulfilled only when I see the minds of all united in that peaceful harmony which you, as the anointed of God, must preach to others. Delay not therefore, my friends, delay not, servants of God; put away all causes of strife, and loose all knots of discord by the laws of peace. Thus shall you accomplish the work most pleasing to God, and confer upon me, your fellow servant, an exceeding great joy."

After this address he gave way to the (ecclesiastical) presidents of the council and the business began. The emperor, however, constantly, took an active part, and exercised a considerable influence." **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 625-6, Philip P. Schaff.**

Constantine, in his address, noted that there was discord and division in the Church. The controversy was brought about because of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria after 313, who "taught that Christ, while he was indeed the creator of the world, was himself a creature of God, therefore not truly divine." **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 620, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff describes the discord as he states, "The contest between these two views broke out about the year 318 or 320. Arius and his followers, for their denial of the true deity of Christ, were deposed and excommunicated by a council of a hundred Egyptian and Libyan bishops at Alexandria in 321. In spite of this he continued to hold religious assemblies of his numerous adherents, and when driven from Alexandria,

agitated his doctrine in Palestine and Nicomedia, and diffused it in an entertaining work, half poetry, half prose: The Banquet (Θάλεια), of which a few fragments are preserved in Athanasius. Several bishops, especially Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea, who either shared his view or at least considered it innocent, defended him. Alexander issued a number of circular letters to all the bishops against the apostates and Exukontians. Bishop rose against bishop, and province against province. The controversy soon involved, through the importance of the subject and the zeal of the parties, the entire church, and transformed the whole Christian East into a theological battle-field. **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 620-21, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff again states, "Arius himself traced his doctrine to Lucian of Antioch, who advocated the heretical views of Paul of Samosata on the Trinity, and was for a time excommunicated, but afterwards rose to great consideration, and died a martyr under Maximinus." **History of the Christian Church, Volume III, Chapter IX, page 620, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff tells us that the antitrinitarian controversy "filled the whole third century. These Antitrinitarians are commonly called Monarchians from (μοναρχία) or Unitarians, on account of the stress they laid upon the numerical, personal unity of the Godhead."

Schaff adds, "But we must carefully distinguish among them two opposite classes: the rationalistic or dynamic Monarchians, who denied the divinity of Christ, or explained it as a mere "power" (δύναμις) and the patripassian or modalistic Monarchians, who identified the Son with the Father, and admitted at most only a modal trinity, that is a threefold mode of revelation, but not a tripersonality." **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter XII, page 572, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff then states that "Paul of Samosota, from 260 bishop of Antioch, and at the same time a high civil officer, is the most famous of these rationalistic Unitarians, and contaminated one of the first apostolic churches with his heresy. He denied the personality of the Logos and of the Holy Spirit, and considered them merely powers of God, like reason and mind in man; but granted that the Logos dwelt in Christ in larger measure than in any former messenger of God, and taught, like the Socinians in later times, a gradual elevation of Christ, determined by his own moral development, to divine dignity. He admitted that Christ remained free from sin, conquered the sin of our forefathers, and then became the Saviour of the race. To introduce his Christology into the mind of the people, he undertook to alter the church hymns, but was shrewd enough to accommodate himself to the orthodox formulas, calling Christ, for example, "God from the Virgin," and ascribing to him even homo-ousia with the Father, but of course in his own sense." **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter XII, page 575, Philip P. Schaff.**

Now, that the Church at Antioch had an established succession from the apostles is well documented by the Scriptures as in **Acts 11 (NASB):**19 So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and *began* speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. 22 The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. 23 Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and *began* to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain *true* to the Lord; 24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. 25 And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Paul the apostle was sent out by the Holy Spirit from the church at Antioch with Baranabas on their first missionary journey as in **Acts 13 (NASB):**1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there,* prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Schaff continues in his narrative of Paul of Samasota as he says, "The bishops under him

in Syria accused him not only of heresy but also of extreme vanity, arrogance, pompousness, avarice, and undue concern with secular business; and at a third synod held in Antioch A.D. 269 or 268, they pronounced his deposition. The number of bishops present is variously reported (70, 80, 180). Dominus was appointed successor. The result was communicated to the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, and to all the churches. But as Paul was favored by the queen Zenobia of Palmyra, the deposition could not be executed till after her subjection by the emperor Aurelian in 272, and after consultation with the Italian bishops**." History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter XII, page 576, Philip P. Schaff.**

Schaff concludes by saying, "His overthrow decided the fall of the Monarchians; though they still appear at the end of the fourth century as condemned heretics, under the name of Samosatians, Paulianists, and Sabellians." **History of the Christian Church, Volume II, Chapter XII, page 576, Philip P. Schaff.**

Being a bishop of a church planted by the apostles did not guarantee fidelity to the word of God as history proves in the case of Paul of Samosota, bishop of Antioch. This was about sixty years after Irenaeus death. In this case, Irenaeus' prophecy, which we covered in **Chapter 20: Apostolic Succession**, under the heading **Book 3: Chapter III**, paragraph one, has come true, as he said that the apostles "were desirous" that the men they appointed as overseers "should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity."

Evidently a bishop could be deposed as was the case of Paul of Samosota. However, his deposition did not become final until the queen Zenobia of Palmyra was brought under subjection by the emperor Aurelian in 272. And the council of Nicaea in 325 convened over 120 years after Irenaeus' death over the heresy of Arius who is traced to Lucian of Antioch, and ultimately to Paul of Samosata. At the time of the council, the heresy was said to involve the whole Church. We may well ask why the "ancient constitution" of the Church didn't protect Antioch from this heresy? Surely the Church at Antioch was a "distinctive manifestation of the body of Christ" at one time. And again, did the "very complete system of doctrine" not guard and preserve the Church at Antioch? It there was the "reading [the word of God] without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exposition in harmony with the Scriptures, both without danger and without blasphemy," why did the Church fall into heresy with the bishop, Paul of Samosota? None of these things apparently kept the bishop in the church at Antioch, which the apostles had planted, from going astray into error.

History therefore shows us that apostolic succession guarantees the Church nothing. Neither the possession of apostolic doctrine, or the succession of the bishops guaranteed anything in regards to what was taught in a church planted by an apostle. Mere possession of the apostolic writings does not mean an understanding of them. Understanding the Scriptures does not come by laying on of hands. Understanding the Scriptures is given as a "certain gift of truth." The understanding of the Scriptures comes when the Holy Spirit illumines our mind as we read or study the Scriptures. As we are obedient to what we have heard from the Lord, He reveals more through this same process. In this way, we grow in grace and knowledge. If we do not walk in the light in this way, we will remain spiritual babies.

Chapter 22: Communion

Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter II

Irenaeus seems to have three agendas in his writing here.

1) The first was to destroy the Gnostic argument that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh.
2) The second was to destroy the Gnostic argument that the flesh could not be raised in a resurrection.
3) The third was to uphold the teaching of the Church of his day.

The Lord Jesus did become "an actual man, consisting of flesh, and nerves, and bones," just as Irenaeus says. However, he seems to want to prove that the resurrection is true because of the invocation of the word of God on the bread and the wine making the Eucharist, which is spiritual nourishment that gives the eternal life of Christ to our bodies since we are members of His body. Paul does not make his argument in this fashion. When Paul argues for the resurrection, he explains what is of first importance as in **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB):**3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. 11 Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Believing the Gospel is what saves as John says in **1 John 5 (NASB):**1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

John explains further that the one who has faith in Jesus Christ overcomes the world as in **1 John 5 (NASB):**4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

John goes on to say that the one who has the Son has eternal life as in **1 John 5 (NASB):**9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. 10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. 11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

John tells us the reason he is writing in **1 John 5 (NASB):**13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

We do not receive eternal life by ingesting the bread and wine of the Communion or Eucharist meal. We already have eternal life because of our faith in Jesus Christ. We do not sustain the eternal life, which we have by faith in Him, by partaking of the Eucharist. When we are born again, we are born of the Spirit. It is not a gradual thing or something we have to work up to, to be good enough to do. The moment we believe, we are saved. And that saving faith is the gift of God as Paul says in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

This is what happened to Lydia in **Acts 16 (NASB):**14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

The Lord opens our hearts to believe. We may not know that this has happened until we receive teaching in the word of God. But our salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit from start to finish. Irenaeus confuses the work of the Spirit of God with the ritual practice of the Eucharist by implying that we are saved by ingesting the bread and wine into our physical bodies as if that is what gave our bodies eternal life and the hope of the resurrection. Irenaeus compares the "cutting from the vine planted in the ground" and the "corn of wheat falling into the earth," both rising in their season "with manifold increase by the Spirit of God," to "our bodies, being nourished by" the "Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ." At death he says that our bodies, after being "deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God, even the Father, who freely gives to this mortal immortality, and to this corruptible incorruption."

However, Paul is telling us what type of body will be raised by the analogy of the seed falling into the ground and changing into the body of a beautiful plant. Irenaeus makes the Eucharist a kind of seed with eternal life in it. His goals, or agendas, are good and worthy. However, his argument takes the Scriptures slightly out of context. We must do as Paul encouraged Timothy in **1 Timothy 4 (NASB):**16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and

for those who hear you.

Again we will summarize Irenaeus' thinking about the Eucharist at the end of this section and also provide a final commentary.

Commentary Summary: Communion

If we were to summarize Irenaeus' thoughts on Communion, or the Eucharist as he called it, we could list the following points:

1. Irenaeus believed that sacrifice was secondary to obeying the voice of the Lord as in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 1.** where he says, "For when He perceived them neglecting righteousness, and abstaining from the love of God, and imagining that God was to be propitiated by sacrifices and the other typical observances, Samuel did even thus speak to them: "God does not desire whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but He will have His voice to be hearkened to. Behold, a ready obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." He is referring to 1 Samuel 15:22. In addition, Irenaeus quotes David whose ears the Lord opened to hear His voice as in **Psalm 40 (NASB):**6 Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; Burnt offering and sin offering You have not required.

   Comment: Yes, obeying the voice of the Lord is primary. When God says to do sacrifice, as He did by the law, then we sacrifice accordingly, in obedience to His voice. But His delight is in a ready obedience as Irenaeus says.

2. Irenaeus quotes the Psalms in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 1,** to show that the Lord was not pleased with a sacrifice alone but with a broken and contrite heart as he quotes **Psalm 51 (NASB):**16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering**.** 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

   Comment: Yes, God does delight in a broken spirit and a contrite heart. But again, He does not require sacrifice for sin from us anymore. We will see why this is so after these points.

3. Irenaeus believed that the sacrifice alone did not justify a man or woman, nor did it bring him or her nigh to God. A sacrifice must be offered purely, without sin in the heart of the one who offers, for it to propitiate God and be accepted by Him and thus justify the one who offers it as in **Book 4: Chapter XVII**, **paragraph 1**, where he says, "Then, lest it might be supposed that He refused these things in His anger, He continues, giving him (man) counsel: "Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the Most High; and call upon Me in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me;" rejecting, indeed, those things by which sinners imagined they could propitiate God, and showing that He does Himself stand in need of nothing; but He exhorts and advises them to those things by which man is justified and draws nigh to God." He is referring to **Psalm 51 (NASB):**14 "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High; 15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me."

   Comment: Irenaeus does not understand that our sacrifices don't justify us at all, either under the Old Covenant or under the New Covenant. They only remind us of the one sacrifice Christ made on the cross, which is the only sacrifice that can justify us. And the Scriptures say that we are justified when we place our faith in His sacrifice as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

4. Again Irenaeus believed that what pertained to salvation were acts of compassion done from a sinless life as he says in the same paragraph, **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 1,** "And when He had repudiated holocausts, and sacrifices, and oblations, as likewise the new moons, and the sabbaths, and the festivals, and all the rest of the services accompanying these, He continues, exhorting them to what pertained to salvation: "Wash you, make you clean, take away wickedness from your hearts from before mine eyes: cease from your evil ways, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; and come, let us reason together, saith the Lord."

   Comment: Irenaeus does not see that there is no more need for a sacrifice for sin. Under the law, the sacrifices pointed to the need for an atonement, but they did not actually atone for anything. They only covered sins. The purpose of the law was to make us aware of sin, and the need for an atonement that would not just cover sin but take it away. Our focus must be on Christ and what He has done for us.

5. Then Irenaeus also believed that only by true sacrifices was God appeased, and by offering them, He gave them life as a consequence as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 2**, "For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him. As He elsewhere declares: "The sacrifice to God is an afflicted heart: a sweet savour to God is a heart glorifying Him who formed it."

   Comment: We don't appease God with our sacrifices, no matter how pure. There is nothing we can do to fix our sin problem except to receive what Christ has done for us. We receive life when we accept His sacrifice for sin for us which, again, was once and for all time.

6. Irenaeus called the Eucharist the "new oblation of the new covenant" which the Church received from the apostles as in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 5,** where he says, "Again, giving directions to His disciples to offer to God the first-fruits of His own, created things—not as if He stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful—He took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, "This is My body." And the cup likewise, which is part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to Him who gives us as the means of subsistence the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament, concerning which Malachi, among the twelve prophets, thus spoke beforehand." Irenaeus is referring to the prophecy in Malachi that says that a pure sacrifice would be offered by the Gentiles as in **Malachi 1 (King James Version):**11 **"**For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down [of the same], My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice for great is My name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Omnipotent."

   Irenaeus believed that the Eucharist fulfilled this prophecy.

   Comment: We note that Irenaeus was not the first to refer to this passage in Malachi as we shall soon see.

7. Irenaeus believed that there were sacrifices to be made by the people under the first covenant and so in the Church there are sacrifices. The class of oblations has not changed. Only the type or species of sacrifice has changed as he said in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 2**, "And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians]. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church: but the species alone has been changed, inasmuch as the offering is now made, not by slaves, but by freemen."

Comment: The class of oblations most certainly has changed. God does not require sacrifices for sin from us anymore because He has provided the one sacrifice for us that was for all time.

8. Irenaeus believed that the one offering a sacrifice with a pure conscience cleansed or sanctified the offering and moved God to accept his sacrifice as in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 3,** where he says, **"**Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man, for God stands in no need of sacrifice; but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as from a friend."

   Comment: We are not saved by sanctifying ourselves, whether by making sacrifice with a pure conscience or making a sacrifice at all. We are saved by faith in Christ's one sacrifice which sanctifies us and is final as in **1 Corinthians 1 (NASB):**30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."
   We cannot add to what God has already done for us through Christ, His Son.

9. Irenaeus believed that the Church alone offered a pure oblation or sacrifice as opposed to any other group such as the Jews or the heretics as in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 4**, where he says, "Inasmuch, then, as the Church offers with single-mindedness, her gift is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God. As Paul also says to the Philippians, "I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things that were sent from you, the odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, pleasing to God." For it behoves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things. And the Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with giving of thanks, [the things taken] from His creation. But the Jews do not offer thus: for their hands are full of blood; for they have not received the Word, through whom it is offered to God."

   Comment: Inasmuch as we are members of His body, we can offer up spiritual sacrifices that are pleasing to God because of our faith in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. These sacrifices do not atone for sin. We do not rely on our own purity to be acceptable to God, but upon His sacrifice that makes us holy.

10. Irenaeus states that it is the invocation of God which changes the bread and wine into a heavenly reality as in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, "For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity."

    Comment: Irenaeus seems to believe that it is by receiving the Eucharist that we receive eternal life. Partaking of the Eucharist is only an evidence of our faith. It does not save us or give us eternal life or remission of sins. The Eucharist is only a remembrance of what we could not do for ourselves, but what God has done for us through Jesus.

11. Irenaeus believed that receiving the Eucharist gives us spiritual life, again referring to **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, as he says, "…so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity." Also in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 2**, "For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him. And in **Fragment XXXVII**, he says, "And then, when we have perfected the oblation, we invoke the Holy

Spirit, that He may exhibit this sacrifice, both the bread the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ, in order that the receivers of these antitypes may obtain remission of sins and life eternal."

Comment: If this were true, what would be the purpose of the new birth? It is the Spirit that gives us life. The flesh profits nothing.

12. Irenaeus believed that the Eucharist should be offered frequently and without intermission as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII**, **paragraph 6**, "As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these [services], yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of oblations, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission.

Comment: This statement can only lead the Church into legalism and ritualistic practices.

13. Irenaeus believed that the wine and bread becomes the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, when they receive the word of God as in **Book 5 Chapter II, paragraph 3**, where he says "When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made…." And again in the same paragraph he states that the Eucharist is "the body and blood of Christ" when he says, "And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ."

Comment: The bread and the wine do not become the body and blood of Christ at the invocation of the Holy Spirit, or when they receive the word of God, or at any other time. Jesus Christ offered His body and blood as a sacrifice for our sins once and for all. There is no need to repeat this sacrifice. His was a perfect sacrifice as Peter says in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):**17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth;* 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. 20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

The lamb was unblemished and spotless, that is, without sin. His was a perfect sacrifice.

14. Irenaeus believed that the oblation of the Eucharist was not a carnal one but spiritual as in **Fragment XXXVII** where he says, "And therefore the oblation of the Eucharist is not a carnal one, but a spiritual; and in this respect it is pure." By spiritual and not carnal Irenaeus meant that the Eucharist is not a sacrifice of an animal with blood dripping from the altar. It is a sacrifice according to the Spirit for we worship God in Spirit and in truth as in **John 4 (NASB):**24 God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Much like the living sacrifice of our bodies and the sacrifice of the praise of our lips that we are to offer, Irenaeus believes the Eucharist is a sacrifice of this genre, that is, a spiritual sacrifice.

Comment: Irenaeus did also acknowledge in **Fragment XXXVII** that there were other sacrifices under the new covenant such as the incense of the prayers of the saints as in **Revelation 5 (NASB):**8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

He also refers to **Romans 12 (NASB):**1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.

And **Hebrews 13 (NASB):**15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. 16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

But this was only to support his contention that the Eucharist was such a sacrifice, that is, an example of worship in spirit and in truth.

In summary, Irenaeus believed that God does not need our sacrifices but enjoined the observance of them for man's sake. Man must have the opportunity to be fruitful and grateful to God. Also, sacrifice is secondary to obeying the voice of the Lord. And sacrifices when they are made must be done with a broken heart and a contrite spirit to please the Lord. A pure conscience and a clean heart is required for the offering to be sanctified and thus for God to accept the offering. And obedience in the matters of relieving the oppressed, and caring for the fatherless and the widow is also required for God to be propitiated and appeased and the offerer to be justified and able to draw nigh to God.

With this understanding about sacrifice, Irenaeus prepares us for his belief that the Church has received from the apostles the new oblation, "For it behoves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things," Irenaeus says in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII**, **paragraph 4**. The Eucharist meal was then a fulfillment of the prophecy in Malachi 1:11. Therefore, he says, it is the "new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world," in **Book 4: Chapter XVII**, **paragraph 5**. Irenaeus speaks of the Eucharist meal as a sacrifice on this basis. And he says it is a sacrifice of the same class as those in the Old Testament, though not of the same species. The only difference, he says, is that the Eucharist is offered by freemen as opposed to those who offered under the law in the Old Testament. The elements of this new oblation are the bread and the wine which, when the invocation of the word of God is made, become the body and blood of Christ, according to Irenaeus. The bread is therefore no longer common bread but consists "of two realities, earthly and heavenly." Since then the bread and wine consist of a heavenly reality in the Eucharist, they are the "means of subsistence" of our bodies which are then incorruptible "when they receive the Eucharist." Irenaeus believed that the "flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood," partakes of life and has "the hope of the resurrection to eternity." Irenaeus says also that the oblations of the New Testament "are not according to the law, the handwriting of which the Lord took away from the midst by cancelling it," as he quotes from **Colossians 2 (NASB):**13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

The oblations of the New Testament are spiritual sacrifices and not carnal ones according to Irenaeus. Therefore nothing is physically killed in sacrifice. Irenaeus taught that those who receive the Eucharist receive eternal life and remission of sins. This is in accordance with his thinking about sacrifice which he believes the Eucharist meal to be. When it is offered with a clean heart and purely, the offering, or oblation or sacrifice, of the Eucharist justifies the one who receives it. This is the gist of Irenaeus' teaching on the Eucharist.

There is some justification for Irenaeus' thinking that the Eucharist meal is a sacrifice for Malachi 1: 11 does mention the word Gentiles and the word sacrifice together. The other less obvious reason, which Irenaeus does not mention, is that it mentions the table of the Lord as in **Malachi 1 (NASB):**6 "'A son honors *his* father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?' says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, 'How have we despised Your name?' 7 *You* are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled You?' In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.' 8 But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts. 9 "But now will you not entreat God's

favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts. 10 "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle *fire on* My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you. 11 For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name *will be* great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering *that is* pure; for My name *will be* great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts.

It is particularly the last verse that caught Irenaeus' attention, and not only the attention of Irenaeus but Justin Martyr, who lived between 110 and 165 AD and wrote before Irenaeus. Here is Justin's forty-first chapter in his book, **Dialogue with Trypho**.

Chapter XLI.—The oblation of fine flour was a figure of the Eucharist.

"And the offering of fine flour, sirs," I said, "which was prescribed to be presented on behalf of those purified from leprosy, was a type of the bread of the Eucharist, the celebration of which our Lord Jesus Christ prescribed, in remembrance of the suffering which He endured on behalf of those who are purified in soul from all iniquity, in order that we may at the same time thank God for having created the world, with all things therein, for the sake of man, and for delivering us from the evil in which we were, and for utterly overthrowing 2058 Literally, "overthrowing with a perfect overthrow." principalities and powers by Him who suffered according to His will. Hence God speaks by the mouth of Malachi, one of the twelve [prophets], as I said before, 2059 Chap. xxviii. about the sacrifices at that time presented by you: 'I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord; and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands: for, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, My name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure offering: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord: but ye profane it.' 2060 Mal. i. 10–12. [So] He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices to Him, i.e., the bread of the Eucharist, and also the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify His name, and that you profane [it]. The command of circumcision, again, bidding [them] always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath, [namely through] our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first 2061 Or, "being the first." of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, according to the number of all the days of the cycle, and [yet] remains the first.

So **w**e see then that this belief that the Eucharist was a sacrifice did not start with Irenaeus. Now, in Malachi's prophecy the Jews, that is Israel, are being rebuked for profaning the table of the Lord. At that time, the altar, also called the table of the Lord, was where sacrifices and offerings were offered. Irenaeus, and Justin, saw this prophecy's fulfillment in the Church. The expression, "the table of the Lord," is also found in the New Testament and it is in reference to the Eucharist meal as we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV**):14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. 18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

Irenaeus mentions the word altar in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 1**. Irenaeus begins this paragraph by writing, "The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him." Irenaeus then states, "For by the gift both honour and affection are shown forth towards the King; and the Lord, wishing us to offer it in all simplicity and innocence, did express Himself thus: "Therefore, when thou offerest thy gift upon the altar,

and shalt remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then return and offer thy gift," referring to Matthew 5:23-24. Irenaeus reflects on the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:23-24 as if they were direct instructions from Him about how to offer the Eucharist meal, or rather as he says, the "sacrifice" of the Eucharist. Jesus spoke as in **Matthew 5 (KJV):**23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;
24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Jesus was speaking to the Jews who lived under the law as He Himself did. He is simply teaching us that reconciliation with our brother was necessary in order for any sacrifices and offerings to be accepted by God. In other words, if we are to have fellowship with our Heavenly Father, we must first be reconciled to our brother. Jesus did not mention the Eucharist here, and He is addressing Jews who were still under the Old Covenant. The Jews in Jesus' time had a temple as well as an altar. Jesus does not ask us to build a temple and an altar again. We are now to present ourselves as a temple where we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice.

Irenaeus and Justin seem to have connected these two passages, Malachi 1:1-11 and 1 Corinthians 10:14-22, and concluded that there is one table of the Lord and one altar, and so the idea of sacrifice became fundamental in Irenaeus' thinking about the Eucharist meal.

Also, Irenaeus says that we must have something to offer so that we might be "neither unfruitful nor ungrateful." This is the basis of his statement in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 5**, where he says that Jesus "taught the new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world." This is the crux of his teaching on the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a new oblation, that is, a new offering fulfilling the requirement that we not come empty handed but have something to offer to the Lord. According to Irenaeus, our offering is different from the Old Testament offerings only in that free men perform it, while those under the law were slaves to the law. And in Irenaeus' teaching, the Eucharist meal is a spiritual sacrifice, and thus a pure sacrifice, offered by the Church through Jesus Christ to God. We might well ask what else could the offering of the body and blood of Jesus Christ be but a pure sacrifice?

The Scriptures do say that the Church is composed of living stones which are all who believe in Jesus Christ. We are said to be a spiritual house for a royal priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices as we read in **1 Peter 2 (NASB):**5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Peter notes that Jesus Christ is the precious corner stone of this spiritual house, and that we believers are a royal priesthood who offer up spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. What these spiritual sacrifices are, Peter does not say, but we know from the other Scriptures in the New Testament previously mentioned that they include the offering of our bodies as a living sacrifice, the sacrifice of praise which is the fruit of our lips, doing good and sharing with others, and our prayers as in Romans 12:1,2, Hebrews 13:15,16, and Revelation 5:8. However, the Eucharist meal is never spoken of as a sacrifice, or an offering, or a new oblation in the New Testament. The offering of our bodies as a living sacrifice as Paul exhorts in Romans 12:1,2, could just as easily by itself fit the prophecy in Malachi 1:11. The way Irenaeus speaks of the Eucharist meal, Jesus is being sacrificed all over again every time it is celebrated, albeit in a spiritual sense. And we are being born again, and justified from our sins every time we receive it, according to Irenaeus' teaching. The bread is "no longer common bread" but has a heavenly reality after the invocation and the Eucharist is made, presumably by the words "This is my body," as Jesus spoke in Matthew 26:26. The bread and wine become the Eucharist, which is "the body and blood of Christ," Irenaeus says. And so, according to Irenaeus, we offer the sacrifice of Jesus' body and blood to the Father in purity of heart and conscience, and the Father accepts our offering and gives us eternal life and remission of sins every time we remember Him in this way. And he says that this offering must be done in the Church for the Church alone offers a pure offering through Jesus Christ to God in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 4.** So Irenaeus believed.

The New Testament teaches us that the Eucharist or Communion meal is not a sacrifice, but a remembrance of the greatest sacrifice of all time which Jesus Christ offered upon the cross for our sins. That this was a once for all sacrifice is stated by the writer of Hebrews in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

He has now accomplished eternal redemption for us once for all as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Jesus only suffered once for our sins as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

God does desire us to worship Him in Spirit and in truth just as Irenaeus testifies, referring to the apostle John in John 4:23. And as Irenaeus also said above, "God did not seek sacrifices and holocausts from them, but faith, and obedience, and righteousness, because of their salvation," so also He does not now seek offerings or sacrifices from us for sin for He has already offered His own body once and for all as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

We see by this Scripture that the class of oblations has indeed changed under the New Covenant. Jesus paid it all. Our redemption has been paid for by the only sacrifice that could accomplish our redemption. There is no work that we could do that would be good enough to do what Jesus already did for us. He died for our sins once and for all. Irenaeus only refers to the book of Hebrews about six times in all his writings, and none of the references relate to this subject. The case that is made in Hebrews is that God does not require any more offerings or sacrifices for sin. Our debt of sin has been paid. We now owe Him a debt of love. This will require sacrifice on our part. But our sacrifices do not pay any of our debt of sin. That has been paid by Jesus in full once and for all. Our sacrifices only remember, honor, and thank Him for what He did for us. And the Greek word εὐχαριστέω, pronounced eucharisteo, itself means to be grateful, feel thankful, or give thanks.

The fact is that the class of oblations in general has most certainly been set aside, for Jesus has fulfilled the law of sacrifice for sin forever. There has never been, nor will there ever be, a sacrifice that we could offer, or a work that we could do, that could atone for even one sin. That is why Jesus came. He did what we could not do for ourselves as it clearly says in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

And so there is no more offering for sins under the New Covenant. Jesus is now sitting down at the right hand of God waiting for His enemies to be made a footstool for His feet. He is not suffering any more, or being sacrificed again and again. The Old Testament sacrifices looked forward to what God would do when Jesus came. We now look back at what He has done for us. There is no longer any offering for sin.

So God has changed the method of dealing with sin. We are no longer to offer sacrifice to be cleansed of our sin, or for remission of sins, or to be justified as they were to do under the law. Now in the Church age we who have believed in Jesus Christ are already justified and have peace with God as we read in **Romans**

5 (KJV):1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

It is through Him that we are justified when we believe as we read in **Acts 13 (KJV):**38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Our justification has to do with our standing before God. It is in this sense also that we are sanctified as we see in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):**11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Jesus Christ's death on the cross was the true sacrifice for all time. Jesus dealt with sin as an issue. The remedy for sin is His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. The one who believes this has crossed over from death to life as Jesus said in **John 5 (KJV):**24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Partaking of the Eucharist does not do this for us. We partake of the Eucharist in order to celebrate what has already been done for us. Once we believe in Jesus Christ, we who were dead in sin are now born again and become children of God as John reveals in **John 1 (KJV):**12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The fact that, after we believe, we are now children of God is also pointed out by John again in **1 John 3 (KJV):**1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

It does not yet appear what we shall be. We are not perfect yet, and we still have the old Adamic nature in our flesh like our father Adam. But after we accept Christ and we are born again, we are born of the Spirit and have a new nature in our spirit that is sinless. In our flesh we still have the old Adamic nature but in our spirits when we are born again, we are created in righteousness and true holiness as we read again in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**20 But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

This is why we can say with Paul that we are a new creature in Christ as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):**17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Since we are a new creature in Christ, and since He has already offered the one and only sacrifice that is necessary for sin, we do not need to deal with our sin by offering up bulls and goats to gain acceptance with God. We simply confess our sins, on the basis of His shed blood, and as we do so He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):**9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus Christ the righteous, who is our advocate with the Father, is always there to make intercession for us as we see in **1 John 2 (KJV):**1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Notice John wrote to the children of God, as he says, my little children. We, as children of God, possess a new nature as we see in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):**4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Though we have escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust in our spirits, we still are in possession of the old Adamic nature in our flesh, and we still may sin. This is why we are told to put off the old man, and put on the new man as we saw previously in Ephesians 4:20-24. The way we put off the old man is to

confess our sins. Then the Lord is faithful to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In this way, He empowers us to live the new life He has placed inside us.

Irenaeus does not seem to know where to put this new life that God has given us when we have faith in His Son. He did not understand that we have a spirit of our own, as well as a soul, and that it was our spirit that was dead in sin and needed rebirth to have fellowship with God. Irenaeus seemed to think that man is only body and soul, and that therefore the Holy Spirit was born in us when we believed, and could leave us if we lived frivolously.

Jesus was teaching Jews who were under the law, and therefore told them to be obedient to God and keep the law. He had not died for sin yet, and so, while He was on earth, nothing had changed in regards to keeping the law. Everyone was still under the Old Covenant. But all of that was done away with after Jesus died on the cross. Jesus' priesthood is permanent as the writer of Hebrews tells us in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

As to Irenaeus' assertion that, when the bread and wine receive the word of God, they become the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, he is surely basing this claim on two passages in the Scriptures, though I cannot find reference to them in his writings. Nevertheless, the first passage is in chapter 6 of the Gospel of John. In this chapter, Jesus has just fed about 5000 men, not counting women and children, with five barley loaves and two fish. As Jesus perceives they are going to come and take Him by force and make Him King, He withdraws to a mountain alone. At evening the disciples got into a boat and left for Capernum. Jesus then walks on the water to where their boat was being held by a strong wind. He enters the boat and they arrive safely at the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The people who had eaten of His feast of barley loaves and fish came looking for Him wanting more loaves and fish. So Jesus speaks to them as we begin reading in **John 6 (KJV):**26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

In response to their question what they should do, Jesus tells them that the work of God is to believe in Him whom He has sent in **John 6 (NASB):**28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

The people then wanted a sign while totally missing the greatness of the miracle Jesus had just performed in feeding over 5000 men, women, and children. They wanted the manna from heaven like Moses gave their forefathers. But Jesus points them to the Father as the one who gave them the manna and who also gives the true bread from heaven for the life of the world. The people want this bread and are now panting for it. So Jesus tells them the way to get this bread. They must believe in Him, and they will have eternal life. Jesus tells them plainly that He is the bread of life as we read in **John 6 (KJV):**48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The people don't understand that Jesus worked a miracle in front of over 5000 people by the Holy Spirit. So Jesus slaps them in the face to wake them up. He tells them that He is the bread of heaven, and that it is His flesh which is the bread they must eat. The Jews grumble at this, but Jesus slaps them again as we read in **John 6 (KJV**):52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

The Jews who did not believe did not get it. They didn't want Spirit. They wanted flesh. So Jesus gave them what they wanted. And many of them choked on this statement, and no longer followed Him. But Jesus explained everything to His disciples as we read in **John 6 (KJV):**60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Jesus explained that His words were spirit and life, and that the flesh profits nothing. In other words, it's not about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, but about receiving the Spirit and life. Peter understood this as he says in **John 6 (KJV):**66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. 70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

It was Jesus' words that struck Peter. He heard the Spirit, and he knew Jesus was talking about life. And not just any old life, but eternal life. What does it take to get people's attention? Even one of the twelve was a devil. So Jesus was using figurative language of the kind used in His parables to get people's attention. But it is true that His body was given as a sacrifice for the sin of the world as Isaiah prophesied over six hundred years before in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):**1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?
2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The other passage that Irenaeus could be referring to in his writing is **1 Corinthians 11 (NASB):**27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

The words "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" must have struck Irenaeus with a more literal meaning. Paul had just finished giving us what he received from the Lord. That is, the instructions about the Eucharist meal as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in

remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Who then is the one who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, but the one who has unconfessed sin in his or her life, and is pretending to be in fellowship with the Lord. When we flaunt our sin in this way, we do not judge rightly the cost of our redemption which is the body and blood of Christ. And we place other members of the body of Christ in jeopardy of becoming entangled with our sin. This is why the judgment may be so severe resulting in sickness and sometimes in death for the one who was guilty of this as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

We are to examine ourselves, and confess our sins to the Lord before we eat the Lord's Supper. This examination is like the washing of our feet that Jesus referred to in **John 13 (KJV):**10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

We are washed when we believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confess Him as Lord. After this step of faith, we only need to wash our feet and we are clean. That is, we do not need to take a bath all over again. This is what Jesus was saying.

As to Irenaeus' assertion in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, that the bread is no longer common bread, but it now has both earthly and heavenly qualities when it becomes the Eucharist by the invocation of God, the idea here is that the Eucharist now contains spiritual life which is imparted to the receiver. And we note that Irenaeus uses the word "invocation" which refers to the pronouncement that "this is My body" and "this cup is the new covenant in My blood." Irenaeus describes this process as like the change in a seed planted in the ground, and that, when it has "decomposed," it then "rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God." So also then the bread and the wine are like the seed, that, when these elements receive the word of God, they become "the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ," by the Spirit of God. And so we are led to believe that the Eucharist gives us spiritual life when we receive it. Irenaeus believed that the Eucharist gave spiritual life to our mortal bodies, and therefore made it possible for us to be resurrected. Again, Irenaeus did not understand that man has a spirit. Before we come to Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. This is a result of the fall of Adam, as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The day Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he died spiritually, and eventually physically as well. After we have faith in Christ, we are born again, and we have new life in our spirit. That is, we have been made alive in our spirit, and now we have relationship with God, our Father, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):**12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This happens to those who believe in His name. Irenaeus leads us to believe that the Eucharist is somehow the sustenance of this new life we received when we were born again. We will discuss this in a moment.

As to Irenaeus' assertion that the ones who receive the Eucharist receive spiritual life so that their bodies are "no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity," the Scripture says that the one who believes in Jesus Christ is born again. It is the Spirit, that is, the Holy Spirit, that gives us life as we read in **John 3 (KJV):**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

As Paul taught the Colossians, we were dead in our transgressions, but when we accepted Christ we were made alive, or born again, as in **Colossians 2 (KJV**):13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

And John tells us in his Gospel that even to those who believe in His name He gives power to be children of God in **John 1 (KJV):**12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Again John says **John 3 (KJV):**36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The one who believes in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confesses with their mouth Jesus as Lord is born again. This is what it means to be saved as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):**8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

From this point on we have been raised up with Christ in a spiritual birth, and Christ is said to be our life as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):**1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):**27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Since Christ is in us, we do not gradually get more and more life by sharing in the Eucharist meal as we see in **1 John 5 (KJV):**12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

It's one or the other. You either have life, or you need to come to Jesus that you might have life as we read in **John 6 (KJV):**37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

And in **John 5 (KJV):**39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

It is the Spirit who gives us birth so that we are born of the Spirit. As a result, the Spirit is the life principle of our spirit as Jesus spoke in **John 6 (KJV):**63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

And the Spirit is eternal as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

This is why, when we are born of the Spirit, the life Jesus gives us is eternal life, because it is of the Spirit of God. So there is no sustenance necessary for the life the Spirit of God gives us. You either have it by accepting Christ as Savior, or you do not and must accept Christ or forever be apart from Him. And in regards to invoking the Holy Spirit "that He may exhibit this sacrifice, both the bread the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ, in order that the receivers of these antitypes may obtain remission of sins and life eternal," the receivers have already received eternal life and remission of sins when they had faith in Christ. The Gospel message is not "receive the Eucharist and be saved." The Gospel message is "believe in Me" and you will have everlasting life. This is the message that Paul preached at Philippi when he was in jail, and the Lord set him free with an earthquake as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV):**25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they

spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Notice that there was no waiting period to be baptized. The Philippian jailer and his whole household were baptized immediately after they believed in the Lord Jesus.

As to Irenaeus' assertion that "it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as a friend," we must understand that the Eucharist meal is not a sacrifice, but is a remembrance of a sacrifice. It is a proclaiming of the Lord's death until He comes as in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament In my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

When we share in the Eucharist meal, we do so because we have already been forgiven of our sins, and have eternal life by faith in Jesus Christ. We have already been accepted by God into His household as sons and daughters. We need make no more offerings for sin. Jesus Christ paid the price of sin. And so we, being justified by faith, have peace with God as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):**1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The word "peace" in the Greek is εἰρήνη (pronounced eirēnē) and comes from the Greek verb eiro meaning "to bind together that which has been separated." **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume 1, Page 77**. Thus, the word "peace" in the Greek means "to be set at one with, to be at peace."

The Scripture does say to examine ourselves, and then partake of the Eucharist meal as we read again in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Our profession should match our confession. It is not that we lose our salvation for God treats us as sons and daughters, and he chastens, or disciplines everyone whom He receives as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):**6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

However, the discipline described here in 1Corinthians 11:30 includes sickness and death. We should be careful to examine ourselves and live a holy life, for this is the will of God for us as we read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):**3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

Now Irenaeus also quotes Philippians 4:18 in support of his statement that the Church alone offers a pure oblation as in **Philippians 4 (KJV):**18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

The Church is what God is building in our day and age. There is no other purpose of God at this time. As members of the Church we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. We offer our monetary support as the Philippians did to help with the work of the ministry. We offer the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, and we are encouraged to be thankful in everything as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):**16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning

you.

The Eucharist meal is another way for us to give thanks to God for His indescribable gift. The Eucharist is neither a spiritual, or carnal offering, nor is it a sacrifice. It is not an offering at all. It is simply a celebration of what Jesus has done for us. It is a remembrance of His one sacrifice that paid the debt of our sin forever. No other sacrifice could do that. Jesus offered Himself without blemish as we read again in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

We are to offer ourselves as Jesus did. This is why Paul exhorts us as in **Romans 12 (KJV**):1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We don't offer Jesus' body and blood back to God to be accepted by Him. This has already been done by Jesus Himself when He entered heaven itself to represent us as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

We offer ourselves as living sacrifices, not for our sins, but because it is our reasonable spiritual service in view of God's mercy. The words "our spiritual service" in the Greek are τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν (pronounced ten logiken latreian hoomon), and which mean literally "your logical service." In the King James Version it reads "your reasonable service." In other words, because of what He has done for us, it is reasonable and logical for us to return to Him our very lives in thanksgiving. But we offer ourselves, our own bodies, as Jesus did, a living sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ's once and for all sacrifice.

Chapter 23: The Priesthood

Commentary Summary: The Priesthood

To summarize Irenaeus' arguments in this chapter, Irenaeus begins by defending the Church against the doctrine of Marcion, which taught that Abraham was excluded from the inheritance of the kingdom of God because he believed in the God of the Old Testament. Irenaeus testifies that "those who disallow his salvation, and frame the idea of another God besides Him who made the promise to Abraham," are themselves "outside the kingdom of God."

Irenaeus then proceeds to show that the righteousness of Abraham was attested by the Lord Jesus Himself who set a "daughter of Abraham" free from Satan who had bound her eighteen years. Jesus also validated the goodness of the law by showing that "the law did not prohibit men from being healed upon the Sabbaths; [on the contrary,] it even circumcised them upon that day, and gave command that the offices should be performed by the priests for the people." And "the law commanded them to abstain from every servile work, that is, from all grasping after wealth which is procured by trading and by other worldly business; but it exhorted them to attend to the exercises of the soul, which consist in reflection, and to addresses of a beneficial kind for their neighbours' benefit." Irenaeus is trying to show the unity of the Old Testament with what Jesus was preaching and doing.

Just as Abraham believed in Him, so Jesus "loosed and vivified those who believe in Him," that is, the God of Abraham. Irenaeus says that Jesus did "nothing contrary to the law when He healed upon the Sabbath-

day," which means He was in agreement with the law, and was not acting in opposition to it. Irenaeus then clarifies the meaning of the law, asserting as Jesus did that it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, and even to perform circumcision and other priestly duties. And Irenaeus says at the end of paragraph two, "And therefore the Lord reproved those who unjustly blamed Him for having healed upon the Sabbath-days. For He did not make void, but fulfilled the law, by performing the offices of High Priest, propitiating God for men, and cleansing the lepers, healing the sick, and Himself suffering death, that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and might return without fear to his own inheritance."

Now in this last sentence Irenaeus asserts that Jesus was fulfilling the law by performing the offices of the High Priest and propitiating God for men while He was on earth, and before He suffered death on the cross. Irenaeus asserts here that it was partly by His good works of cleansing the lepers and healing the sick that He propitiated God. Also, we note that Irenaeus seems to see Jesus as High Priest before He died on the cross. However, Jesus came as a man to fulfill the law and to be our redeemer. His works identified Him as the one who was prophesied to come as our redeemer as we read in **Matthew 8 (KJV):**16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

His good works were gracious acts of God, and did in no way atone for sin although they showed the benefits of faith in Him. His works were the signature of God on His ministry as He Himself said in **John 10 (KJV):**25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

Again Jesus said in **John 10 (KJV):**37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

God predicted through Isaiah the prophet, hundreds of years before He actually came, that Jesus would come. There are many specific prophecies concerning Him through Isaiah and the other prophets that have been fulfilled to the letter, and these identify Him as the one and the only Son of God. In order to fulfill all that was written about Him, Jesus had to be obedient to the law in all respects. And so Jesus argued with the ruler of the synagogue in Luke 13:14-17, concerning the daughter of Abraham, that healing was permitted by the law on the Sabbath days, and was actually fulfilling the law. Jesus was not yet the High Priest that He was to become because the Old Covenant was still in effect. And it would remain in effect until Jesus died on the cross and fulfilled the Old Covenant law of sacrifice. By dying on the cross, Jesus was able to enter heaven itself by His own blood on our behalf after being raised from the dead. This event inaugurated the New Covenant and the High Priestly ministry of Jesus. We will examine the book of Hebrews shortly to prove this is so.

But to Irenaeus' point, Jesus was not acting in behalf of a different god, but in behalf of the one and only God, the God of Abraham.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus continues his argument in order to show the unity between the Old and the New Covenants, and that there is only one God of both. He tries to show here in this paragraph that the unity between the Old and New Covenants also exists because the apostles had a priesthood of the Lord of the same substance as the Levitical priesthood. He means to say that there is therefore ultimately a continuation of the Levitical priesthood in substance in the Church. Irenaeus begins his argument with the statement, "And again, the law did not forbid those who were hungry on the Sabbath-days to take food lying ready at hand." The words, "And again," refer to his thought in the previous paragraph that it was lawful for Jesus to heal on the Sabbath day. And not only was it lawful, but it was actually a fulfillment of the law. Here in paragraph three, Irenaeus will attempt to continue his thinking that Jesus did everything according to the law and taught His disciples to do the same. Even though Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of being a Sabbath breaker by allowing His disciples to pick grain and to eat it on the Sabbath day, Irenaeus shows how Jesus justified His disciples by the words of the law, and in so doing He thus reveals that the God of the Old Covenant is the same as the God of the New Covenant. But he also has a secondary agenda, and that is to show that the disciples had a "priesthood of the Lord."

Now, let us examine his argument for this "priesthood of the Lord", that is, literally, of "the Lord's Levitical substance."

Irenaeus begins in paragraph three as he asserts, "And again, the law did not forbid those who were hungry on the Sabbath-days to take food lying ready at hand: it did, however, forbid them to reap and to gather into the barn. And therefore did the Lord say to those who were blaming His disciples because they plucked and ate the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, "Have ye not read this, what David did, when himself was an hungered; how he went into the house of God, and ate the shew-bread, and gave to those who were with him; which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone?," referring in context to **Luke 6 (KJV):**3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him; 4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? 5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Irenaeus refers to this event and asserts that the Lord Jesus was "justifying His disciples by the words of the law, and pointing out that it was lawful for the priests to act freely."

Irenaeus continues as he then asserts in his very next sentence that David acted freely as a priest appointed by God, and that David's priesthood was justified as he argues, "For David had been appointed a priest by God, although Saul persecuted him. For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank."

Continuing in paragraph three, Irenaeus then asserts:

- "And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually."
- "Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant," referring to Deuteronomy 33:8-10.
- "But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance," referring to Numbers 18:10.
- "And again, "The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (*fructifications*) of the Lord: these shall they eat," referring to Deuteronomy 18:1-2;
- Wherefore also Paul says, "I do not seek after a gift, but I seek after fruit," referring to Philippians 4:17.
- To His disciples He said, who had a priesthood of the Lord, 3893 Literally, "the Lord's Levitical substance"—*Domini Leviticam substantiam*. to whom it was lawful when hungry to eat the ears of corn, "For the workman is worthy of his meat," referring to Matthew 10:9-10.
- And the priests in the temple profaned the Sabbath, and were blameless. Wherefore, then, were they blameless? Because when in the temple they were not engaged in secular affairs, but in the service of the Lord, fulfilling the law, but not going beyond it, as that man did, who of his own accord carried dry wood into the camp of God, and was justly stoned to death," referring to Numbers 15:32-36.
- ""For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire," referring to Matthew 3:10.
- and "whosoever shall defile the temple of God, him shall God defile," referring to 1 Corinthians 3:17.

Now we will examine the merit of each of the points of Irenaeus' argument in paragraph three in turn.

First of all, let us look at the other passage which records the event of Jesus' disciples plucking the ears of corn and eating them on the Sabbath day. This event is also recorded in **Matthew 12 (KJV):**1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat. 2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. 3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; 4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? 5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? 6 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. 7 But if ye had known what

this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

In this passage, Jesus compares Himself and His disciples to David and his men. Jesus' argument with the Pharisees is whether it is lawful to pick grain and eat it on the Sabbath. Jesus' rebuttal is five-fold.

i. When David and his men were hungry, they entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread which was not lawful for David or his men to eat but only the priests.
ii. The priests on the Sabbath profane, or break the Sabbath and are innocent meaning they perform their duties yet are blameless.
iii. One greater than the temple is here in their presence.
iv. The Pharisees did not know what this means, "I desire compassion and not a sacrifice" since they had condemned the innocent.
v. The Pharisees did not recognize that Jesus was the Son of Man and Lord of the Sabbath. That is, they did not recognize that the Sabbath was His day.

In Jesus' rebuttal to the Pharisees here in Matthew 12:1-8, He first justifies His disciples by the words of the law, that is, by the words of the Old Testament in **1 Samuel 21 (KJV):**1 Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? 2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. 3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. 4 And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. 5 And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. 6 So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. 7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul. 8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. 9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.

Using the story of David and his men eating the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him or his men to eat but only the priests, Jesus refutes the accusation of the Pharisees that His disciples were breaking the Sabbath day. Jesus then presses His point by mentioning that the priests break or profane the Sabbath, meaning they do their duties of offering sacrifices on the Sabbath day as commanded by the law, yet they are blameless. Jesus is saying that there are some things done on the Sabbath day that would be classified as work, yet the performance of them is permitted on the Sabbath day by the law. Jesus is pointing out that the disciples were serving their Lord, and travelling with Him and ministering the Gospel. This would mean that they were many times far from home. This would also mean that their food would not be readily available to them. Jesus in effect was explaining to the Pharisees that such service is similar to the priestly service. On this basis, His disciples should be considered innocent. They were not innocent because they were priests, for they were not of the sons of Aaron, which was a requirement under the law. They were innocent because God is merciful. Jesus then tells them with absolute clarity that He speaks with the authority of the one who is greater than the temple. The issue as Jesus sees it is that God desires compassion and not sacrifice. To say it another way, God simply wants relationship and not ritual. Jesus proclaims the innocence of His disciples to the Pharisees, and takes ownership of the Sabbath day. It is His day. He is Lord of the Sabbath.

So Jesus pointed out in this passage that God does not value ritual over human life. The disciples were

hungry, and needed food to survive. They were called by Jesus to minister by His side. Jesus was to become the great High Priest of the New Covenant according to God's predetermined plan. They would need food to sustain them. This is similar to David and his men needing food on their journey, since David was going to be king in Saul's place, again, according to God's predetermined plan. David needed food to sustain him and his men. In God's eyes, it was more important to preserve human life, that is, to have mercy, than to keep the ritual part of the law. This is what Jesus was saying.

So, as Irenaeus points out, the first thing that Jesus did in this passage was to justify His disciples by the words of the law.

Now Irenaeus also argues that Jesus was "pointing out that it was lawful for the priests to act freely" on the Sabbath day. Irenaeus is referring to Jesus' statement in **Matthew 12 (KJV):**5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

When Jesus said that the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, He is referring to the Sabbath offerings as stated in **Numbers 28 (KJV):**9 And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: 10 This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

Their priestly duties required them to do the work of offering sacrifice on the Sabbath day. And so Jesus is again pointing out that ritual is not as important as human life. Ritual does not take away sin, nor has it ever taken away sin. David knew this for he says that he was conceived in sin in **Psalm 51 (KJV):**5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

And David knew he was sinful as he states in **Psalm 51 (KJV):**9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

But David also knew God as his Savior as we read in **Psalm 51 (KJV):**14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

God was the God of his salvation. David knew that the only thing he could give back to God was the praise from his heart as we read in **Psalm 51 (KJV):**15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

David knew that God looked at the heart. And David trusted in the Lord as his redeemer as he says in **Psalm 19 (KJV):**14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

The priests were offering ritual sacrifice, according to the law. There was nothing in their duties that would save them from their sin. They, just as David, had to trust in the Lord as their redeemer.

Now Irenaeus continues as he then asserts in his very next sentence in paragraph three that David acted freely as a priest appointed by God, and that David's priesthood was justified as he argues, "For David had been appointed a priest by God, although Saul persecuted him. For all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank."

However, there is no place in the Scriptures where this appointment of David is mentioned. David did ask for the ephod to be brought to him when he had to make life and death decisions for Israel. The ephod was a garment made especially for the Levitical priests as we read in **Exodus 28 (KJV):**1 And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. 2 And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. 3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 4 And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

The ephod was to be made of gold, blue, and purple and scarlet material as in **Exodus 28 (KJV):**6 And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.

Two stones with the names of the sons of Israel were to be set on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as we read in **Exodus 28 (KJV):**11 With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of

gold. 12 And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial.

The breastpiece, which also had four rows of three precious stones representing each of the twelve tribes of Israel, was attached to the ephod as we see in **Exodus 28 (KJV):**28 And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. 29 And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

The breastpiece was for judgment or for helping in making decisions as we read in **Exodus 28 (KJV):**15 And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it.

And so the ephod was used by David to inquire of the Lord as we read in **1 Samuel 23 (KJV):**9 And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod. 10 Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. 11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down. 12 Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.

The thought here is that David would call for the priest to come wearing the ephod. David would then pray and the Lord would answer by the priest or speak a word in David's ear. This did not mean that David was a Levitical priest with the right to wear the ephod. But David was said to be a prophet as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):**29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

In his speech, Peter, just before he said these words, refers to Psalm 16, a Psalm of David, and a prophecy of the Holy One, the Redeemer, in **Acts 2 (KJV):**25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

So we see that David truly was a prophet, but not a priest appointed by God in the same sense as the Levitical priests were appointed, for he himself and those with him were not allowed by the law to eat the consecrated bread as stated in **Matthew 12 (KJV):**3 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? 5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

Also, David was not a priest in the Levitical sense since he was not of the right tribe and family. The law gave the Levitical priesthood to Aaron and his sons exclusively as we see in **Numbers 18 (KJV):**1 And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. 2 And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. 3 And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. 4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. 5 And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. 6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the

vail; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

If those Levites who were not sons of Aaron, but of the tribe of Levi, came near to "the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar," both they and Aaron and his sons would die. Aaron and his sons were to "bear the guilt in connection with" their priesthood. The Levitical priesthood was therefore not given to all the Levites but only to the sons of Aaron. This was a perpetual statute as stated in **Exodus 29 (KJV):**4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. 5 And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: 6 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. 7 Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. 8 And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. 9 And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

The fact that the priesthood was exclusively Aaron and his son's and not the other Levites is proven also by the rebellion of Korah who was a Levite but not a son of Aaron. The account of Korah's rebellion begins in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**1 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Korah and his followers were sons of Levi but they were not sons of Aaron. They wanted the priesthood as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

Moses commanded Korah and all his company to take censors and to put fire and incense in them and appear before the Lord. There were 250 men with censors offering incense. Aaron was present as well. They stood in front of Moses when Moses pronounced judgment on them as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. 27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. 28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. 30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

Fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men offering incense as we see in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**35 And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

The censors of these men were gathered up and hammered out as a covering for the altar so that the people of Israel would not forget that the priesthood belonged to the sons of Aaron exclusively as we read in **Numbers 16 (KJV):**39 And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: 40 To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

Again the Levites were to assist the sons of Aaron as in **1 Chronicles 23 (KJV):**27 For by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above: 28 Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God; 29 Both for the shewbread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size; 30 And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even: 31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD: 32 And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy place, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.

The division of the priests was strictly within the families of the sons of Aaron as recorded in **1 Chronicles 24 (KJV):**1 Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. 3 And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service.

In regards to Irenaeus' statement that all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank, thereby justifying David's priesthood, this is true as stated in the book of Exodus when Moses speaks of Israel and says that they will be a kingdom of priests if they are fully obedient and keep the covenant as we read in **Exodus 19 (KJV):**3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

This was said to all Israel, and so there is some justification for Irenaeus to say that all the righteous possess the sacerdotal rank, and that therefore David was also a priest in this sense. However, it is certain that David was not a Levitical priest because he was not a son of Aaron, and therefore, as Jesus Himself stated in Matthew 12:5, it was not lawful for him or his men to eat of the shew-bread but only the priests.

There is one other passage in the Scriptures that supports Irenaeus' assertion that David was a priest appointed by God. In 2 Samuel, chapter 24, and 1 Chronicles, chapter 21, an account is recorded of David being incited by Satan to number the fighting men of Israel as we read in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):**1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. 2 And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

This displeased the Lord and when David knew it, he confessed in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):**7 And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. 8 And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

The Lord spoke to Gad the seer, or prophet as they were later called, to go tell David he has three options as we read in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):**9 And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying, 10 Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. 11 So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee 12 Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

David feared the Lord more than man as we read in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):**13 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man. 14 So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. 15 And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand.

And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

The Lord revealed to David that an angel had a sword stretched out over Jerusalem as we see in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):**16 And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

At this point David interceded for Israel, something a priest would do, as we see in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):**17 And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.

David was then told by prophecy to build an altar as we read in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):**18 Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19 And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD.

David paid Ornan 600 shekels of silver for his threshing floor and built an altar and offered sacrifice as the Lord told him to do through the prophet Gad as in **1 Chronicles 21 (KJV):**25 So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. 26 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. 27 And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. 28 At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. 29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon. 30 But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

After this event, David decided to build the temple on this exact spot as we read in **1 Chronicles 22 (KJV):**1 Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel. 2 And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.

However, this did not make David a Levitical priest, much less, did it make the disciples of the Lord to have "the Lord's Levitical substance."

Now Irenaeus then asserts, "And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually."All the apostles were believer priests because they were righteous, but they could not be Levitical priests, nor could they have the "Lord's Levitical substance," since they were not the sons of Aaron. All the apostles were priests just as all believers. That is, all the righteous, according to the faith of Abraham, possess the sacerdotal rank as stated in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):**4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

All the righteous are priests and offer sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. What are these sacrifices? In the New Testament, they are the following:

1. The sacrifice of praise to God, the fruit of lips that give thanks to his name as in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):**15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.
2. To do good and to share as in **Hebrews 13 (NASB):**16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

3. The presentation of our bodies as living sacrifices as in **Romans 12 (KJV):**1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This offering of sacrifice is in the same manner as our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, who offered Himself without spot to God to take away our sins once and for all time. This is what makes us His disciples for we are His followers and do as He did. Jesus did good and shared, offered praise to God, and gave His body as a sacrifice for us. So we are to do the same. He is our model of priesthood. He sacrificed Himself for us. We offer ourselves back to Him for His glory.

Irenaeus then argues in paragraph three, "Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant," referring to **Deuteronomy 33 (KJV):**8 And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; 9 Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. 10 They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.

Irenaeus continues as he argues, "But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance," referring to **Numbers 18 (KJV):**20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

However, the law of inheritance was valid under the Old Covenant, but was not carried forward under the New Covenant. The law of inheritance under the Old Covenant related to the tribes of Israel. The land of Canaan was originally promised by God to Abraham, and was to be given to his descendants as we read in **Genesis 12 (KJV):**5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. 6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. 7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

It was this same land that the Lord brought Israel to, and gave instructions to Moses about the boundaries of this promised land which was to be Israel's inheritance as a nation. This was the land of Canaan as stated in **Numbers 34 (KJV):**1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:)

The borders of this land are stated very specifically in Numbers 34:3-12. The boundaries stated in this passage were for the nine and one half tribes as stated in **Numbers 34 (KJV):**13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe:

The other two and one half tribes received their inheritance as in **Numbers 34 (KJV):**14 For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received their inheritance; and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance: 15 The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan near Jericho eastward, toward the sunrising.

The law of inheritance of the Old Covenant stated that the inheritance of the people of Israel should not be transferred from one tribe to another as we read in **Numbers 36 (KJV):**7 So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8 And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may

enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers. 9 Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

The inheritance of the two and one half tribes east of the Jordan is described in Joshua 13:8-33. And the nine and one half tribes had their inheritance in the land of Canaan. But to the tribe of Levi was given no inheritance but only cities to dwell in as in **Joshua 14 (KJV):**4 For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance. 5 As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

The land was divided by lot, and the division of the land is described in the book of Joshua, chapters 14 through 20. The cities and pasturelands allotted to Levi are described in the book of Joshua, chapter 21.
In the New Covenant there is no law of inheritance for lands. Inheritance under the New Covenant relates to the blessings of faith in Jesus Christ. In the Old Covenant it was revealed that Abraham was not only promised that the land of Canaan was to be given and possessed by his descendants, but also that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed as we read in **Genesis 12 (KJV):**1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The reason that Abraham was blessed in this way was because he believed God as we read in **Genesis 15 (KJV):**4 And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

And so in the New Covenant this blessing of faith comes to all who are children of Abraham as we see in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.
7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

How we become children of Abraham is explained by Paul in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Paul tells us that the law, that is the Old Covenant, was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

And so when we have faith, we become children of God and we are no longer under a tutor as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

This faith in Jesus Christ makes us all one in Christ Jesus as we see in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

It is in this way that we become children of God and heirs as we see in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Since we have been redeemed by Christ, we receive the adoption of sons and become heirs of God through Christ as we read in **Galatians 4 (KJV):**4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The Spirit Himself bears witness that we are the children of God and joint heirs with Christ as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if

children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

What are we heirs to?

I. Eternal life as in **Titus 3 (KJV):**5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

II. The Kingdom of God as in **Matthew 25 (KJV):**34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

III. A heavenly inheritance as in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

IV. The world as in **Romans 4 (KJV):**13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

V. Salvation as in **Hebrews 1 (KJV):**13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

VI. An incorruptible body at the resurrection of the dead as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

VII. Victory over sin and death as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

VIII. God Himself as in **Romans 8 (KJV):**16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

The inheritance spoken of in the New Testament does not include the inheritance of lands since no provision is made for that anywhere in the Scriptures. A promise that the righteous, that is the meek, will inherit the world, or the earth, in the future has been given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount as in **Matthew 5 (KJV):**5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

As for Irenaeus' assertion that the apostles "serve God and the altar continually," it is without doubt that the apostles served God continually doing the work of the ministry for they devoted themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word as in **Acts 6 (KJV):**1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not

reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

The first deacons were appointed at this time as well, as we read in **Acts 6 (KJV):**5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

The apostles were devoted to prayer and to preaching the word, and as a result of their ministry, great numbers were becoming obedient to the faith as we see in **Acts 6 (NASB):**7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

No mention is made of serving at the altar. If this were being done, at least some passing reference would have been made by the apostles, but this is not found anywhere in the New Testament. In Irenaeus' thinking, as we saw in the section on Communion, the altar is the table of the Lord. Irenaeus views the Eucharist meal as the sacrifice offered by the Gentiles, which he believes is referred to in the prophecy in Malachi 1:6-11. However, as we saw in that section, the Eucharist meal is not a sacrifice but a remembrance or commemoration of the one sacrifice which dealt with sin once and for all time that Jesus made for us on the cross.

The use of the word "altar" by Irenaeus speaks of ritual or lawful practice of some sort. The Church in Irenaeus' time was accumulating many legalistic practices or rituals of which the Eucharist, or the Lord's supper as Paul called it in 1 Corinthians 11:20, is the most prominent. From these practices, we see the need in Irenaeus' thinking for a priest, that is, a holy man, to perform the ritual.

Now as to Irenaeus' reference to Moses in his blessing of Levi in Deuteronomy 33:8-10, Irenaeus asserts in context, "And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually. Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant," referring to Deuteronomy 33:9.

Irenaeus here concludes that Aaron disinherited his sons. But Irenaeus interpolates rather than interprets the Scripture here. That is, he inserts a meaning in this passage that is not there. This is in part due to the Septuagint version of the text from which he is reading. Here are two versions to compare.

Deuteronomy 33 (Septuagint):8 And to Levi he said, Give to Levi his manifestations, and his truth to the holy man, whom they tempted in the temptation; they reviled him at the water of strife. 9 Who says to his father and mother, I have not seen thee; and he knew not his brethren, and he refused to know his sons: he kept thine oracles, and observed thy covenant. 10 They shall declare thine ordinances to Jacob, and thy law to Israel: they shall place incense in the time of thy wrath continually upon thine altar.

Deuteronomy 33 (NASB):8 Of Levi he said, "Let Your Thummim and Your Urim belong to Your godly man, Whom You proved at Massah, With whom You contended at the waters of Meribah; 9 Who said of his father and his mother, 'I did not consider them'; And he did not acknowledge his brothers, Nor did he regard his own sons, For they observed Your word, And kept Your covenant.

Moses is here seen blessing all the sons of Jacob in Deuteronomy, chapter 33, before his death, and as he comes to Levi, he speaks of the time in Exodus, chapter 17, when the Israelites grumbled against Moses because they had no water and the Lord told him to strike the rock. When he did so, water came pouring out for the Israelites to drink. Moses was blessing the tribe of Levi whom he, as a son of Levi, represented at Massah, which means testing, and Meribah which means quarrel. Moses did not consider his sons or brothers in this matter but contended for the Lord, and apparently so did all the sons of Levi. In so doing, they did not have regard for sons or brothers, but they put God first, and observed the word of God and kept His covenant. So Moses did not disinherit his sons nor did Aaron, but he taught the Israelites to place God first in their lives, even above father and mother, brother or sister, son or daughter.

Now, again, Irenaeus argues, "But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Irenaeus

is arguing that the disciples of the Lord are priests since, like Levi, they "have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant."

In context, he says, "And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually. Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant." But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance," referring to Deuteronomy 33:9.

Irenaeus continues as he says, "Of whom again Moses says, "They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance," referring to Numbers 18:20. And he adds, "And again, "The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (fructifications) of the Lord: these shall they eat," referring to Deuteronomy 18:1.

So after quoting Deuteronomy 33:9 regarding the Levites, Irenaeus, in his very next sentence in paragraph three, is asking us to compare the Levites, who upheld the covenant, and the word of God, and served God and the altar continually, with the disciples of the Lord, as he asks, "But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord?"

Irenaeus here points out three similarities between the disciples of the Lord and the Levites, which are as follows:

1. They left father and mother
2. They have no inheritance for the Lord is their inheritance
3. They have their food from the offerings of the people

However, in his comparison, we note that the Levites did not actually leave mother and father. Irenaeus points out in Deuteronomy 33:9 that the Levites did stand up for God and His covenant, and placed Him first above all things, even above father and mother, and son and daughter. Nothing is said in the Scriptures however about the Levites leaving father or mother. And strictly speaking, leaving father or mother, or even placing God first in our lives above all others, were not qualifications to be a Levite, or a Levitical priest. These things were simply a duty as it is the duty of every believer because of God's mercy. On the other hand, for those who would serve the Lord, doing the work of the Lord, it is incumbent upon them especially to place God first in their lives, even above father and mother and sons and daughters. James says teachers incur a stricter judgment as we read in **James 3 (NASB):**1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

Also, under the Old Covenant, there was a law of inheritance such that all the tribes but Levi did inherit lands based upon the tribe of their fathers. However, under the New Covenant, there is no such law of inheritance for lands or houses to anyone who believes. The Lord may be said to be the inheritance of every believer under the New Covenant. It is possible that those who serve the Lord, and who are doing the work of the Lord, will experience more of the Lord's presence in their lives under the New Covenant. This could be what Jesus meant when He said that those who left father and mother would receive many times as much in this lifetime as we read in **Luke 18 (KJV):**28 Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. 29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, 30 Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

However, under the New Covenant, the opportunity to serve the Lord exists for every believer, since all are members of His body, and as such have a function to serve, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not

of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

God has placed each member in the body as He desired. The word translated "placed" in the Greek is εθετο (pronounced etheto) which is the third person singular, second aorist, indicative middle of the verb tithemi (pronounced titheme) meaning "to place, put, stand or set."

This is the same word translated "set" in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Not all the members have the same place or function. This function or ability is according to the measure of Christ's gift as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

As for living off the offerings of the believers, the Lord has provided that those who preach and teach the word of God may enter into full time ministry, and so "the workman is worthy of his meat," as we will discuss shortly. The Lord did provide this for the Levites as we saw in **Numbers 18 (KJV):**20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. 21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And in **Deuteronomy 18 (KJV):**1 The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance.
2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.

Now in reference to Irenaeus' assertion that Paul received offerings as well, referring to Philippians 4:17 where he says "I do not seek after a gift, but I seek after fruit," Paul explains that this was his right as he defends his apostleship in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):**1 Am I am not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? 2 If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. 3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,
4 Have we not power to eat and to drink? 5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? 7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

Paul also states this again, as he also refers to Deuteronomy 18:1 and Numbers 18:20, in **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):**13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? 14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

Paul did not say that, because he was a priest, he should have his support from the offerings of the people. He said that in the same way as those who did the work of the ministry under the Old Covenant received support from the offerings of the people, so also those who proclaim the gospel should get their living from the gospel.

This right is also given to those who work hard at teaching and preaching as stated in 1 **Timothy 5 (KJV):**17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

And again in 2 **Timothy 2 (KJV):**3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

Not once did Paul say that it was because he was a priest, or because the disciples have the substance of priests, that they should receive their living from the support of the believers. The ministry of the New Covenant is not in ritual but in reality. Christ has come and made a way for us, a new and living way. Paul lived under the New Covenant, and said that, in a like manner, those who preach the Gospel should get their living from the Gospel, as he did at times himself. This did not mean that Paul was a priest. He never referred to himself as such in all his writings.

Now in regards to Irenaeus' assertion that the disciples of the Lord had "a priesthood of the Lord, literally "the Lord's Levitical substance," and that the Lord Jesus stated as much when He said, "For the workman is worthy of his meat," referring to Matthew 10:10, the Scriptures make it plain that the law of the Levitical priesthood is not carried forward into the New Testament.

Again, when the New Covenant was inaugurated, there was a change in the law, and a change in the priesthood as well, as we shall soon see in the book of Hebrews. Jesus was stating that, in a similar way, those who proclaim the Gospel were worthy to get their living from their converts just as the priests and Levites were worthy in their service of the Lord to live off the offerings of the people. Paul was explaining in more detail what Jesus taught. The Lord Jesus was preparing His disciples, His workers in the Kingdom who would proclaim the good news of the Gospel message of salvation for all who believe in Him, that they would get their living from their preaching just as the priests and Levites got their living from their service of the Tabernacle and later their service in the temple.

As to Irenaeus' argument that, because the priests serving in the temple profaned the Sabbath and were blameless since they were serving the Lord, and fulfilling the law, but not going beyond it, which would entail judgment as the man who gathered wood on the Sabbath day and was justly stoned to death, referring to Numbers 15:32-36, he was arguing that therefore, the disciples of the Lord were blameless when they picked grain on the Sabbath day and ate it since they were priests also. Again, the Lord was not saying that this meant that His disciples were priests also. The Lord was only stating that He desired mercy and not sacrifice, and that He valued life over ritual.

And lastly, when Irenaeus justifies in paragraph three the stoning of the man who picked grain on the Sabbath in Numbers 15:32-36 by stating, "For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire," referring to Matthew 3:10, and that "whosoever shall defile the temple of God, him shall God defile," referring to 1 Corinthians 3:17, to show that the apostles must have been priests since they were not judged, we see that this only proves that the Lord's words were correct. The disciples, just as David, were innocent as the Lord declared in **Matthew 12 (KJV):**7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

In summary, Irenaeus is here trying to lay a foundation from the Scriptures for another priesthood to be carried forward following the Levitical priesthood, and having the same substance as the Levitical priesthood. This priesthood he believes has been given the responsibility of the work and service of the Lord in the Church. This new priesthood, which has been given the substance of the Levitical priesthood by the Lord when He said, "the workman is worthy of his meat," Irenaeus believes to be over and above the priesthood of all believers in the New Testament, just as the Levitical priesthood was over and above the priesthood of all believers in the Old Testament.

Irenaeus also mentions an altar in paragraph three, for he says that the disciples "do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually." The Scriptures do not mention a physical earthly altar in the New Testament. As we shall see, all of the laws of sacrifice relating to bulls and goats have been fulfilled by the sacrifice that Jesus made when He offered Himself on the cross. Again we note that Irenaeus is defending the Church of his time which would include the traditions of the Church in his time. These traditions were thought to be handed down by the Apostles and were therefore a form of truth as we saw in **Chapter 21: The Church**, under the heading **Book 4: Chapter XXIII**, **paragraph 8**.

However there are differences between God's requirements of obedience in the Old Testament and the

requirements of obedience to God in the New Testament. In the Old Testament and under the Old Covenant, we see a progressive revelation of the righteousness of God represented by His word. All that is in His word is a requirement of His righteousness. To leave out even one word is to misrepresent His righteousness for He is perfect in holiness. In fact, He is perfect in all His attributes as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):**48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

And in **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV):**3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Under the Old Covenant, God revealed that His offerings had to be perfect to be accepted by Him as in **Leviticus 22 (KJV):**20 But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. 21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. 22 Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD.

This requirement of a perfect offering we understand to have been fulfilled by Jesus in the New Testament. The offering of Jesus on the cross, as a lamb without blemish, fulfills all requirements for offerings for sin and forms the basis of the New Covenant. Irenaeus does not seem to understand this.

Jesus was merely pointing out to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law that they had misinterpreted the law, and had greatly misunderstood the requirements of the law. He taught them that there is no law against doing good on the Sabbath. He taught them that He valued mercy more than sacrifice, and reality more than ritual.

Irenaeus is trying to establish a Scriptural basis for the priesthood that was already in the Church in his time, and growing in prominence alongside the bishops and presbytery as a sort of adjunct ministry. This is a sort of secondary agenda to his writing, the first and of primary importance being the defense of the Church against heresy. Irenaeus seems to try to show a Scriptural basis for all that is happening in the Church of his time, which would include the tradition that he perceived to have been handed down from the apostles themselves.

Philip Schaff states, "The idea and institution of a special priesthood, distinct from the body of the people, with the accompanying notion of sacrifice and altar, passed imperceptibly from Jewish and heathen reminiscences and analogies into the Christian church. The majority of Jewish converts adhered tenaciously to the Mosaic institutions and rites, and a considerable part never fully attained to the height of spiritual freedom proclaimed by Paul, or soon fell away from it. He opposed legalistic and ceremonial tendencies in Galatia and Corinth; and although sacerdotalism does not appear among the errors of his Judaizing opponents, the Levitical priesthood, with its three ranks of high priest, priest, and Levite, naturally furnished an analogy for the threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, and came to be regarded as typical of it. Still less could the Gentile Christians, as a body, at once emancipate themselves from their traditional notions of priesthood, altar, and sacrifice, on which their former religion was based. Whether we regard the change as an apostasy from a higher position attained, or as a reaction of old ideas never fully abandoned, the change is undeniable, and can be traced to the second century. The church could not long occupy the ideal height of the apostolic age, and as the pentecostal illumination passed away with the death of the apostles, the old reminiscences began to reassert themselves." **History of the Church, Volume II, Clergy and Laity, page 123, Philip Schaff.**

In the passage in Luke 6 above where Jesus says He is Lord of the Sabbath, He also asked, "which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?" He was pointing them to the change that He knew was coming, and would be fulfilled in the Church, and which was about to be inaugurated through His sacrifice on the cross. We see this in **John 16 (KJV):**12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

This change had to do with the New Covenant that would be in effect after Jesus died on the cross. Jesus explained to His disciples that there would be much more that He would say to them but they were not ready

when He was speaking with them.

As we read the book of Hebrews, we discover in part what this change was all about. Jesus is speaking by the Holy Spirit through the writer of Hebrews and is explaining the change. He tells us that after His death, He became our great high priest as it says in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):**17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

And again in **Hebrews 3 (KJV):**1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

And in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):**14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Even Jesus did not take this honor upon Himself, but God called Him to be our high priest as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):**1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. 5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Jesus, because of His perfect obedience, has become the source of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):**7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Now it is important to understand that this was God's set purpose all along as we read in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):**13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

We who believe in Jesus Christ are the heirs of His promises to Abraham, that He would bless him and multiply his descendants. Now this Melchizedek had no recorded genealogy, and so he is a type of the Son of God as we see in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Only the sons of Levi who are sons of Aaron receive the priest's office as we saw previously in **Exodus 28 (NASB):**1 "Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me—Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

Melchizedek's geneology however did not trace back to Aaron as we see in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take

tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

And perfection was not through the Levitical priesthood as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. 11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

Our Lord Jesus has become a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and so there has been a change in the priesthood as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

The law, which required the Levitical priesthood, could not make anything or anyone perfect, and it has been set aside as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Because Jesus has become a priest by an oath, and because He was raised from the dead and holds His priesthood permanently, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Jesus has offered up Himself once for all for sins, and does not need to do so daily as the Levitical priests did under the law as in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):**26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant, and obtained a more excellent ministry than the Levitical priests under the law of the first covenant. Jesus ministers in the true tabernacle, the sanctuary in heaven as we read in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):**1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. 3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. 6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Jesus' work on the cross has made the first covenant obsolete as we read in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):**7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant,

and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

The first covenant showed the need for a greater sacrifice, and one that would grant access for all through the veil into heaven itself as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

Jesus came to make a way into the Holy Place once for all, and by His own blood to cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the Living God as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Jesus is then the mediator of a New Covenant. By His one great sacrifice, offering Himself, He has made a way into the presence of God for us as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. 18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.
21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Jesus has offered one perfect sacrifice to put away sin for us as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

The Old Covenant, the law, could not perfect those who draw near for the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually

make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

By His will, the will of God, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

On the basis of Jesus' one sacrifice, we have remission of sins, and therefore confidence to enter heaven itself by His blood as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Therefore, the Levitical priesthood has not been carried forward under the New Covenant by the disciples of the Lord. Jesus inaugurated a new priesthood after the order of Melchizedek that never changes the high priest since He will never die. Jesus our great High Priest offered one sacrifice for sin that did away with sin once and for all time. There is no longer any need for a sacrifice or for Jesus to be sacrificed again and again. This He did once on the cross. Now we celebrate what He has done for us on the cross. If we sin, He is our advocate with the Father. He does not have to be sacrificed all over again to atone for our sins. His sacrifice is good for all sin for all time.

In the same way, if we sin, we do not have to be born again, again. Once we are born again, God deals with us as sons as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):**1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

The remission of sin has been accomplished by Jesus' one sacrifice on the cross. There is therefore no more offering for sin. We receive forgiveness for our sins when we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead,

and we confess Him as Lord. This one act of faith causes us to be washed, sanctified, and justified. We then need only to wash our feet as we walk in this world, and we are totally clean.

Chapter 24: The Law

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XII

To summarize, we could say that the driving force of Irenaeus' arguments about the law in this chapter of his writing are his efforts to show that the God of the Old Testament, the Father, is the God and Father spoken of in the New Testament. But he has a secondary agenda, and that is to show that the law was given in the Old Testament, and that the greater commandments of the law were reaffirmed by Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

So Irenaeus begins in paragraph one to show that the Pharisees had "set up a spurious law, and one contrary to the [true] law; as also the Lord made plain, when He said to them, "Why do you transgress the commandment of God, for the sake of your tradition?" The Pharisees had "set up their own law in opposition" to the law of God." The Pharisees "were unwilling to be subject to the law of God, which prepares them for the coming of Christ." The "commandment of the law" is "the love of God," Irenaeus says.

Irenaeus continues in paragraph two to show that the Lord "renewed this very same one," that is, the greatest commandment, "to His disciples, when He enjoined them to love God with all their heart, and others as themselves." And Irenaeus notes that "Paul in like manner declares, "Love is the fulfilling of the law," to show that the keeping of the law to love was also enjoined by Paul.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus again points out that "As in the law, therefore, and in the Gospel [likewise], the first and greatest commandment is, to love the Lord God with the whole heart, and then there follows a commandment like to it, to love one's neighbour as one's self." Therefore "the precepts of an absolutely perfect life, since they are the same in each Testament, have pointed out [to us] the same God." Irenaeus does well to unite the two Testaments, and to point out that the God who gave the law in the Old Testament is the same God and Father who gave us the New Testament. However, he continues as he says this same God, "has promulgated particular laws adapted for each; but the more prominent and the greatest [commandments], without which salvation cannot [be attained], He has exhorted [us to observe] the same in both." Irenaeus did not think that the whole law was binding in the New Testament. As we shall see in the next chapters of his writing, he believed that the Decalogue, the ten commandments, must be observed or there is no salvation. Irenaeus also calls these commandments the natural laws, and he includes the laws of love with these as well.

In paragraph four, Irenaeus clearly points out that, "The Lord, too, does not do away with this [God], when He shows that the law was not derived from another God." Irenaeus also points out that the Lord "therefore did not throw blame upon that law which was given by Moses, when He exhorted it to be observed," but He did throw "blame upon those persons, because they repeated indeed the words of the law, yet were without love." That is, they did not love God according to the commandment. They were thus without love, and "for this reason were they held as being unrighteous as respects God, and as respects their neighbours." Again, Irenaeus points out that the Lord "does not call the law given by Moses commandments of men, but the traditions of the elders themselves which they had invented, and in upholding which they made the law of God of none effect, and were on this account also not subject to His Word." Irenaeus then notes that Paul says the same thing in Romans 10:3-4 "concerning these men" who "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." Irenaeus then concludes from this as he asks, "And how is Christ the end of the law, if He be not also the final cause of it?" Irenaeus then tries to show the unity of God's purpose by asserting that "He who has brought in the end has Himself also wrought the beginning; and it is He who does Himself say to Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have come down to deliver them;" it being customary from the beginning with the Word of God to ascend and descend for the purpose of saving those who were in affliction." That is, just as the Lord

descended to save Israel in Exodus 3:7-8, and ascended again, so He has again descended to save us, by giving us the greater laws one final time, and ascended once more.

In paragraph five, Irenaues points out, "Now that the law did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ, He does Himself make manifest, when He replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." Irenaeus asserts that when the Lord replied to the man who asked which commandments he should keep to inherit eternal life, the Lord was "setting as an ascending series (*velut gradus*) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law," that is, "Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour *as* yourself," as "the entrance into life;" in other words, you must observe the law to be saved. Irenaeus concludes as he shows that the Lord "did not preach to His followers another God the Father, besides Him who was proclaimed by the law from the beginning;" Rather, Irenaues asserts, the Lord "taught that they should obey the commandments which God enjoined from the beginning, and do away with their former covetousness by good works, and follow after Christ." Irenaues explains that Zaccheus made evident "that possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness," when "he said, "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one, I restore fourfold," as Luke 19:8 records.

To summarize once more, Irenaeus is saying that Jesus was the "final cause of the law," for "He who has brought in the end has Himself also wrought the beginning." He points out that, as Jesus came down to save His people by giving them the law through Moses, so He has come down again as the Son of God to save His people by reaffirming the law, or as it were, to give it finally once more. And the law, he says, "did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ," as Jesus Himself did say in Matthew 19:17, "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments," when the man asked what he should do to inherit eternal life. Irenaeus continues as he says, "But upon the other asking "Which?" again the Lord replies: "Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself," thus making murder and adultery the least of the commandments while honoring father and mother and loving your neighbor are the greatest. Irenaeus asserts that the Lord was "setting as an ascending series (velut gradus) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law, as the entrance into life; and what He then said to one He said to all." And Irenaeus did not believe that the whole law was binding in the New Testament but only the laws of the Decalogue, the ten commandments that is, and the laws of love, which comprise the natural laws.

Now Irenaeus believes that, in this passage in Matthew 19:16-22, Jesus is connecting the entrance into life with keeping the law. What Irenaeus does not understand is that Jesus was speaking to those under the law. He Himself had not made atonement yet for our sins by dying on the cross. If this were all that was revealed about the entrance into life, Irenaeus would be justified in his assertion that we must follow Jesus by keeping the law in order to enter into eternal life. However, Jesus also said that the one who hears His word and believes in Him will not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life as in **John 5 (NASB):**24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

There is much more that Jesus wanted to tell the apostles and the disciples but they could not bear it at the time He was with them. However, He has continued speaking to us after He rose from the dead through the words that He has given by these same apostles who spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them. It is through their writings that we have a more complete understanding of the place of the law in God's plan of salvation. That is, Jesus has continued speaking to us by the Holy Spirit through the writings of the apostles. It is these same writings, such as the book of Romans, that we must turn to in order to have a more complete understanding of the purpose of the law.

Now we will see going forward that there is more to Irenaeus' thinking on the law. Clearly however, Irenaeus is making salvation an uphill climb by forcing us to keep the law as an ascending series of commandments, the greatest being love, and this in order to enter eternal life, that is, attain salvation. And he also says that this was the same requirement for those in the Old Testament as those in the New Testament. However, as we shall see shortly, keeping the law cannot save us. It only points us to Christ. Paul explains this in part in **Galatians 3 (NASB):**23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up

to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Now, in Irenaeus' effort to combat the heresy of the Gnostics, he has tried to show that the God of the Old Testament is the same as the New Testament. This is a noble goal. However, either the Church in Irenaeus' time in which he had been brought up in and had been made a bishop had gone off track, or Irenaeus himself simply misunderstood Paul's letter to the Romans. Specifically, Irenaeus misses the point that Paul is making in Romans 10:4. In this Scripture Paul is saying that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Paul is not saying that Christ is the final cause of the law, and that in order to enter life, we must follow Christ by keeping the law. This may not be immediately apparent as we read verse 4 of Romans, Chapter 10, as in **Romans 10 (NASB):**1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. 2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

To see the context of Paul's writing in Romans, chapter 10, we must look at how Paul explains the place of the law in our lives now. That is, we must begin by finding the start of Paul's argument in Romans. To find the Biblical truth about the law, we begin by reading in Romans, chapter 2, that there is no one in a place to judge in regards to the law since we are all guilty as in **Romans 2 (NASB):**11 For there is no partiality with God. 12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; 13 for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

Paul points out here that it is the doers of the law who will be justified. Paul then tells us that circumcision is of no value if we break the law as in **Romans 2 (NASB):**25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Paul points out that circumcision is of no value if you break the Law. Circumcision is really of the heart, by the Spirit, and not by the letter, Paul says. Now God is the only one who knows the heart of everyone, and our praise is not from men but from God as in **Romans 2 (NASB):**28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Solomon also spoke in his dedication of the temple of this same knowledge of God as in **1 Kings 8 (NASB):**39 then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive and act and render to each according to all his ways, whose heart You know, for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men.

So Paul is saying that we must be circumcised in our heart in order to please God. Now the Jews were entrusted with the word of God under the Old Covenant as Paul continues in **Romans 3 (NASB):**1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

However, then Paul points out that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin as in **Romans 3 (NASB):**9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "there is none righteous, not even one; 11 there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for god; 12 all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one." 13 "their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving," "the poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"; 15 "their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 destruction and misery are in their paths, 17 and the path of peace they have not known." 18 "there is no fear of god before their eyes."

Since we are all, both Jews and Greeks, under sin, we are all under the condemnation of the Law. The Law holds the whole world accountable to God as Paul continues in **Romans 3 (NASB):**19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

And Paul again speaks for both Jews and Gentiles, those of the Old Covenant and those of the New, and says that they will not be justified by the works of the law, that is, by keeping the law, as in **Romans 3 (NASB):**20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

Paul says that through the Law comes only the knowledge of sin, and not justification. When Jesus extended the law, as Irenaeus tells us in the next section, He increased our awareness of sin. Jesus showed us where our sin was, that is, in our hearts and in our minds. But this knowledge or awareness does not save us or justify us. Keeping the law does not atone for the sin we already have, as Irenaeus suggests when he says "that possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness," in his reference to Zacheus in Luke 19:8.

As we continue in Romans, Paul then says that a righteousness of God has been revealed apart from the Law. We saw in **Chapter 12: Teaching on the Atonement**, that John Piper has given us a working definition of God's righteousness, as he says, "God's righteousness is His unwavering allegiance to do what is right, that is, most ultimately, to uphold the infinite worth of His glory." **The Future of Justification, A Response to N. T. Wright, by John Piper, page 78.**

We must remember that when Paul speaks of God's righteousness, he speaks of the righteousness of no other. This righteousness, which is of God, is apart from the law, and is for all who through faith in Jesus Christ believe as we continue to read in **Romans 3 (NASB):**21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

We are justified by His grace as a gift. The means of receiving this gift of justification, this redemption which is in Christ Jesus, this propitiation in His blood, is through faith in Jesus Christ. He has not only passed over our former sins, but also all sin for all time as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):**26 for the demonstration, *I say,* of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

As Paul says, this is the law of faith, not the law of works. Our justification, which is a declaration by God that we who believe are righteousness, is by faith apart from the works of the law as in **Romans 3 (NASB):**28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Paul explains that the law is not overthrown or nullified by faith as in **Romans 3 (NASB):**31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Paul continues in chapter 4 of Romans as he states that Abraham was not justified by works in **Romans 4 (NASB):**1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed god, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

The word "credited" is the Greek word λογίζομαι (pronounced logizomai). Vine's says that this word "is properly used (a) of numerical calculation, e.g. Luke 22:37; (b) metaphorically, by a reckoning of characteristics or reasons, to take into account, Rom. 2:26, "shall …be reckoned." R.V. (A.V., "counted"), of reckoning uncircumcision for circumcision by God's estimate in contrast to that of the Jew regarding his own condition (ver. 3); in 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 22, 23, 24, of reckoning faith for righteousness, or reckoning righteousness to persons, in all of which the R.V. uses the verb to reckon instead of the A.V. to count or to impute." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 258.**

We can understand more clearly that this word means numerical calculation when we actually read the verse in **Luke 22 (NASB):**37 "For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'and he was numbered with transgressors'; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment."

And the metaphorical meaning of reckoning is understood more clearly when we read the verse in **Romans 2 (NASB):**26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

The word translated "regarded" here is in fact the Greek word λογίζομαι (pronounced logizomai), just as the word translated "credited" in Romans 4:3 above is also the Greek word λογίζομαι (pronounced logizomai).

When the Scripture then says that righteousness was credited to Abraham, it is saying that righteousness was put down to Abraham's account. We must understand that the righteousness that God puts down to our account is His righteousness. There is no other righteousness that will satisfy the holiness of God.

As Paul continues, he says that when we do work, we receive wages which are due to us and therefore it is not a gift as in **Romans 4 (NASB):**4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

The works that Paul is talking about are those that make us godly or ungodly. They are righteous deeds we do by keeping the law, or sinful deeds we do which go against what the law says. Keeping the law then is considered doing good works. Breaking the law is sin. In other words, if we keep the law we do good, but when we break the law we do bad, that is, we sin. Paul is saying that we have already done bad, and we are under sin, and so we are the ungodly. We are all under sin. It is not because we do good, or keep the law, that God justifies us because we are already under sin, and as such, we are the ungodly. God justifies us when we believe in Him, just as He did Abraham, as we read in **Romans 4 (NASB):**5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 "blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. 8 "blessed is the man whose sin the lord will not take into account."

The Greek word translated "credited" here in verse 5 and 6 above is also the Greek word λογίζομαι (pronounced logizomai).

When we believe in Jesus, our lawless deeds have been forgiven, and God does not take our sin into account. And as Abraham trusted in God's promise, and his faith was counted as righteousness, so it is to us when we believe, as we continue to read in **Romans 4 (NASB):**20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. 22 therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness. 23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

The Greek word translated "credited" here in verse 22, 23, and 24, above is also the Greek word λογίζομαι (pronounced logizomai).

Now we might well ask when does this justification happen? We can answer confidently that this justification happens the moment we believe in Jesus Christ. Thereafter we have peace with God as Paul reveals in **Romans 5 (NASB):**1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

The Greek word translated justified is δικαιόω (pronounced dikaioō). Vine's says that this word means "to deem to be right," "to declare to be righteous, to pronounce righteous." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 285.**

Justification is a sovereign act of God as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB):**33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

This justification occurs when we believe God, just as Abraham did. And it is by faith that we have obtained access into the grace in which we now stand as we read in verse 2 above. This is the faith which we had when we believed that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we confessed Him as Lord. God's love was then poured out into our hearts as we continue to read in **Romans 5 (NASB):**3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Having been justified in this way, we have received the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, and we reign in life through Jesus Christ as we then read in **Romans 5 (NASB):**17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Now because we have this free gift of the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, we are not to consider ourselves free to sin for we have been baptized into Christ Jesus, and so we are united with Him in His death and in His resurrection. We are therefore to consider ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God in Him, and we must not let sin reign in our mortal body as we continue to read in **Romans 6 (NASB):**11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts.

We have been brought from death to life, and we are no longer under sin or under the law, but under grace as we continue in **Romans 6 (NASB):**13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

We have been set free from sin and become slaves of righteousness as Paul reveals in **Romans 6 (NASB):**17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

The wages of sin is death, but God's free gift is eternal life as we read in **Romans 6 (NASB):**23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul continues in Romans, chapter 7, explaining that we have died to the law and been married to another, Jesus Christ, as we continue in **Romans 7 (NASB):**1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. 3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man. 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

We have been joined to Him who was raised from the dead. That is, He is our life. Paul then says that we have been released from the law as we continue in **Romans 7 (NASB):**5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Paul tells us that the law is not sin, but shows us what sin is as we read in **Romans 7 (NASB):**7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "you shall not covet."

The law Paul is talking about here is not the law that makes a Jew a Jew as, say the law of circumcision or the law of the sacrifices for sin. Paul refers here to one of the ten commandments, "You shall not covet." We see that Paul affirms that the law is good in **Romans 7 (NASB):**12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Paul then explains that sin dwells in our flesh in **Romans 7 (NASB):**14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do,* but I am doing the very thing I hate. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do,* I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Paul then describes his present state as we read in **Romans 7 (NASB):**21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

Paul is saying that he joyfully concurs with the law of God in the inner man, that is, the

spirit of man. This is where we are born again. But Paul sees a different law in the members of his body, that is, his flesh, which is waging war against the law of his mind to become a prisoner of the law of sin in his members, his flesh. Paul continues in **Romans 7 (NASB):**24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Paul here reveals that the believer still has sin in his members, his flesh, but he thanks God who has set him, and us who believe as well, free from the body of this death. Paul then says that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is what has set us free from the law of sin and death in **Romans 8 (NASB):**1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

That is, when we believe and we are born again, the Spirit becomes the life of our spirits. Since He is the life of our spirit, that is our inner man, we do not have to obey the law of sin in our flesh, our outer man. And Paul speaks of this in **2 Corinthians 4 (NASB):**16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

As we continue in Romans, we see that, though our spirits are alive with the life of the Spirit, we must not walk according to the flesh as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB):**3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did:* sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

So God has condemned sin in the flesh and made it possible for the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in us who are alive in our spirits. And the keeping of the law, being weak through the flesh, could not give our spirits life, because we were already dead in sin. When the Spirit gives birth to our spirit, He is then the life of our spirit. This is why Paul says that it is the law of the Spirit of life that has set us free from the law of sin and death in our members. Our job then is not to keep the law, but to put off the old life of sin, and put on the new life in the Spirit. The new life in the Spirit is Christ in us as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB):**10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

And in Romans, chapter 9, Paul explains that the Jews tried to attain the righteousness of the law by works without faith, and that they failed as in **Romans 9 (NASB):**30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. 32 Why? Because *they did* not *pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "behold, i lay in zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed."

So even for Israel, the keeping of the law did not profit them if they had no faith. The scribes and Pharisees also were pursuing a law of righteousness, but did not arrive at that law, that is, the righteousness of faith, because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They were climbing up another way as Jesus says in **John 10 (NASB):**1 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.

Jesus is the door as He says in **John 10 (NASB):**7 So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.

It is by believing in Jesus that we enter the door and become one of His sheep. And when we enter the door by believing in Jesus, that is when we are justified. It is then that our faith, like Abraham, is credited to us as righteousness.

As Paul continues in Romans, chapter 10, he says that the Jews did not have knowledge about God's righteousness. Paul is not saying that Christ is the final cause of the law, but that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness so that the one who believes in Him may receive the free gift of Christ's righteousness apart from keeping the law as we read in **Romans 10 (NASB):**1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. 2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not

subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The scribes and the Pharisees were like thieves and robbers climbing up another way to get into the sheepfold. Jesus is the way, and the only way as we read in **John 14 (NASB):** 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes in Jesus. Paul then explains to us that the righteousness of faith is different from the righteousness based on the law as we read in **Romans 10 (NASB):**5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "do not say in your heart, 'who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 or 'who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." 8 But what does it say? "the word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "whoever believes in him will not be disappointed."

That is, the righteousness of faith is not based on something that we can do, but it is based on who we believe in. If we confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved Paul says in verse 9.

Now Paul also testifies that the righteousness of faith which he had was not his own, which came from keeping the law, but the righteousness of faith which he had was that which comes from God on the basis of faith as he reveals in **Philippians 3 (NASB):**8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul did not want a righteousness of his own, derived from keeping the Law. Rather, he would only have the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith in Christ. It is not what we do, but who we know. Do you know Mr. Jesus? Have you met Him?

Now, in paragraph five, Irenaeus points out that, when one asked Him "what he should do that he might inherit eternal life," Jesus "replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments."" This response, Irenaeus says, shows that the necessity of following Christ was taught by the law beforehand, that is, before Christ came. Actually, Paul says that the law was our trainer or tutor to bring us to Christ as we read in **Galatians 3 (NASB):**24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

The idea is that the law revealed sin in the life, and therefore the need for Christ as our Savior. The primary purpose of the law was to lead us to faith in Christ. The promise of the law and the prophets was that Christ would come, as Jesus says in **John 5 (NASB):**45 Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Jesus is the promise of the Old Testament that is fulfilled in the New Testament. Again, Irenaeus refers to Matthew 19:16-22 when Jesus was asked by a man what good thing he should do to obtain eternal life, and notes that Jesus responded that he should keep the commandments if he wished to enter into life as we read in **Matthew 19 (NASB):**16 And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" 17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." 18 Then he said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "you shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; 19 honor your father and mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." 20 The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" 21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he

was one who owned much property.

Jesus did not tell the man in this case that he had to believe in Him to be saved, as He plainly told the Jews in **John 8 (NASB**):22 So the Jews were saying, “Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?” 23 And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. 24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

The young man in Mattthew 19:22 had to first become aware of his sin. The Jews in John 8:22 were Pharisees who were arguing with Jesus about the law as in **John 8 (NASB):**12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." 13 So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true."

These Pharisees knew the law, but would not accept the testimony of the law, and did not even know God the Father. It is evident that they were in denial of their sin as we read in **John 8 (NASB):**17 Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. 18 I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me." 19 So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also." 20 These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

The Jewish Pharisees would not accept the testimony of the law. There was only one option left for them. They must believe in Jesus or perish in their sins as Jesus tells them in **John 8 (NASB):**24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

We must put the Scripture in Matthew, chapter 19, in context with this one in John, chapter 8, in order to understand what Jesus is saying. Jesus was telling the man in Matthew, chapter 19, that he should keep the commandments for they will teach him about his sin, and his need for a Savior, and will lead him to faith in Christ. When he comes to the knowledge of sin in his life through the commandments, he will then be lead to have faith in Jesus. So Jesus didn’t always bowl people over with the truth. As Irenaeus says, Jesus saw this man’s covetousness, and gave him what he needed, in the place where he was, at that time in his life. This man needed faith, and to get the faith he needed, Jesus told him to keep the commandments for they would teach him about his sin, and lead him to believe that he needed a Savior, Jesus Christ. This man had not yet entered the “door,” and was therefore not one of the sheep yet.

This event in Jesus’ life is also recorded in **Mark 10 (NASB):**17 As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments, 'do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" 20 And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." 21 Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22 But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

This same passage is found in Luke as well as in **Luke 18 (NASB):**18 A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

In this passage the man calls Jesus a good teacher. Jesus knew right away that the man did not recognize Him as the Son of God, and so he questions the man directly by saying, “Why do you call me good?” He evidently didn’t know Jesus from any other rabbi. This man evidently needed to be made aware of his sin, which is the reason why Jesus pointed him to the law.

In another Scripture parallel to this, Jesus asks a lawyer what is written in the law as in **Luke 10 (NASB):**25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” 27 And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” 28 And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.” 29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus told this lawyer that he had answered correctly, and that he should do this and he would live. The lawyer was on the right track. Jesus came and lived in perfect obedience under the law. The Old Covenant was still in force until His death on the cross. So when the Jews asked him about what to do to inherit eternal life, He told them what they should do under the Old Covenant since it was still in force. This is not to say that obedience to the law saved them. But obedience to the law would lead them to faith in Christ and thus be saved. Jesus said, "do this and you will live." Under the law, there were certain sins that were punishable by death such as the following:

1. Premeditated murder as in **Exodus 21 (NASB):**12 "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. 13 But if he did not lie in wait *for him,* but God let *him* fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place to which he may flee. 14 If, however, a man acts presumptuously toward his neighbor, so as to kill him craftily, you are to take him *even* from My altar, that he may die.
2. Striking father or mother as in **Exodus 21 (NASB):**15 "He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.
3. Stealing and selling a man, or possessing such a stolen man, as in **Exodus 21 (NASB):**16 "He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death.
4. Cursing father or mother as in **Exodus 21 (NASB):**17 "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.
5. Doing work on the Sabbath as in **Exodus 35 (NASB):**2 "For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy *day,* a sabbath of complete rest to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.
6. Idolatry and child sacrifice as in **Leviticus 20 (NASB):**1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "You shall also say to the sons of Israel: 'Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens sojourning in Israel who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones.
7. Adultery as in **Leviticus 20 (NASB):**10 'If *there is* a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.
8. Incest as in **Leviticus 20 (NASB):**11 If *there is* a man who lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death, their bloodguiltiness is upon them. 12 If *there is* a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.
9. Homosexuality as in **Leviticus 20 (NASB):**13 If *there is* a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.
10. Taking both a woman and her mother to wife as in **Leviticus 20 (NASB):**14 If *there is* a man who marries a woman and her mother, it is immorality; both he and they shall be burned with fire, so that there will be no immorality in your midst.
11. Lying sexually with an animal as in **Leviticus 20 (NASB):**15 If *there is* a man who lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; you shall also kill the animal. 16 If *there is* a woman who approaches any animal to mate with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.
12. A medium or spiritist as in **Leviticus 20 (NASB):**27 'Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.'"
13. Blaspheming the Name as in **Leviticus 24 (NASB):**10 Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the sons of Israel; and the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel struggled with each other in the camp. 11 The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name and cursed. So they brought him to Moses. (Now his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) 12 They put him in custody so that the command of the LORD might be made clear to them. 13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 14 "Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp,

and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then let all the congregation stone him. 15 You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If anyone curses his God, then he will bear his sin.
16 Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

If you kept the law you would live as in **Leviticus 18 (NASB):**5 So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.

Under the law it was an eye for an eye as in **Leviticus 24 (NASB):**17 'If a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death. 18 The one who takes the life of an animal shall make it good, life for life. 19 If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him. 21 Thus the one who kills an animal shall make it good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death. 22 There shall be one standard for you; it shall be for the stranger as well as the native, for I am the LORD your God.'" 23 Then Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, and they brought the one who had cursed outside the camp and stoned him with stones. Thus the sons of Israel did, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

You still had to have faith in the promise, that is Christ, to enter into eternal life. Evidently the man who was asking Jesus about what to do to inherit eternal life didn't know about his sin. Otherwise he would have known who was standing right in front of him, that is, Jesus, and that all he had to do to inherit eternal life was believe in Him as Jesus says in **John 5 (NASB):**24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

The apostles and disciples were faced with questions about the law after Jesus' resurrection. If they kept the law in force, they would be faced with these injunctions for capital punishment or the injunctions for injuries to one's neighbor, that is, an eye for an eye, and so forth. Fortunately it was not up to them. The Holy Spirit tells us through Paul's writings that we are not under the law, but that we are not without law to God. We are under the law of Christ as in **1 Corinthians 9 (NASB):**20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.

Under the law of Christ, we are not to sin, but we are completely free and able to reach anyone with the Gospel. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free as we read in **Galatians 5 (NASB):**1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

As to the end of paragraph five where Irenaeus says that Jesus did not preach another God the Father, certainly this is true. Irenaeus was and is very effective in demolishing Gnostic beliefs. However, his last statement, that "possessions distributed to the poor do annul former covetousness," is without Scriptural basis. Ireaneus says that Zaccheus made this "evident, when he said, "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one, I restore fourfold." However, the word "annul" has the idea of cancellation which could lead us to believe that good works atone for sins like covetousness. Our good works cannot cancel or atone for sin as we read in **Titus 3 (NASB):**5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,
6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Our salvation is not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. The word regeneration refers to being born again. Paul is saying that a cleansing or washing happens when we are born again. We are born again of the Spirit of God when He renews our spirit to life as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions,

made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We can make amends as Zacheus the tax collector did as a an act of repentance and a token of our thanks as we read in **Luke 19 (NASB):**8 Zacheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

But making amends is only a fruit of someone who has truly repented and been born again. It does not save us. Zacheus's faith in Christ saved him. And he demonstrated the faith which he had by his making amends.

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XIII

In this chapter, and paragraph one, Irenaeus is saying "that the Lord did not abrogate the natural [precepts] of the law, by which man is justified," and that the natural precepts of the law were extended and fulfilled by Jesus, as is shown by Jesus' words in Matthew, chapter 5. Jesus did not oppose or overturn the precepts of the past. Rather, according to Irenaeus, Jesus' words show that He was extending and fulfilling them, "as He does Himself declare: "Unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Jesus also commanded "not only to abstain from things forbidden by the law, but even from longing after them." With these words, Jesus was "affording greater scope to" the law, according to Irenaeus.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus is saying that the law was "laid down for those in bondage," and thus was "used to instruct the soul by means of those corporeal objects which were of an external nature." That is, the soul was instructed by the ritual laws, the laws of sacrifice, and the laws concerning the feasts which were to be kept on certain days of the year. The bondage Irenaeus refers to is sin, and the laws of an "external nature" are those which draw the soul "as by a bond, to obey its commandments, that man might learn to serve God." Irenaeus believed that the "Word set free the soul and taught that through it the body should be willingly purified." That is, when the Word, Jesus, came and died for us on the cross, He set the soul free, and there was no more need for the laws of an "external nature," which were "bonds of slavery." Thus the laws of an "external nature" have been removed. Man is now to "follow God without fetters." And "the laws of liberty," that is, the "natural precepts of he law," have been "extended, and subjection to the king increased." This is "so that no one who is converted should appear unworthy to Him who set him free, but that the piety and obedience due to the Master of the household should be equally rendered both by servants and children; while the children possess greater confidence [than the servants], inasmuch as the working of liberty is greater and more glorious than that obedience which is rendered in [a state of] slavery."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus believed that the Lord was extending the natural laws when He forbade "even concupiscence," and when He "prohibited anger," and when He told us "to share all our possessions with the poor; and not to love our neighbours only, but even our enemies; and not merely to be liberal givers and bestowers, but even that we should present a gratuitous gift to those who take away our goods." The Lord gave these commands "so that thou mayest not follow him as a slave, but may as a free man go before him, showing thyself in all things kindly disposed and useful to thy neighbour, not regarding their evil intentions, but performing thy kind offices, assimilating thyself to the Father, "who maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust."" All of these commands of the Lord were "fulfilling, extending, and widening" the law among us. But the Lord "did not set us free for this purpose, that we should depart from Him," but that we should love Him more, "the more we receive His grace." Irenaeus believed that

"no one, indeed, while placed out of reach of the Lord's benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation." By this statement he seems to believe that no one who is not submitted to a church in apostolic succession can be saved. Irenaeus concludes, "Now the more we have loved Him, the more glory shall we receive from Him, when we are continually in the presence of the Father."

In this chapter, Irenaeus makes man's justification dependent on his obeying the natural precepts of the law. Although he has not really defined these precepts yet, we understand from what he has said in this chapter that they are not the ritual laws of sacrifice and temple service. And these natural precepts he says were observed even by those who were justified by faith, and who pleased God, previous to the giving of the law. We will understand more about what these natural laws are in the next chapter.

What we have tried to show in this chapter is that man is not saved or justified by doing the works of the law. That is, man's salvation is not dependent on his obedience to the law. While Jesus did give greater scope to the law, He did not add, as it were, more precepts to the law. He only clarified the intent of the law, and thereby made sin utterly sinful. The prophet Samuel spoke to Saul after Saul had disobeyed the word of the Lord to not offer the sacrifice until after Samuel had returned. Samuel said as we read in **1 Samuel 15 (NASB):**22 Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams. 23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king."

Samuel here says that rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Did Samuel extend the law here by saying that we must obey the very voice of the Lord, and not just do sacrifice? Rather, Samuel clarified the law. God wants our hearts, not our sacrifices. We must listen for His voice and obey it in whatever He tells us. In just the same way as Samuel clarified the true intent of the law to Saul, the Lord Jesus clarified the law to the Jews. In so doing, He made the law an even better tutor to bring us to faith in Christ by which we are saved.

As for Irenaeus' making the Church the procurer of the Lord's benefits for us, we know from the Scriptures that we are not saved by the Church, but the members of the Church are saved by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. It is our faith in Jesus Christ that makes us each individually a member of the Church. It is our relationship to Him that makes us a member of His body. The Church is composed of all those who have such a faith. The Church does not give this faith to the members. Our faith is a gift of God to each member individually.

The Scriptures do teach that man is sinful, and that he is in bondage to sin, and that he is held by death as a result. However, the Scriptures teach us that the purpose of the law was not to save us, but to convict us of our sin as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):**19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

And the law does instruct the soul by means of corporeal objects of an external nature as Irenaeus says. In the book of Leviticus, chapter 23 the Feasts of the Lord are described as in **Leviticus 23 (King James Bible):**39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day [shall be] a Sabbath, and on the eighth day [shall be] a sabbath. 40 And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. 41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. [It shall be] a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: 43 That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I [am] the LORD your God. 44 And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

In this way we could think of the law as a bond which draws the soul to obey its commandments as Irenaeus says. The law prescribes remembrance of the times when God delivered Israel in miraculous ways as when He made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. But the law did not make them righteous. It only gave them knowledge of sin as Paul tells us in **Galatians 3**

(NASB):19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. 20 Now a mediator is not for one *party only;* whereas God is *only* one. 21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. 22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

The law cannot impart life. This is why keeping the law, no matter how blameless we are in its commands, will not save us. This is why Jesus had to come and die for our sins, so that He could do what we could not do for ourselves. Jesus does set the soul free as it is sanctified by faith in Him, since our sanctification in this life occurs in our souls. But the body is not purified and free from sin until the resurrection. That is, the body still has sin as a nature and is death doomed. But our spirits are made alive to God, and we do not have to yield to the sin in our members as Paul says in **Romans 6 (NASB):**17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

We are freed from sin in our spirits, but not in our bodies for Paul tells us that nothing good dwells in our flesh as in **Romans 7 (NASB):**18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not.

This is why we must put off and put on as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

On one final note, when Irenaeus says in paragraph three, "and instead of that which runs thus, "Thou shalt not kill," He prohibited anger," referring to Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus did not prohibit anger, for God Himself is angry as we read in **Isaiah 47 (NASB):**6 "I was angry with My people, I profaned My heritage And gave them into your hand. You did not show mercy to them, On the aged you made your yoke very heavy.

Again we read Moses' confession in **Deuteronomy 4 (NASB):**21 "Now the LORD was angry with me on your account, and swore that I would not cross the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

To say that God has sin is against the Scripture as we read in **Deuteronomy 32 (NASB):**4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.

The Lord's instructions to us through Paul are as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE *of you* WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. 26 BE ANGRY, AND *yet* DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.

We will learn more about the ritual precepts of the law in the next chapter. In the chapter after that, we will learn more about the natural precepts of the law.

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XIV

To summarize, in this chapter of Irenaeus he uses the word "serve" four times, and the word "service" seven times. Irenaeus also used the words "follow", "followers", "followed", "following" a total of ten times. This seems to be related to his underlying theme in these three paragraphs. Irenaeus states very early on in paragraph one that God formed Adam, not because He needed his service, "but that He might have [some one] upon whom to confer His benefits." Irenaeus also states, "Nor did He stand in need of our service when He ordered us to follow Him;" To follow and to serve is Irenaeus' message in these paragraphs. But Irenaeus is not just encouraging us to follow and to serve here. Irenaeus has a deeper message. He is encouraging us to be saved by our serving and following as he continues as he says, "Nor did He stand in need of our service when He ordered us to follow Him; but He thus bestowed salvation upon ourselves. For to follow the Saviour is to be

a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light." That is, Irenaeus is saying that "He ordered us to follow Him" in order that we would in this way have salvation bestowed upon ourselves. That this is so is confirmed by his very next statement, "For to follow the Saviour is to be a partaker of salvation, and to follow light is to receive light."

Irenaeus also mentions the word "law" four times. The first two instances are in paragraph two as follows:

1) "And He did Himself furnish guidance to those who beheld Him not in Egypt, while to those who became unruly in the desert He promulgated a law very suitable [to their condition]."
2) "And the Word, passing through all those [men], did liberally confer benefits upon His subjects, by drawing up in writing a law adapted and applicable to every class [among them]."

The second two instances are in paragraph three as follows:

3) "Thus, too, He imposed upon the [Jewish] people the construction of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, the election of the Levites, sacrifices also, and oblations, legal monitions, and all the other service of the law."
4) "And again, having first mentioned what are contained in the law, he goes on to say: "Now all these things happened to them in a figure; but they were written for our admonition, upon whom the end of the ages is come," referring to 1 Corinthians 10:11.

We will see in the very next chapter of Irenaeus' writing the importance of these words.

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XV

Now to summarize, in Irenaeus' thinking, one had to have faith in God and keep the Decalogue, that is, the natural precepts of the law, in order to obtain salvation. In addition, Irenaeus would include in the natural precepts of the law the two greatest commandments, to love God and to love our neighbor, as well. Irenaeus points out in **Book 4: Chapter XII**, **paragraph 1**, that " the commandment of the law", is "the love of God." And again in paragraph 2, he says, "But that this is the first and greatest commandment, and that the next [has respect to love] towards our neighbour, the Lord has taught, when He says that the entire law and the prophets hang upon these two commandments," referring to **Matthew 22 (NASB):**34 But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. 35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him *a question*, testing Him, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' 38 This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' 40 On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

To Irenaeus, keeping the natural precepts of the law was how you followed Christ, and were thereby justified and obtained salvation. Again in the same book in paragraph 5, Irenaeus states, "Now, that the law did beforehand teach mankind the necessity of following Christ, He does Himself make manifest, when He replied as follows to him who asked Him what he should do that he might inherit eternal life: "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments." Irenaeus quotes the Lord Jesus responding to the man who had asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life as he continues in this paragraph 5, "again the Lord replies: "Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself,"— setting as an ascending series (velut gradus) before those who wished to follow Him, the precepts of the law, as the entrance into life; and what He then said to one He said to all." Again Irenaeus tells us in the same paragraph 5 in Book 4: Chapter XII, "But He taught that they should obey the commandments which God enjoined from the beginning, and do away with their former covetousness by good works, and follow after Christ."

The “commandments which God enjoined from the beginning” in Irenaeus’ thinking are the Decalogue and the love of God and of our neighbor. And though Irenaeus does not quote it, there is another passage in Luke, chapter 10, that Irenaeus probably was familiar with, and which seems to be a source of his belief that one must observe the law to be saved as we read in **Luke 10 (NASB):**25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" 27 And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE." 29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

So we are to understand that Irenaeus included the two greatest laws among the natural laws, in addition to the Decalogue, “which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation,” he says in **Book 4: Chapter XV**. I believe that Irenaeus would refer to the rest of the law as the “course of discipline,” the “yoke of bondage,” which is “a state of servitude suited to their wish.”

Now in this chapter, Book 4: Chapter XV, Irenaeus is very firm in his division of the law into natural precepts which one is required to observe, he says, or there is no salvation. And he then quotes Moses in Deuteronomy 5:22 to support his contention that the Lord did not require anything more for salvation than these ten commandments, or literally, “words”. Again, here is what Irenaeus says in paragraph one, “For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them. As Moses says in Deuteronomy, “These are all the words which the Lord spake to the whole assembly of the sons of Israel on the mount, and He added no more; and He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me.” For this reason [He did so], that they who are willing to follow Him might keep these commandments.”

However, Irenaeus is in error here, first of all because, as we noted above, the passage in Deuteronomy 5:22 does not use the word “demand,” but simply says He “added no more.” Not only so, but the Lord requires all of His statutes and ordinances to be kept, and not just the Decalogue, as we find in **Leviticus 19 (NASB):**37 'You shall thus observe all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am the LORD.'"

Second, we find no reference to the term, “natural precepts,” anywhere in the Scriptures. The work of the law is said to be written in the hearts of all men in Romans 2:15. But there is simply no division of the law in this way recorded in the Scriptures, nor is it implied. And the two greatest commandments, which Irenaeus would include in the natural precepts of the law, are not in the Decalogue “which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation,” according to Irenaeus.

Third, the law is referred to by the apostles, Paul, and Peter, as a yoke of bondage. The term “yoke of bondage” is used in the New Testament in **Galatians 5 (King James Bible):**1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

This verse is also translated in another version as a “yoke of slavery” as in **Galatians 5 (NASB):**1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

It is also referred to as a yoke the apostle Peter nor the fathers were able to bear as we read in **Acts 15 (NASB):**10 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

However, the law is not divided up by the apostles into the “natural precepts” of the law, and “a course of discipline,” which is a “yoke of bondage” as Irenaeus asserts. The apostles refer to the law as a yoke of bondage because of the difficulty of living under the law. Until Christ came, the people of Israel were under the law because Christ had not come yet. That is, the law told them that they had sin, and they looked forward to the coming of their Messiah, the Redeemer, Christ, in the hope that He would redeem them from their sin and make all things right. This was the focus of the law, that is, to teach people about their sin and their need for a Savior, who is Christ. Irenaeus does not understand the freedom that is in Christ Jesus. Jesus didn’t just set us free from the laws of sacrifice and the ordinances. Jesus set us free from sin as a nature, and thereby set us free from being under the condemnation of the law.

Now, as we study the Scriptures, we find that the law naturally falls into three main divisions. The first is the Decalogue which we find in Exodus 20:1-17. Next are the ordinances which we find in Exodus 21:1 to 23:33. And finally we find the law of the priesthood, or the liturgical law, in Exodus 25:1 to 30:38. But observing any part of the law has never been what saved us or the Israelites or those before Moses' time. We will see why shortly.

The problem begins in this chapter for Irenaeus because he quotes Deuteronomy 5:22 out of context. Here is the sequence of events Irenaeus asserts in this chapter of his writing:

- First, Moses says in Deuteronomy, "These are all the words which the Lord spake to the whole assembly of the sons of Israel on the mount, and He added no more;"
- Second, "and He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me." That is, God gave them to Moses.
- Third, "But when they turned themselves to make a calf, and had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage;" In other words, God gave them the rest of the law which was the "yoke of bondage" when they made the calf and turned back in their minds to Egypt.

If Irenaeus would have taken into account Exodus, chapters 19 to 34, he would have seen that what actually transpired was quite different than what he has summarized. The actual timeline and sequence of events is recorded in Scripture as follows:

1.) The sons of Israel camped in front of Mount Sinai as we read in Exodus **19 (NASB):**1 In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain.

2.) Moses went up to God and the Lord spoke to him and told him that if they would obey His voice and keep his covenant that they would be His own possession as we read in **Exodus 19 (NASB):**3 Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 5 Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

3.) Moses told the people all the words that the Lord had spoken and they responded as in **Exodus 19 (NASB):**8 All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.

4.) The Lord told Moses that He would speak with him in the hearing of the people as we read in **Exodus 19 (NASB):**9 The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever."

5.) Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

6.) The Lord then spoke in the hearing of the people on the third day of the third month after they had gone out of the land of Egypt as we read in **Exodus 19 (NASB):**16 So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

7.) The Lord told Moses to go down and warn the people again, and then to come up to Him on the top of Mount Sinai as we read in **Exodus 19 (NASB**):24 Then the LORD said to him, "Go

down and come up *again,* you and Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, or He will break forth upon them." 25 So Moses went down to the people and told them.

8.) Then God spoke the ten commandments to Moses in the hearing of all the people, and began as in **Exodus 20 (NASB)**:1 Then God spoke all these words, saying, 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. 7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. 8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. 12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. 13 "You shall not murder. 14 "You shall not commit adultery. 15 "You shall not steal. 16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

9.) After hearing God speak all the words of the Decalogue, the people spoke to Moses as we read in **Exodus 20 (NASB)**:18 All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it,* they trembled and stood at a distance. 19 Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die."

10.) Moses told the people that God wanted to test them, and put the fear of Him in them so they would not sin as we read in **Exodus 20 (NASB)**:20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

11.) Moses then approached the cloud again in **Exodus 20 (NASB)**:21 So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God *was.*

12.) Then the Lord spoke to Moses again and began to give him more commands as we read in **Exodus 20 (NASB)**:22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'You yourselves have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven. 23 You shall not make *other gods* besides Me; gods of silver or gods of gold, you shall not make for yourselves. 24 You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you. 25 If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it. 26 And you shall not go up by steps to My altar, so that your nakedness will not be exposed on it.'

13.) Then the Lord began to give the ordinances to Moses as we read in **Exodus 21 (NASB)**:1 "Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them:

14.) The Lord gave them ordinances about Hebrew servants in 21:2-11 as in **Exodus 21 (NASB)**:2 "If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.

15.) The Lord gave Moses ordinances about personal injuries in verses 21:12-36 as in **Exodus 21 (NASB)**:12 "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. 13 But if he

did not lie in wait *for him,* but God let *him* fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place to which he may flee.

16.) The Lord gave Moses ordinances about property rights in 22:1-15 as in **Exodus 22 (NASB)**:1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep. 2 "If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account. 3 *But* if the sun has risen on him, there will be bloodguiltiness on his account. He shall surely make restitution; if he owns nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

17.) The Lord also gave Moses ordinances for various social responsibilites in 22:16-31 and 23:1-9 as in **Exodus 22 (NASB)**:16 "If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and lies with her, he must pay a dowry for her *to be* his wife. 17 If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the dowry for virgins.

18.) The Lord also gave Moses ordinances about Sabbaths and the national festival in 23:10-19 as in **Exodus 23 (NASB)**:10 "You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, 11 but *on* the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard *and* your olive grove.

19.) The Lord gave Moses encouragement about obeying His voice in 23:20-33 as in **Exodus 23 (NASB)**:20 "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. 21 Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him. 22 But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

Evidently the Lord finished speaking to Moses all of these words, and at some later time the Lord spoke to Moses again and told him to come up to Him with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel as we read in **Exodus 24 (NASB)**:1 Then He said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall worship at a distance. 2 Moses alone, however, shall come near to the LORD, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him."

The next events in sequence are as follows:

20.) Moses recounts to the people all the words of the Lord, and the ordinances to the people as we read in **Exodus 24 (NASB)**:3 Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!"

21.) Moses then writes down all the words of the Lord in a book as in **Exodus 24 (NASB)**:4 Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

22.) Moses then offers sacrifice on the altar he has built in **Exodus 24 (NASB)**:5 He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. 6 Moses took half of the blood and put *it* in basins, and the *other* half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

23.) Moses then reads to the people the book of the covenant he wrote the night before in **Exodus 24 (NASB)**:7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read *it* in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" 8 So Moses took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

24.) Then the Lord spoke to Moses as in **Exodus 24 (NASB):**9 Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. 11 Yet He

did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank.

25.) Moses then went up alone to be with God on the mountain and stayed there 40 days and 40 nights as we read in **Exodus 24 (NASB):**12 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction." 13 So Moses arose with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. 14 But to the elders he said, "Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, let him approach them." 15 Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 16 The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. 17 And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. 18 Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

26.) During this time the Lord spoke to Moses about building the tabernacle, a sanctuary where the Lord could dwell among them as we read in **Exodus 25 (NASB):**1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution. 3 This is the contribution which you are to raise from them: gold, silver and bronze, 4 blue, purple and scarlet *material,* fine linen, goat *hair,* 5 rams' skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, 6 oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, 7 onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece. 8 Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.
9 According to all that I am going to show you, *as* the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct *it.*

27.) *God gave Moses instructions during this forty day period about the Ark of the Covenant, the Showbread, the Golden Lampstand, and the priesthood, and all the priestly garments and tabernacle walls in Exodus, chapters 25 through 31.*

28.) *It was during this forty day period that Israel grew restless and made the golden calf as we read in* **Exodus 32 (NASB):**1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." 2 Aaron said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me." 3 Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought *them* to Aaron. 4 He took *this* from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." 5 Now when Aaron saw *this,* he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow *shall be* a feast to the LORD." 6 So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

29.) It was at this point that the Lord broke off His instructions to Moses regarding the ordinances and the law of the priesthood, and told him to go down because the people had rebelled against Him and sinned as in **Exodus 32 (NASB):**7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves.* 8 They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!'" 9 The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. 10 Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."

30.) Moses then interceded for the people as we read in **Exodus 32 (NASB):**11 Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your

people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil *intent* He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about *doing* harm to Your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.'" 14 So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people. 15 Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; they were written on one *side* and the other. 16 The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets. 17 Now when Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a sound of war in the camp." 18 But he said, "It is not the sound of the cry of triumph, Nor is it the sound of the cry of defeat; But the sound of singing I hear."

31.) When Moses saw what the people had done, he threw the stone tables on the ground, shattering them as we read in **Exodus 32 (NASB):**19 It came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and *the* dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain. 20 He took the calf which they had made and burned *it* with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and made the sons of Israel drink *it.*21 Then Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought *such* great sin upon them?" 22 Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. 23 For they said to me, 'Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 24 I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave *it* to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."

32.) Moses commanded the Levites to strap on the swords and administer discipline to the unrepentant in **Exodus 32 (NASB):**25 Now when Moses saw that the people were out of control—for Aaron had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies— 26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, *come* to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him. 27 He said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Every man *of you* put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.'" 28 So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day. 29 Then Moses said, "Dedicate yourselves today to the LORD—for every man has been against his son and against his brother—in order that He may bestow a blessing upon you today."

33.) The golden calf was a great sin, and the Lord chastened Israel for it as we read in **Exodus 32 (NASB**):30 On the next day Moses said to the people, "You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the LORD, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." 31 Then Moses returned to the LORD, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. 32 But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!" 33 The LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. 34 But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My angel shall go before you; nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin." 35 Then the LORD smote the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

34.) Sometime later the Lord spoke again to Moses and told him to make two more stone tablets like the first as we read in **Exodus 34 (NASB):**1 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered. 2 So be ready by morning, and come up in the

morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain. 3 No man is to come up with you, nor let any man be seen anywhere on the mountain; even the flocks and the herds may not graze in front of that mountain." 4 So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand.

35.) Then the Lord spoke to Moses again of the covenant as we read in **Exodus 34 (NASB)**:10 Then God said, "Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the LORD, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you.

36.) The Lord then told Moses to observe all that He was commanding him this day as we read in **Exodus 34 (NASB)**:11 "Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. 12 Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. 13 But *rather,* you are to tear down their altars and smash their *sacred* pillars and cut down their Asherim 14 —for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God— 15 otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, 16 and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons *also* to play the harlot with their gods.
17 You shall make for yourself no molten gods. 18 "You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt. 19 "The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep. 20 You shall redeem with a lamb the first offspring from a donkey; and if you do not redeem *it,* then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. None shall appear before Me empty-handed. 21 "You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; *even* during plowing time and harvest you shall rest. 22 You shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, *that is,* the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. 23 Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. 24 For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before the LORD your God. 25 "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, nor is the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover to be left over until morning. 26 "You shall bring the very first of the first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God. "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."

37.) Then the Lord spoke to Moses over another period of forty days and told him to write down all the words that the Lord spoke to him and that in accordance with these words he would make a covenant with Israel. Then God wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments as we read in **Exodus 34 (NASB)**:27 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." 28 So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

This timeline and sequence of events proves conclusively that God did not give the ordinances and the law of the priesthood or liturgical law, in other words the “yoke of bondage” if you will, in response to Israel’s sin of the golden calf. God was in the process of giving the ordinances and the liturgical law to Moses when the Israelites grew impatient with Moses’ absence, and asked Aaron to make the golden calf. God was not dividing His law up into good and bad laws. God had a purpose in the tabernacle, the Showbread, the priesthood, and all

the laws of the Old Covenant. These laws foreshadowed real things in a tangible way, and gave the Israelites an understanding of what was necessary in order to redeem mankind from sin, and make things right with God.

Now the Old Covenant with Israel consisted of the Decalogue and all the other commandments God gave to Moses. The Decalogue was written on two stone tablets which were the tokens of the Old Covenant with Israel, just as circumcision was the token of the covenant God made with Abraham as we read in **Genesis 17 (NASB)**:9 God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a *servant* who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. 13 A *servant* who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

The covenant with Israel was a continuation of the covenant God made with Abraham, and was God's set purpose all along. The Lord had made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan. The sons of Israel were their descendants, and so God remembered His covenant as we read in **Exodus 6 (NASB)**:2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD; 3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them. 4 I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned.
5 Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. 6 Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you *for* a possession; I am the LORD.'"

This covenant to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, that is to Isaac, Jacob, and all Jacob's descendants, meaning all Israel, is an everlasting covenant as we read in **Psalm 105 (NASB)**:6 O seed of Abraham, His servant, O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones! 7 He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth. 8 He has remembered His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations, 9 *The covenant* which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac. 10 Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant, 11 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan As the portion of your inheritance,"

The Lord gave Moses the two stone tablets twice, and each time it was His set purpose to make a people for Himself and to give them the land of Canaan. The Lord spoke many words to Moses after He spoke the ten commandments to all the assembly from the cloud, and over a period of forty days He told him to set up the tabernacle, a sanctuary where God might dwell among them. The Lord also commanded that priests should minister before him in this tabernacle, and that sacrifice for sin would be made, though only sacrifices of bulls and goats that could not take away sin. This was not an after thought, or something God brought about because the people sinned a great sin, but it was God's set plan all along.

And this same sequence of events is recorded again in Deuteronomy, chapter five as we read in **Deuteronomy 5 (NASB):**23 And when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24 You said, 'Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. 25 Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer, then we will die. 26 For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have,* and lived? 27 Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do *it.*'

And then the Lord speaks more to Moses as in **Deuteronomy 5 (NASB):**28 "The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken. 29 Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever! 30 Go, say to them, "Return to your tents." 31 But as for you, stand here by Me, that I may speak to you all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe *them* in the land which I give them to possess.' 32 So you shall observe to do just as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left. 33 You shall walk in all the way which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which you will possess.

Here the Lord tells Moses that He wants Israel to keep all His commandments always. The Lord says that they are to walk in all the way which He has commanded them. And again in chapter six of Deuteronomy it is written as in **Deuteronomy 6 (NASB):**4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Again the Lord says in **Deuteronomy 6 (NASB):**17 You should diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you.

The Israelites were commanded to teach their children all the commandments of the Lord as in **Deuteronomy 6 (NASB):**20 "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *do* the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments *mean* which the LORD our God commanded you?' 21 then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand.
22 Moreover, the LORD showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; 23 He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.' 24 So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as *it is* today. 25 It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.

The ten commandments, or the Decalogue, were spoken by God to Moses in the hearing of all the people out of the cloud so that the people would fear the Lord and serve Him always. The rest of the Lord's commands were not spoken in the hearing of the people. But they were none the less the words of the Lord, and they were to be obeyed. Israel was to obey all the commandments of the Lord. In fact, Israel was to live, not by every command, but by every word of the Lord as in **Deuteronomy 8 (NASB):**1 "All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore *to give* to your forefathers. 2 You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 3 He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

So the ten commandments were part of the covenant the Lord made with Israel, but they were not the totality of the covenant. The ten commandments may be said to be the standard of God's righteousness, but they are not the totality of His righteousness. The ten commandments spoke of particular sins, but not of all possible sins. This is why Jesus seems to extend the law as we read in **Matthew 5 (NASB):**27 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; 28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

It's not that Jesus made more laws, but He was showing us that the Decalogue, the ten commandments, show us what sin is like. Lustful thoughts are not specifically mentioned in the ten commandments, but Jesus points out that they are still sins. They did not become sins when Jesus pointed them out as sins. They were always sins, but we were not aware.

Jesus pointed out that there were weightier matters in the law, but the whole law was to be obeyed as in **Matthew 23 (NASB):**23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe the mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

So the words, “and he added no more,” at the end of verse 22 in Deuteronomy chapter 5, mean simply that God added no more in the hearing of the people to the standard of His righteousness. They do not mean that God “did demand nothing more of them,” for it is abundantly clear in the Scriptures that God demands obedience to His every command, and His voice, and even His every word.

Before Israel crossed the Jordan to enter the promised land, Moses gave them a charge to keep all of the commandments of the Lord as in **Deuteronomy 27 (NASB):**1 Then Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying, "Keep all the commandments which I command you today.

And there was a curse on everyone who did not do all the commandments of the covenant. As Israel stood poised to enter the land, Moses commanded six tribes to stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people and six tribes to stand on Mount Ebal for the curse as in **Deuteronomy 27 (NASB):**25 'Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

The curse was on those who did not observe to do all the law, and not just the ten commandments. The command to be careful to do all the Lord’s commandments is repeated again in **Deuteronomy 28 (NASB):**1 "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God: 3 "Blessed *shall* you *be* in the city, and blessed *shall* you *be* in the country. 4 "Blessed *shall be* the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.

Other blessings are mentioned in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. The Lord promised victory over their enemies, and abundance of produce and livestock if they were obedient and if they did not turn aside from any of the words He commanded them as in **Deuteronomy 28 (NASB):**12 The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. 13 The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe *them* carefully, 14 and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Again, if Israel did not obey all His commandments and statutes, all the curses would come upon them as we read in **Deuteronomy 28 (NASB):**15 "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: 16 "Cursed *shall* you *be* in the city, and cursed *shall* you *be* in the country. 17 "Cursed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl. 18 "Cursed *shall be* the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock. 19 "Cursed *shall* you *be* when you come in, and cursed *shall* you *be* when you go out.

Many more curses are pronounced in Deuteronomy 28:20-68. All these words, the blessings and the curses, are in the covenant which the Lord made with Israel as we read in **Deuteronomy 29 (NASB):**1 These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb.

Horeb was another name for the mountain of God as in **Exodus 3 (NASB):**1 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.

Horeb is used interchangeably with Mount Sinai, which was where the Lord gave the ten commandments to Israel, as well as all of the ordinances over a period of forty days and forty nights as we read in **Exodus 24 (NASB):**12 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction." 13 So Moses arose with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. 14 But to

the elders he said, "Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, let him approach them." 15 Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 16 The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. 17 And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. 18 Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Now, that the blessings and curses were a part of the covenant and written in the book of the law is shown in **Deuteronomy 29 (NASB):** 21 Then the LORD will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the law.

And Joshua was commanded to meditate on this book of the law day and night so that he would be carerful to do all that is written in it as we read in **Joshua 1 (NASB):**6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. 8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

The reason that Joshua was commanded to meditate on the book of the law day and night is because every word of God is inspired, literally God-breathed, as in **2 Timothy 3 (NASB):**16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

This is why the word of God is described as living as in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):**12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

It is the whole word of God that is inspired and living, and not just the ten commandments. It is the word of God that is a light to our path as we read in **Psalm 119 (NASB):**105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

And Psalm 19 describes the law of the Lord as perfect in **Psalm 119 (NASB**):7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. 10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

This Psalm describes the whole law, and not just the ten commandments. The whole law reveals truth about God that is not found in the ten commandments. For example, when the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus questioning Him, he responded as in **Mark 12 (NASB**):24 Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God? 25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26 But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *passage* about *the burning* bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken."

Jesus points out that the truth about the resurrection was revealed in the book of Exodus, one of the first five books of the Bible, which God commanded Moses to write. These five books are also known as the Torah, and are also referred to simply as “the Law.” Whatever we call them, they are included in the Scriptures and as such are inspired by God. And all the words of God are truth for He is the God of truth as we read in **Psalm 31 (NASB**):5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth.

The Decalogue is the standard of God’s righteousness, but the Decalogue is only a small part of the truth of God revealed in the word of God. We need all the truth in the word of God in order to truly be free and live for Him.

Irenaeus continues his writing with the words, “But when they turned themselves to make a calf, and had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage.” The term “yoke of bondage” is used in the New Testament in **Galatians 5 (King James Bible):**1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

It is also translated a “yoke of slavery” as in **Galatians 5 (NASB):**1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Irenaeus is trying to tell us that the ten commandments and the other natural precepts of the law such as the commandments to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as our self are what we must keep in order to obtain salvation. The rest of the law Irenaeus calls the “yoke of bondage” that Paul mentions here in Galatians. Irenaeus also leads us to believe that some of the laws of Moses are the bad laws spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel, for Irenaeus says that when the Israelites “had gone back in their minds to Egypt, desiring to be slaves instead of free-men, they were placed for the future in a state of servitude suited to their wish,—[a slavery] which did not indeed cut them off from God, but subjected them to the yoke of bondage as Ezekiel the prophet, when stating the reasons for the giving of such a law, declares: “And their eyes were after the desire of their heart; and I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live,” referring to Ezekiel 20:24-25.

These verses in Ezekiel must be read in context within the book, and the time that it was written. Here is the verse in the immediate context in which it was written.

> **Ezekiel 20 (NASB):**23 Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the wilderness that I would disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries, 24 because they had not obeyed my laws but had rejected my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes lusted after their parents’ idols. 25 So I gave them other statutes that were not good and laws through which they could not live; 26 I defiled them through their gifts—the sacrifice of every firstborn—that I might fill them with horror so they would know that I am the LORD.’

By the time Ezekiel was writing this, Israel was in captivity in Babylon as we read in **Ezekiel 1 (NASB):**1 Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth *day* of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. 2 (On the fifth of the month in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile, 3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the LORD came upon him.).

This exile came about because Israel had rejected the laws of the Lord. Before Moses died, the Lord told him to lay his hands on Joshua and appoint him as the new leader of Israel. Joshua took Moses’ place and led the Israelites in conquest of the promised land. This is recorded in the book of Joshua. Israel went through the times of the Judges as the book of Judges records. During this time godly men and women such as Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, and Deborah, and Samuel led Israel. Finally a king was appointed. Saul became Israel’s first king, but he was rejected because of his sin. David was a man after God’s own heart and led the Israelites to conquer Goliath and the Philistines. David became King and his heart was perfect toward the Lord all his days except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba. David committed adultery with Bathsheba and when she became pregnant by David, David had Uriah killed in battle by his commander Joab. Nathan the prophet was sent by the Lord to rebuke David as we read in **2 Samuel 12 (NASB**):9 Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.

The Lord forgave David in **2 Samuel 12 (NASB**):13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.
14 However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die." 15 So Nathan went to his house.

David soon had another son by Bathsheba and they named him Solomon. The kingdom of Israel reached its pinnacle in the reign of Solomon. However, at the end of his reign, he fell into sin. He had many foreign

wives in disobedience to the Lord's command not to take foreign wives as we read in **1 Kings 11 (NASB)**:4 For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father *had been.* 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father *had done.* 7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. 8 Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

As a result, the Lord judged Israel because of Solomon as we read in **1 Kings 11 (NASB)**:9 Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded. 11 So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. 12 Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, *but* I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, *but* I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

The kingdom of Israel became divided in the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Jeroboam eventually became king over the ten tribes in the north. Rehoboam reigned over Judah and Benjamin. Soon however Jeroboam set up idols for the northern tribes to worship in Dan and Bethel. This became a snare to Israel and they went into captivity as a result by the Assyrians in 723 BC. Here is the account of their captivity and why in **2 Kings 17 (NASB)**:6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and settled them in Halah and Habor, *on* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 7 Now *this* came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods 8 and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel, and *in the customs* of the kings of Israel which they had introduced. 9 The sons of Israel did things secretly which were not right against the LORD their God. Moreover, they built for themselves high places in all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city. 10 They set for themselves *sacred* pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, 11 and there they burned incense on all the high places as the nations *did* which the LORD had carried away to exile before them; and they did evil things provoking the LORD. 12 They served idols, concerning which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this thing." 13 Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets *and* every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets." 14 However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God. 15 They rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers and His warnings with which He warned them. And they followed vanity and became vain, and *went* after the nations which surrounded them, concerning which the LORD had commanded them not to do like them. 16 They forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God and made for themselves molten images, *even* two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. 17 Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him. 18 So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah.

Israel was led into captivity because of sin. They forsook all the commandments of the Lord and worshipped other gods. They rejected His statutes and His covenant. However, Judah still had one tribe and was faithful a little while longer.

Judah had some good kings who were faithful to the Lord, but after Hezekiah there was only one who was faithful, and that was Josiah. But Hezekiah's son did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any king before or after him as we read in **2 Kings 21 (NASB)**:1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hephzibah. 2 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.

3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. 4 He built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." 5 For he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 He made his son pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and used divination, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD provoking *Him to anger.* 7 Then he set the carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever. 8 And I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers, if only they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them." 9 But they did not listen, and Manasseh seduced them to do evil more than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel.

Because of Manasseh, the Lord finally determined judgment on Judah as well as we read in **2 Kings 21 (NASB)**:10 Now the LORD spoke through His servants the prophets, saying, 11 "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, having done wickedly more than all the Amorites did who *were* before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols; 12 therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am bringing *such* calamity on Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. 13 I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. 14 I will abandon the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they will become as plunder and spoil to all their enemies; 15 because they have done evil in My sight, and have been provoking Me to anger since the day their fathers came from Egypt, even to this day.'" 16 Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; besides his sin with which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

Incredibly, Josiah, Manasseh's son, became king of Judah and was zealous for the Lord as we read in **2 Kings 22 (NASB)**:1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name *was* Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. 2 He did right in the sight of the LORD and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left.

Josiah gave commands to clean up Israel and tear down the idols and repair the House of the Lord. When Hilkiah the high priest found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, he had Shaphan take it to King Josiah and read it to him. The King was greatly distressed when he realized that Israel had not obeyed all that was written as we read in **2 Kings 22 (NASB)**:11 When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. 12 Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant saying, 13 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the LORD that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

Josiah realized that the Lord's wrath was upon Israel because they had not obeyed all that was written in the book of the law, and not just because they had not obeyed the ten commandments. Josiah immediately inquired of the Lord and Huldah the prophetess responded as we read in **2 Kings 22 (NASB)**:14 So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her. 15 She said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to me, 16 thus says the LORD, "Behold, I bring evil on this place and on its inhabitants, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read. 17 Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods that they might provoke Me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore My wrath burns against this place, and it shall not be quenched."' 18 But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD thus shall you say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "*Regarding* the words which you have heard, 19 because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you," declares the LORD. 20 "Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your

fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place."'" So they brought back word to the king.

In 2 Kings, chapter 23, it is recorded how zealous Josiah was for the Lord. He led the people back to the Lord as we read in **2 Kings 23 (NASB)**:24 Moreover, Josiah removed the mediums and the spiritists and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25 Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

However the Lord would not turn from His wrath for the sins of Judah were too great as we see in **2 Kings 23 (NASB)**:26 However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. 27 The LORD said, "I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"

Josiah was killed in the battle with Pharoah Neco, king of Egypt, and every king after him did evil in the sight of the Lord. Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead as we read in **2 Kings 23 (NASB):** 31 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. 33 Pharaoh Neco imprisoned him at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a fine of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

Eliakim, son of Josiah, reigned after his brother as we read in **2 Kings 22 (NASB):**34 Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the place of Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz away and brought *him* to Egypt, and he died there.

Johoiakim also did evil in the sight of the Lord as we read in **2 Kings 22 (NASB):**36 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name *was* Zebidah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. 37 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

As a result, the King of Babylon came and made Jehoiakim his servant as we read in **2 Kings 24 (NASB):**1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant *for* three years; then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 The LORD sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites. So He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken through His servants the prophets. 3 Surely at the command of the LORD it came upon Judah, to remove *them* from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4 and also for the innocent blood which he shed, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; and the LORD would not forgive. 5 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? 6 So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin his son became king in his place.

Then Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, reigned and eventually was led into exile in Babylon and Zedekiah reigned after him as we read in **2 Kings 24 (NASB):**7 The king of Egypt did not come out of his land again, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates. 8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; and his mother's name *was* Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. 10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon went up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came to the city, while his servants were besieging it. 12 Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother and his servants and his captains and his officials. So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign. 13 He carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, just as the LORD had said. 14 Then he led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. 15 So he led Jehoiachin away into exile to Babylon; also the king's mother and the king's wives and his officials and the leading men of the land, he led

away into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16 All the men of valor, seven thousand, and the craftsmen and the smiths, one thousand, all strong and fit for war, and these the king of Babylon brought into exile to Babylon. 17 Then the king of Babylon made his uncle Mattaniah king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.18 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 For through the anger of the LORD *this* came about in Jerusalem and Judah until He cast them out from His presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

This was how Ezekiel came to be exiled in Babylon with the other Israelites. This exile was a fulfillment of the Lord's promise in the wilderness that he would disperse them among the nations, as we read in **Ezekiel 20 (NASB):**23 "Also I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them among the lands, 24 because they had not observed My ordinances, but had rejected My statutes and had profaned My sabbaths, and their eyes were on the idols of their fathers.

We see that blessing would come upon Israel for obeying the Lord as we read in **Deuteronomy 28 (NASB):**1 "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God: 3 "Blessed *shall* you *be* in the city, and blessed *shall* you *be* in the country.

All the blessings that the Lord planned for Israel are listed in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, verses 1 to 14. But if Israel was not obedient there was also a curse planned for Israel as we read in **Deuteronomy 28 (NASB):**15 "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: "Cursed *shall* you *be* in the city, and cursed *shall* you *be* in the country.

The Lord promised to scatter them among the nations as we read in **Deuteronomy 28 (NASB):** 65 "Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. 66 "Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. 67 "So your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you will be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life. 68 "In the morning you shall say, 'Would that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Would that it were morning!' because of the dread of your heart which you dread, and for the sight of your eyes which you will see. 69 "The LORD will bring you back to Egypt in ships, by the way about which I spoke to you, 'You will never see it again!' And there you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer."

The curse came upon Israel for disobedience. But it was disobedience only after the law had already been given. Israel could not be held accountable for the law until the Lord had given it to them through Moses. Israel was placed on a conditional footing after the law was given by Moses. If they were obedient, they would be blessed. If they were disobedient, they would be judged and come under the curse. Ezekiel is prophesying during the time of the curse. Israel had been driven from their land and scattered among the peoples where they could find no rest and serve other gods. They would also fall under other laws, that is, the laws of the peoples where they were scattered. These were laws that were not good. They were the laws of the peoples, and not God's laws, for Israel had rejected the laws of God. All the laws of God, and every word from His mouth, is good. It is the laws of the peoples that are bad because the peoples are sinful and do not have a right standard to judge by until they submit themselves to the living God.

Irenaeus says that the Lord gave Israel bad laws, and he says that Ezekiel the prophet states the reason for the giving of such a law when he "declares: "And their eyes were after the desire of their heart; and I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live." Again, the verse reads as in **Ezekiel 20 (NASB):**23 Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the wilderness that I would disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries, 24 because they had not obeyed my laws but had rejected my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes lusted after their parents' idols. 25 So I gave them other statutes that were not good and laws through which they could not live; 26 I defiled them through

their gifts—the sacrifice of every firstborn—that I might fill them with horror so they would know that I am the LORD.'

Although Ezekiel telescopes back in time to the time of Israel in the wilderness recalling their first disobedience, the Lord promised to disperse them among the nations if they did not obey all the laws He gave them through Moses. Ezekiel is not saying that the Lord gave them bad laws in the wilderness. It was here in Deuteronomy that Moses finished writing all the words in the book of the law as we read in **Deuteronomy 31 (NASB):**24 It came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, 25 that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, 26 "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you.

It was only after Moses finished writing the law that God could actually hold Israel accountable for it. There was actually a prophecy that Israel would be disobedient and fall under the curse as we read in **Deuteronomy 30 (NASB):**1 "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, 2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, 3 then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

Moses then gave Israel encouragement to be faithful to the Lord, and to do all His commands. Life was to be dependent on their obedience to the Lord's voice and holding fast to Him in relationship as we read in **Deuteronomy 30 (NASB):**19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 20 by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

At the time of Ezekiel's writing, this prophecy about the curse reached its fulfillment. The Lord did not punish Israel with a curse for breaking bad laws but for breaking His laws. The context of the verses shows that it was their disobedience to the Lord's laws that brought them under judgments and statutes that were not good, such as offering their first born in sacrifice. This was a direct result of idolatry as we read in **Jeremiah 7 (American Standard Bible):**30 For the sons of Judah have done that which is evil in My sight," declares the LORD, "they have set their detestable things in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. 31 They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind.

Again Jeremiah says in **Jeremiah 19 (American Standard Bible):**4 Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had *ever* known, and *because* they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent 5 and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it *ever* enter My mind;

God does not give bad laws. If He did, how could He exercise judgment on those who disobeyed. The laws of the peoples where Israel was scattered were the bad laws that the Lord gave Israel over to after they rejected His laws. Therefore, there is another meaning to the words "yoke of bondage" which we will look at later.

Irenaeus continues his argument with the statement, "Luke also has recorded that Stephen, who was the first elected into the diaconate by the apostles, and who was the first slain for the testimony of Christ, spoke regarding Moses as follows: "This man did indeed receive the commandments of the living God to give to us, whom your fathers would not obey, but thrust [Him from them], and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; for we do not know what has happened to [this] Moses, who led us from the land of Egypt. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifices to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their own hands. But God turned, and gave them up to worship the hosts of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets: O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to Me sacrifices and

oblations for forty years in the wilderness? And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of the god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them;""

Irenaeus makes it sound as if God turned Israel over to worship the hosts of heaven as soon as they worshipped the golden calf. But Stephen is here telescoping back in time and summarizes Israel's history. Stephen does not have a lot of time to explain all the history of Israel's disobedience since he is about to be stoned to death. His last quotation is from Amos as we read in **Amos 5 (American Standard Bible):**25 "Did you present Me with sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel? 26 You also carried along Sikkuth your king and Kiyyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves.

Amos lived in the eighth century B.C. and prophesied from Judah about 750 B.C. His prophecy was focused on the northern kingdom. All that can be said here is that the curse did come upon Israel for disobedience to God's laws. Israel did not completely deal with their sin. Eventually judgment came upon Israel, but it was not immediate in the form of God giving them bad laws. The reason Irenaues quotes Stephen is because he wants to show primarily that the law was a "yoke of bondage" adapted to Israel's condition of servitude because they are a stiff-necked people. Irenaeus says Stephen is "pointing out plainly, that the law being such, was not given to them by another God, but that, adapted to their condition of servitude, [it originated] from the very same [God as we worship]." Irenaeus defines the "condition of servitude" in the previous sentences as that state of mind of the Israelites that desired to go back to Egypt and be slaves again rather than serve God. Since this was Israel's desire, God then gave them a law that was "suited to their wish" and "subjected them to the yoke of bondage." To further emphasize his point, Irenaues says, "Wherefore also He says to Moses in Exodus: "I will send forth My angel before thee; for I will not go up with thee, because thou art a stiff-necked people.""

While it is certainly true that the law was not given by another God, the reason for the giving of the law was not because of the sin of the golden calf. The giving of the law was God's purpose all along. When God spoke the ten commandments to Israel in the hearing of the people, it was so that Israel would fear God and not sin as we read in **Exodus 20 (NASB):**18 All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it,* they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die." 20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

After this, it was enough for the Israelites that Moses would speak God's words to them, and they would obey. God only spoke the ten commandments in their hearing, but gave more commands to Moses to give them. Though God "added no more" to the ten commandments that He spoke in the hearing of the people, He added more commandments through Moses which they were to keep also. These were not the bad laws that Ezekiel speaks of, but they were the ordinances and the liturgical laws of the covenant that God was making with Israel. These further commands were good laws as well. As Paul says, the commandment wasn't sin, but it was sin which was in us that is what caused our downfall. The commandment only made us aware of our sin as we read in **Romans 7 (NASB**):7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET." 8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin *is* dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Paul does not place the fault on the law, but on our sin as we read in **Romans 7 (NASB**):13 Therefore did that which is good become *a cause of* death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

If the law is holy and just and good, why then does Paul himself call it a yoke of bondage as in **Galatians 5 (King James Bible):**1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Paul begins his epistle to the Galatians with a great concern as he says in **Galatians 1 (NASB)**:6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

Paul tells them that he received the gospel that he preached to them by revelation from the Lord as we read in **Galatians 1 (NASB)**:11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul's concern was that the Galatians were observing the law as he explains in **Galatians 3 (NASB)**:1 You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed *as* crucified? 2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

The Galatians did not receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law, that is, by observing the law. They received the Spirit by believing what they heard.

Abraham received the Spirit in the same way, by believing what he heard, as Paul tells us in **Galatians 3 (NASB)**:6 Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying,* "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

The words "it was reckoned to him as righteousness" mean that Abraham was justified by his faith. This is why Paul tells us that the Scripture preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, for in the same way Abraham was justified by faith, so are we. So we are to understand that believers before Christ were justified by faith in the same way the believers are justified by faith after Christ.

Paul then explains that being under the law means you are required to abide by all things written in the book of the law, or you are cursed as we read in **Galatians 3 (NASB)**:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM."

Paul does not mention any division of the law into natural precepts and the other laws. He simply mentions "the book of the law." This would include all the laws mentioned in the Scripture. He says that those who are "of the works of the law," that is, those who observe the law, "are under a curse and must abide by all things written in the book of the law or be cursed. Paul did not say they must abide by some things, but all things. His point is that no one, except Jesus Christ, can rely on the works of the law for justification. Jesus Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the law by keeping the law to the letter. Therefore, He has born the curse of the law for us, and we receive His righteousness by faith as we read in **Galatians 3 (NASB)**:11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." 12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"— 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The apostles were not law givers like Moses. The law had already been given through Moses. Now, after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the apostles explained how believers were to live a holy and righteous life. The apostles encouraged believers to think soberly of themselves. We are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think as we read in **Romans 12 (NASB)**:3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

We all have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us as we read in **Romans 12 (NASB**):6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly:* if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;

This is what Paul is saying in **1 Corinthians 7 (NASB):**7 Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

He is not saying that some have harder hearts than others. He is saying that some have a greater or lesser amount of grace according to the measure of his or her gift. Paul had grace to be single. He was not advocating or commanding everyone to be single. But if someone had the grace from God to have authority over his own will and is under no necessity, that is, he is not burning inside with passion, then let this one remain single. Each one has his own gift from God.

Irenaeus concludes by stating a very clear explanation of salvation by works in the New Testament as he says, "it ought not to be wondered at, if also in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Decalogue, and being restrained by Him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart." The "ordinances already mentioned" refer to the Decalogue, the ten commandments. The idea is that God grants certain "indulgences for the benefit of his people," taking into account human infirmity, in order that we might be successful in our obedience to the Decalogue, and so "obtain the gift of salvation through them," that is through the ten commandments.

The idea is that God takes into account our human infirmity, and grants certain indulgences in order that we might be drawn by these ordinances "so that we might obtain the gift of salvation through them." That is, through the facilitation of these indulgences, we might the more easily be obedient to the Decalogue, and be restrained from idolatry and apostasy from God, and thereby obtain salvation. It is through the obedience to the Decalogue that we "learn to love God with the whole heart."

Now as we saw in 1 Corinthians, chapter seven, Paul is not talking about hardness of heart, but of differing measures of grace given to each believer according to the measure of one's gift from God. And in the Old Testament, Moses allowed a divorce certificate to be given as a civil law for the nation. This was done so that those who were not saved by faith in Christ might come to believe in Him through the instruction of God's word which included the ten commandments, the Decalogue. Salvation has always been by faith in Christ in every age, both before the law was given and after. The reason is simple. The law cannot save us but only show us our sin. Once we are aware of our sin we may try to keep the law again, but keeping the law cannot make us perfect as we read in **Hebrews 10 (NASB):**1 For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

There are not enough sacrifices that we could make to cleanse us of our sin, and so become perfect. This is why Christ came. Our sacrifices cannot take away our sins as we read in **Hebrews 10 (NASB):**11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

But Christ's single offering has made us perfect forever as we read in **Hebrews 10 (NASB):**10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, 13 waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

We are saved by grace through faith as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Our salvation is not as a result of works. That is, there is nothing we can do to save ourselves but believe in Jesus Christ. So the law made Israel feel unclean because it revealed sin in their lives, but it could never take away the sin it revealed. And so the law was a yoke that was heavy to bear. In the book of Acts, Peter refers to the law using these very words as we see in the account of Paul and Barnabas going down to the apostles in

Jerusalem to discuss the teaching of certain men from Judea who came up to Antioch and taught that you had to be circumcised to be saved in **Acts 15 (NASB):**1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, *the brethren* determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

So Paul and Barnabas went down from Antioch to Jerusalem as we read in **Acts 15 (NASB)**:3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren. 4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

We must understand that the law made a separation between the clean and the unclean. Israel was set apart from the peoples, and were holy to the Lord as we read in **Leviticus 20 (NASB)**:22 'You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. 23 Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. 24 Hence I have said to you, "You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. 25 You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. 26 Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.

Acts, chapter ten, tells us how Peter came to the conclusion that the Gentiles were to be included in salvation. There was a devout man, a centurion, who feared God with all his household in Caesarea. He prayed continually, and one day an angel appeared to him and told him to send for Peter who was in Joppa. Now God knew that Peter would not receive them since they were Gentiles. So God gave Peter a vision and told him three times to arise and kill animals, which were unclean by the law of Moses, and eat them as we read in **Acts 10 (NASB):**9 On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. 10 But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; 11 and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, 12 and there were in it all *kinds of* four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. 13 A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!" 14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean." 15 Again a voice *came* to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no *longer* consider unholy." 16 This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

The men from Cornelius finally arrived at Peter's house at just the right moment as we read in **Acts 10 (NASB):**17 Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate; 18 and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.
19 While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you.
20 But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself." 21 Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?" 22 They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was *divinely* directed by a holy angel to send for you *to come* to his house and hear a message from you." 23 So he invited them in and gave them lodging.

Peter then goes with the men the next day to the house of Cornelius and tells them how he had formerly thought it was unlawful for him being a Jew to associate with Gentiles as we read in **Acts 10 (NASB):**23 And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.
24 On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped *him.*
26 But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am *just* a man." 27 As he talked with him, he entered and

found many people assembled. 28 And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and *yet* God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. 29 That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me."

Cornelius then tells Peter of his vision from God in **Acts 10 (NASB):**30 Cornelius said, "Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, 31 and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. 32 Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon *the* tanner by the sea.' 33 So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

Peter then realizes that God is at work, and he then preaches the Gospel to the Gentiles as we read in **Acts 10 (NASB):**34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. 36 The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)— 37 you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. 38 *You know of* Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39 We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. 40 God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is,* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. 42 And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. 43 Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

All in the house were saved as a result of Peter's message as we read in **Acts 10 (NASB):**44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. 45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, 47 "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did,* can he?" 48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

Peter knows now that God has fulfilled the law in some way that allows the Gentiles to be included with the Jews with no distinction between them as we now read in **Acts 15 (NASB**):6 The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

The law of Moses that made it unlawful for Peter to associate with Gentiles included the Decalogue, the ten commandments. Peter then calls the whole law a yoke that neither he nor the fathers were able to bear as we read in **Acts 15 (NASB):**10 Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

Peter now realizes in this council in Jerusalem that the God who commanded him to eat the unclean animals, and who told him to go with the Gentiles without misgivings, and who gave the Holy Spirit to those who believed among the Gentiles after he preached the Gospel, was the God who had fulfilled the law of sacrifice and saves by grace as we then read in **Acts 15 (NASB):**11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

Being under the law was like being under a yoke of bondage. You were constantly reminded of your sin. Freedom from sin had not been made possible yet. The law cannot impart life. It only shuts up everyone under sin as Paul tell us in **Galatians 3 (NASB):**21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on

law. 22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Paul tells us that the law leads us to Christ. The law tells us that we have sin, and that we need a Savior. This knowledge leads us to faith in Christ as Paul concludes in **Galatians 3 (NASB):**23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Before Christ, the law lead people to faith in their Messiah, the Christ who would come and redeem them from their sin. They were still under the law because Christ had not come yet. But they were still saved by their faith in Christ, and not by their keeping the law. Blessings were dependent on their keeping the law, but not their salvation. Now that Christ has come, we are no longer under the law. This doesn't mean that we are free to sin. May it never be. The righteous must live by faith in obedience to all the knowledge of the word of God that they have been given for we all grow in grace and knowledge as Peter tells us in **2 Peter 3 (NASB):**17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Commentary Summary: The Law

In summary, Irenaeus states the following in **Book 4: Chapter XVI**:

- that Abraham and the righteous fathers "had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls, that is, they loved the God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbour."
- that "Moreover, all the rest of the multitude of those righteous men who lived before Abraham, and of those patriarchs who preceded Moses, were justified independently of the things above mentioned, and without the law of Moses. As also Moses himself says to the people in Deuteronomy: "The Lord thy God formed a covenant in Horeb. The Lord formed not this covenant with your fathers, but for you," referring to Deuteronomy 5:2.
- that "There was therefore no occasion that they should be cautioned by prohibitory mandates because they had the righteousness of the law in themselves."
- that "when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt, God did necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God;"
- that when Jesus came He "increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all" and commanded that they must "abstain not only from evil deeds, but even from the desire after them."
- that the Lord was "Preparing man for this life," and did "Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us, receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation."
- that when Jesus died on the cross, He freed us from the "laws of bondage" which were "one by one promulgated to the people by Moses, suited for their instruction or for their punishment, as Moses himself declared: "And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments.""
- that "These things, therefore, which were given for bondage, and for a sign to them, He cancelled

by the new covenant of liberty."

- that therefore, as a result of having such a covenant of liberty, we are tested to an even greater degree, whether we "will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord" with all our heart and soul, and whether we will "follow His word unswervingly," and whether we will evidence faith.

To restate Irenaeus' thinking, those before the law "had the meaning of the Decalogue written in their hearts and souls, that is, they loved the God who made them, and did no injury to their neighbour," and they did not need the law "because they had the righteousness of the law in themselves." They were also "justified independently of the things above mentioned, and without the law of Moses."

Irenaeus states that the law was given "when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt." God did then "necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God."

Now, we find in other chapters of Irenaeus' writing that he also believed that all men and women were lepers in sin, but were made clean through water baptism as he says in **Fragment XXXIV**, ""And dipped himself," says [the Scripture], "seven times in Jordan." It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [it served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: "Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.""

This leprosy in sin, which is the state of all men and women before baptism, speaks of original sin. Irenaeus also says that in Adam we do all die when he quotes from 1 Corinthians 15:22. He states in **Book 5: Chapter XII, paragraph 3,** "For it is not one thing which dies and another which is quickened, as neither is it one thing which is lost and another which is found, but the Lord came seeking for that same sheep which had been lost. What was it, then, which was dead? Undoubtedly it was the substance of the flesh; the same, too, which had lost the breath of life, and had become breathless and dead. This same, therefore, was what the Lord came to quicken, that as in Adam we do all die, as being of an animal nature, in Christ we may all live, as being spiritual, not laying aside God's handiwork, but the lusts of the flesh, and receiving the Holy Spirit; as the apostle says in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth."

This spiritual death in Adam of all men also speaks of original sin. Also in **Book 4: Chapter II, paragraph** 7**,** Irenaeus speaks of "the old wound of the serpent" and he says that "man can be saved in no other way… than by believing in Him who, in the likeness of sinful flesh, is lifted up from the earth upon the tree of martyrdom, and draws all things to Himself, and vivifies the dead." Here is **Book 4: Chapter II, paragraph** 7 in full.

Book 4: Chapter II, paragraph 7**:** "But as many as feared God, and were anxious about His law, these ran to Christ, and were all saved. For He said to His disciples: "Go ye to the sheep of the house of Israel, which have perished." And many more Samaritans, it is said, when the Lord had tarried among them, two days, "believed because of His words, and said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we ourselves have heard [Him], and know that this man is truly the Saviour of the world." And Paul likewise declares, "And so all Israel shall be saved;" but he has also said, that the law was our pedagogue [to bring us] to Christ Jesus. Let them not therefore ascribe to the law the unbelief of certain [among them]. For the law never hindered them from believing in the Son of God; nay, but it even exhorted them so to do, saying that men can be saved in no other way from the old wound of the serpent than by believing in Him who, in the likeness of sinful flesh, is lifted up from the earth upon the tree of martyrdom, and draws all things to Himself, and vivifies the dead.

This being the case, we see a paradox in the writing of Irenaeus. If man can be saved in no other way from the "old wound of the serpent," and the leprosy of sin, and spiritual death than by believing in Jesus Christ who died on the tree of martyrdom, the cross, then how does Irenaeus say that without the observance of the Decalogue there is no salvation as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XV, paragraph 1**, "They (the Jews) had therefore a law, a course of discipline, and a prophecy of future things. For God at the first, indeed, warning

them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them."

Again, in this same paragraph, Irenaeus says that "in the Old Testament the same God permitted similar indulgences for the benefit of His people, drawing them on by means of the ordinances already mentioned, so that they might obtain the gift of salvation through them, while they obeyed the Decalogue, and being restrained by Him, should not revert to idolatry, nor apostatize from God, but learn to love Him with the whole heart."

So again, to summarize Irenaeus' thinking, the righteous fathers before Moses had the law written on their hearts and the righteousness of the law was in them. They therefore did not need the law of Moses and were justified independently of it. However, when "this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt," God had to do things differently and reached out to man with a voice and gave the law "in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God." Now, after the law has been given by Moses, Jesus came and "increased and widened those laws which are natural, and noble, and common to all" and commanded that they must "abstain not only from evil deeds, but even from the desire after them."

Jesus prepared "man for this life," and did Himself "speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us, receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation." When Jesus died on the cross, He freed us from the "laws of bondage" which were "one by one promulgated to the people by Moses, suited for their instruction or for their punishment," and cancelled them "by the new covenant of liberty." And, as a result of having such a covenant of liberty, we are tested to an even greater degree, whether we "will reverence, and fear, and love the Lord" with all our heart and soul, and whether we will "follow His word unswervingly," and whether we will evidence faith.

So now, after Jesus has come, when we are baptized, we are made clean from sin, but then must be tested by observing the Decalogue, reverencing, fearing, and loving the Lord, following His word unswervingly, serving Him, and evidencing faith in order to finally be saved. The man or woman who is baptized, according to Irenaeus, is placed on a conditional footing whether he will do these things or not. If not, he may lose life by losing the Spirit as Irenaeus says in **Book 5: Chapter IX, paragraph 4**, "In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Just as if he were to say, "Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God.""

The door is still open in Irenaeus' teaching for the man or woman who loses life to repent and regain what they had lost. See **Fragment XLIII** which we will discuss in **Chapter 33: Repentance** for more on this.

There are several reasons why Irenaeus' teaching about the law will not work, and he is in error here.

First of all, the Scriptures make no division between the "natural precepts of the law," and the other laws. I believe Irenaues' reason for dividing the law of Moses into the "natural precepts of the law" and the "laws of bondage", that is good laws and bad laws, may come from his philosophical training. The Greek philosophers talk about natural law. But Paul never mentions the term "natural precepts of the law," nor does he characterize the laws of God as good and bad laws. Only one law was ever mentioned in all the New Testament as something Moses allowed because "of the hardness of their hearts," and that was the law of divorce. And even that was something Moses allowed and not the Lord. The Scripture records that Moses did this, and Jesus pointed out in Matthew 19:8 that it was because of the hardness of their hearts that Moses did this. Without the mention of any other such law by Jesus, we have no basis to conclude that there were any other such laws. Irenaeus concludes the opposite and leads us to believe that all the other laws besides the natural precepts are "laws of bondage." And in addition, Irenaeus does not identify specifically what all of the natural precepts of the law are in the Scriptures. He does identify the Decalogue, the commandment to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and also the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves, as natural precepts. Beyond these, Irenaeus does not identify any other natural precepts of the law. Surely the laws of cleanliness, and the laws commanding them to wash after touching a dead body, and the laws of quarantine for leprosy and other diseases were good. Yet Irenaeus leaves us wondering not only what all of the "natural

precepts of the law" are, but also what the other bad laws are. This throws doubt upon the word of God, and leaves us with uncertainty as to how to interpret it.

Paul does mention the law of nature, that is of creation, in regards to the marriage bed as in **Romans 1 (NASB)**:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Paul mentions here the "natural function of the woman," pointing to a law of nature. But he does not connect that with the Decalogue. Homosexuality, which the passage is referring to, is named as an abomination in **Leviticus 18 (NASB)**:22 'You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.

It was an abomination because it was against the law of nature, or creation. It was a sin because it was against the law of God in Leviticus. This sin was also punishable by death according to the law of God in **Leviticus 20 (NASB)**:13 'If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

But the sin of homosexuality is not one of the ten commandments. Irenaeus also does not mention it as a natural precept of the law. There are more laws in the Old Covenant that correspond to laws of nature such as **Leviticus 20 (NASB)**:15 'If there is a man who lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; you shall also kill the animal.

But nowhere in the Scriptures are these laws ever said to be a "natural precept of the law." Now, the law may be divided into three main divisions, the Decalogue, the ordinances, and the law of the priesthood, or the ceremonial law. But to divide the law into natural precepts and laws of bondage, or good and bad laws, is to misinterpret Scripture. To divide the law into natural precepts and laws of bondage is to describe the law in philosophical terms. There may be laws that relate to the way God created nature, but Scripture simply does not describe the law in this way. But God certainly did not give them bad laws since the laws that are given are in His word, and man lives by every word that God speaks. Jesus identified one law permitted by Moses. He did not identify any others. However, God does give man over to the desire of his own heart and He allows man to choose his own laws which may be good or bad as we read in **Psalm 80 (NASB)**:11 "But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. 12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.

The result of not listening to or acknowledging God is also seen in Paul's address to the Romans as we read in **Romans 1 (NASB)**:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

And in **Romans 1 (NASB)**:26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

And in **Romans 1 (NASB)**:28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of

God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

If we do not acknowledge God, He gives us over to our sin, and we suffer the consequences of our foolishness.

Also, Irenaeus does not name any other "bad laws" in the Old Testament, but he speaks of all the laws other than the natural precepts as the "yoke of bondage," and he says that they were given because of the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites. So we are left to conclude that all the other laws were bad laws. However, the laws of the priesthood and of sacrifice showed the people the repercussions of sin. An atonement was required for sin by the law. A debt had to be paid. The law also showed the people the difference between the clean and the unclean. These clean and unclean laws protected the people from disease more than a thousand years before man realized that germs can cause disease. These clean and unclean law also taught the people holiness as we read in **Leviticus 11 (NASB)**:44 'For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth.

Holiness was required in order to come into God's presence. The sanctuary, where no one was allowed to enter but the priests alone, also taught the people that God is holy. The altar where no one was allowed to perform sacrifice but the priests alone again taught the people that God is holy. The priest's job was to teach the people to be holy because the Lord their God is holy. This is good.

Now the second reason why Irenaeus' teaching about the law will not work is because of the meaning of the word "impute." Irenaeus says that Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. Irenaeus concludes that Abraham had the righteousness of the law in himself because of this. However, Abraham and the fathers before Moses all possessed the "old wound of the serpent," and were in need of salvation by believing in the only one who could save them, Jesus Christ, just as much as all other men. The fathers before Moses were not therefore righteous in themselves, that is, they were not made perfect yet. But they had the righteousness that comes by faith of Jesus Christ. That is, they had the righteousness of the law imputed to them, as Irenaeus also says. The word "impute" is used in the Scriptures in Romans 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24, II Corinthians 5:19, and James 2:23 and elsewhere. In Romans, Paul is telling us that Abraham was justified by faith before he was circumcised, and without the law of Moses, and that righteousness was imputed to him as we read in **Romans 4 (NASB):**1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. 8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT." 9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

The King James Bible reads as in **Romans 4 (King James Bible):**3 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,…

The Greek word translated "impute" in the King James Bible, and "CREDITED" in the NASB, in Romans 4:3, is ἐλογίσθη which comes from the root word λογίζομαι. Vine's says that this word means "to reckon, take into account, or, metaphorically, to put down to a person's account. This same root word is also

used in Romans 4:4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24, II Corinthians 5:19, and James 2:23." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 252.**

This Greek word does not mean "to make perfect," or "to make sinless," which would be equivalent to being righteous in ourselves or having "the righteousness of the law" in ourselves. In other words, God did not make Abraham perfect when he believed. God imputed, or credited, or reckoned, or put down to Abraham's account, the righteousness of faith as Paul says in **Romans 4 (NASB):**13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

Paul is saying here that it is not those who have righteousness because they kept the law who are heirs of the world to come, but those who have righteousness imputed to them because they believed God, that is, they had faith in His promise. And Paul is emphatic in this regard that though he was blameless as touching the law, he counted all the righteousness he had earned by keeping the law as nothing so that he could have the righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ as we read again in **Philippians 3 (NASB**):6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. 7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

To Paul, it was about relationship. "That I may know Him" is what Paul prayed. Again, Paul did not make any distinction between one law and another. He simply said the law in all his epistles. And works are anything we do. The righteousness that is credited to us by God is apart from works. That is, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith is apart from anything we do, as Paul says in **Romans 4 (NASB):**6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works.

Paul is saying in the book of Philippians that the righteousness he received from God was not as a result of something he did, which would be his own righteousness. The righteousness he received from God was "apart from works." The righteousness he received was the "righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith." When Paul believed in Jesus Christ and confessed him as Lord, he received this righteousness. He was not made perfect, but he was saved. That is, the righteousness of God was credited, or reckoned, or imputed, or put down to his account, and all his sins were forgiven. His sin debt was paid, but much more. Since this righteousness is from God, and was not Paul's own righteousness, and since it is a righteousness from God apart from works, this righteousness from God is greater than all Paul's sin, past, present and future. Paul may be said to have a standing with God as though he had never sinned. And still, this did not make Paul perfect as he says **Philippians 3 (NASB**):12 Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do:* forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

If this was true for Paul, it is true for us as well. Though we are justified by faith and have righteousness from God credited to us, we are not perfect yet, and we still sin just as they did. That is, we do not have the righteousness of the law in ourselves. It is imputed to us but is not in us since we still have the sin nature in our flesh. This sin nature will be purged when we are resurrected. If we sin after we have faith, we do not have to be saved all over again. Jesus' death on the cross was the propitiation for all sin for all time. We must then confess our sins to restore our fellowship with our Father God. If we sin, we are still His children, but He will discipline us as His sons and daughters. And it is not that He expects us to be perfect, but only to walk in the light that He has given us at that stage of growth in our lives.

The third reason why Irenaeus' teaching about the law will not work is because the consistency of the covenant of God with Abraham is said to be demanded by the Scriptures. The covenant that God made with Abraham was one of imputed righteousness based on faith. God made promise to Abraham that He would bless

all the families of the earth through him, and that his descendants would possess the land of Canaan forever. And so Abraham is the father of all who believe. He is the father of the Israelites who walked in his steps and had the same faith as he. And he is the father of all who believe and follow in the footsteps of his faith as we read in **Romans 4 (NASB):**10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

The covenant God made with Abraham was maintained through his life time, and was renewed with Isaac, and then with Jacob. The Lord God swears that he will remember His covenant with them and that He will not break it as we read in **Leviticus 26 (NASB):**42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. 43 For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its Sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. 44 Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. 45 But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.'"

The covenant states as in **Genesis 15 (NASB):**18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.

The Lord also promises that He will make a new covenant with Israel as we read in **Jeremiah 31 (NASB):**31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

And the Lord also says that Israel will not cease from being a nation before Him forever in **Jeremiah 31 (NASB):**35 Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: 36 "If this fixed order departs From before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease From being a nation before Me forever."

The Lord also speaks through Jeremiah and is emphatic in His promise that Israel will not cease from being a nation as in **Jeremiah 33 (NASB):**19 The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 20 "Thus says the LORD, 'If you can break My covenant for the day and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time, 21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.'" 23 And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,
24 "Have you not observed what this people have spoken, saying, 'The two families which the LORD chose, He has rejected them'? Thus they despise My people, no longer are they as a nation in their sight. 25 Thus says the LORD, 'If My covenant *for* day and night *stand* not, *and* the fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established, 26 then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.'"

This same promise has been repeated over and over again throughout the prophets and confirmed by Paul. Paul says that the remnant of Israel will be saved as we read in **Romans 9 (NASB**):27 Isaiah cries out

concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED; 28 FOR THE LORD WILL EXECUTE HIS WORD ON THE EARTH, THOROUGHLY AND QUICKLY." 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "UNLESS THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME LIKE SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

Isaiah spoke his prophecy over six hundred years before Paul wrote and confirmed it by the word of the Lord. Paul also points out that Israel's mistake was not that they didn't observe the law, but that they had no faith as he continues in **Romans 9 (NASB)**:30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. 32 Why? Because *they did* not *pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

So God's plan for Israel has not changed. God's covenant with them still stands. They will be His people and He will be their God, and they will dwell forever in the land God promised to Abraham. This is a prophecy by the word of the Lord, and it will happen as surely as God has sworn it would.

The reason this is important is that by Irenaeus' statement, "But when this righteousness and love to God had passed into oblivion, and became extinct in Egypt, God did necessarily, because of His great goodwill to men, reveal Himself by a voice, and led the people with power out of Egypt, in order that man might again become the disciple and follower of God," he implies that God failed in His plan to have a people whom He imputes righteousness to because of their faith, and that His promise to Abraham and the imputation of righteousness didn't work. So God came up with a new plan, that is, He gave them the laws of the Decalogue by which man might be prepared for this life as Irenaeus says in **Book 4: Chapter XVI, paragraph four**, "For the glory of God was wanting to man, which he could obtain in no other way than by serving God. And therefore Moses says to them again: "Choose life, that thou mayest live, and thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, to hear His voice, to cleave unto Him; for this is thy life, and the length of thy days." Preparing man for this life, the Lord Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us receiving by means of His advent in the flesh, extension and increase, but not abrogation."

Observing the Decalogue, the law of the priesthood, and the ordinances, was supposed to prepare man for the advent of Christ. These were not added as a second thought by God. God did not fail and so start over with plan B, the law, as it were. The law had its purpose and that was to reveal sin. But the law did not make the covenant with Abraham void as Paul says in **Galatians 3 (NASB)**:17 What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. 19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

Man does not gradually become better and eventually obtain enough righteousness by keeping the law so God will accept him into His presence. God is perfect in righteousness, and no one may enter His presence with sin. Man cannot cleanse himself of his sin by keeping the Decalogue, and so please God enough so that God can stand to have man in His presence. There is nothing man can do to make himself or herself worthy to be in God's presence. The only thing the Decalogue does, as the standard of God' righteousness, is show us we have sin as we read in **Romans 3: (NASB):**19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

And so with all the other ordinances and laws God gave Moses, the only thing the law does is to show us we have sin. This ultimately results in our condemnation because we all have sinned and fall short of God's glory as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):**21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in

Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, *I say,* of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

This is the only thing the law can do for us, that is, to show us we have sin and that we are under condemnation. And when we have sin, we are under the law. That is, the law has a hold on us. We are liable to pay a debt because of the law. When this fact registers in our hearts and minds, we see our need for atonement. Since our sin is against God, we are utterly helpless to make atonement for ourselves, and to pay our debt of sin. Left to ourselves, we are without a way. This is why Paul calls justification a gift in verse 24 above. It is a gift through the redemption in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, as He said in **John 14 (NASB):**1 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going." 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Jesus was going to be with the Father in heaven. And He is my way into heaven, and my way out of my debt of sin. He has done what I could not do for myself. By dying on the cross, Jesus has made atonement for my sin. And not for mine only but also for the sins of the whole world. He is now everything to me. This is why I worship and praise Him.

Because Jesus has atoned for all sin by His one sacrifice on the cross, He has made an eternal redemption for us possible. Even if we sin after we accept Him, His atonement is still able to save us because He has atoned for all sin for all time by His one sacrifice on the cross. There is no other sacrifice necessary. There is no other sacrifice that could equal His sacrifice. We were not able to atone for our sin before Jesus came and died for us. And we will not be able to atone for our sin after He died for us. This is why righteousness is a gift. When we repent of our sins and accept Christ He gives us the gift of righteousness as in **Romans 5 (NASB):**17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned **(**through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Since we are not able to atone for sin on our own, and since righteousness is a gift, we are no longer under the condemnation of the law. This does not mean we are free to break the law. We are not to let sin have any rights to us as Paul says in **Romans 6 (NASB):**12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Again Paul says in **Galatians 3 (NASB):**10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.” 11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.” 12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”— 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

We are not to sin because we are not under law, but when we sin we should confess our sins as we read in **1 John 1 (NASB):**6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The idea is that after we are born again, that is, after we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and confess Him as Lord, we must then walk in the light to have fellowship with Him. As the Lord reveals sin in our lives, we must confess it in order to maintain our fellowship with Him.

So the law cannot make us righteous or impart life as we read in **Galatians 3 (NASB):**21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

So it is by the law that we become aware that we need a savior from our sins. This is why Christ came as we read in **1 Timothy 1 (NASB):**15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

It is by grace that we are saved through faith as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

This salvation is a free gift when we accept Christ. When we receive Him, we are born again as we see in **John 1 (NASB):**12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

So the covenant of God with Abraham is consistent through time. The covenant of God with Abraham was simply enfolded into the covenant of the law under Moses. The promise of God to Abraham was still in effect and faith was still required during the covenant of the law as is proven when Paul explains why Israel did not attain the righteousness by faith in Romans, chapter nine, as we read in **Romans 9 (NASB**):30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. 32 Why? Because *they did* not *pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

This statement by Paul in Romans, chapter nine, also proves that faith is still required under the new covenant, the old covenant being the covenant of the law. That is, righteousness comes by faith under the new covenant just as it did under the covenant of God with Abraham, and as it did under the covenant of God with Moses, that is, the old covenant or the covenant of the law. God is still imputing righteousness by faith without the works of the law. Otherwise, Christ died for no reason as Paul tells us in **Galatians 2 (NASB**):21 "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

The fourth reason that Irenaeus' teaching about the law will not work is because Jesus came in the flesh and dwelt with men on earth as a man under the old covenant, the covenant of the law, as we read in **Galatians 4 (NASB**):4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Jesus obeyed all the rules of the Old Covenant as any righteous man would. Jesus allowed John the Baptist to baptize Him in order to fulfill all righteousness as He says in **Matthew 3 (NASB**):13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" 15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. 16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

Jesus taught the people to be obedient to the law. When a man came up to Him asking to be healed of leprosy, Jesus healed him and told him to obey the law as we read in **Luke 5 (NASB**):13 And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him. 14 And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Jesus gave the people greater clarity concerning the law. The law was not just about the letter but about the Spirit and issues of the heart as well as we see in **Matthew 5 (NASB**):23 Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your

offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

Jesus taught the people to keep the commandments to enter life as we read in **Matthew 19 (NASB):**16 And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" 17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is *only* One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

Jesus taught the people not to transgress the law of God for the sake of tradition as in **Matthew 15 (NASB**):3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?

Jesus said He came to fulfill the law as we read in **Matthew 5 (NASB**):17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

And Jesus did fulfill the law. He is the only sinless man who ever lived as Peter tells us in **1 Peter 2 (NASB**):21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; 24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

Jesus taught those He ministered to while He was on earth to keep the law. He Himself lived under the law and kept the law. But Jesus kept all the law blamelessly and so fulfilled the law and earned the righteousness of the law. Because He did this, He was able to bear our sins in His body on the cross. Jesus is then our propitiation, that is, our atonement for sin. Because Jesus did this, God is able to impute His righteousness to us when we have faith in Him. It is His righteousness that is imputed because we have none. God requires perfect righteousness which we don't have. We were helpless to help ourselves, so God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He earned perfect righteousness for us.

When Jesus died on the cross, the atonement was accomplished and the way into the holiest was now made possible by His sacrifice on the cross. The old covenant ended. The law of sacrifice was fulfilled by Jesus' death on the cross, which was a perfect offering for sin. The new covenant is now in effect. Jesus inaugurated this covenant with His death on the cross. Before His death, He celebrated the last Passover and gave us a way to remember His death as we read in **Luke 22 (NASB**):15 And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

It was fitting that Jesus would celebrate the Passover meal as His last meal, and the last Passover ever since He would fulfill the symbolism of the Passover celebration Himself by substituting His body for the Pascal lamb. The Pascal lamb was offered by the Israelites as a substitutionary sacrifice for their first born on the day when the Lord struck dead the first born children of the Egyptians so that the Pharoah would let the Israelites go out free from their land. The substance of what Jesus did on the cross was not that His death freed us from the bondage of the law, but that His death freed us from sin which kept us under the condemnation of the law. The condemnation of the law is what kept us bound as slaves under the law. But Jesus' death on the cross became the one sacrifice for all time that released us from the condemnation of the law and so freed us forever. This is the freedom that Paul is talking about in **Galatians 5 (NASB**):1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit, by

faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

Can Paul be any clearer? If you keep the law in one point, say circumcision, you are under obligation to keep the whole law. Does the whole law not include the Decalogue? Would Paul have made such a statement if there was any doubt?

So we are not saved by keeping the law. We are saved when we believe in Jesus Christ. It is faith in Jesus Christ that in every covenant period was required for salvation. It was not the observance of the law but faith in the redeemer, Jesus Christ, which saves us. Abraham looked forward to this as did Isaac and Jacob and all the other righteous men and women before Moses and the law. When the law came, more was revealed concerning the requirements of God's righteousness, and what it would take to redeem us from our sin. Yet, faith was still required for righteousness during this covenant as well. Jesus Himself lived under the law and fulfilled it to the letter. He has made atonement for us by His death on the cross. He has also inaugurated the new covenant. And faith is still required for righteousness. However, now under the new covenant the atonement has actually been made and the power of the law to condemn us has been nailed to the cross as Paul says in **Colossians 2 (King James Version**):14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

The law was a lot of work to keep it to the letter. For certain sins, animal sacrifice was required. This would mean travelling to the temple with the animal to be sacrificed. This could be quite a distance to travel depending on how far from the temple you lived. This would mean time away from family, and working to support the family. And the law was also very exacting. Premeditated murder was to be punished by the death penalty of course, but so was striking your father or mother, cursing father or mother, doing work on the Sabbath, adultery, homosexuality, idolatry, blaspheming the Name, and other sins. There was not a lot of grace under the law. It was a heavy burden. There were certain foods you could not eat because of the laws of clean and unclean animals. But this was only part of the reason why the law was described as a yoke of bondage. The law was described as a yoke of bondage mainly because the law kept us under sin. The law only condemned us by reminding us of our sin. The law could not save us or give us life. And so it was not called a yoke of bondage by Paul because the laws of Moses contained bad laws. The law of Moses given by God is holy, just, and good, as Paul says in **Romans 7 (NASB**):12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Again Paul explains in **Romans 7 (NASB**):13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

The law makes sin utterly sinful. This is what Jesus was doing when He "extended" the law. Jesus made us accountable for the thoughts of our heart. In so doing He was making sin utterly sinful so that we would see our sin and come to Him and have life. The law shows us our sin, and in this way leads us to surrender our hearts and have faith in Jesus Christ. This is why He is called Savior. He saves us from our sin.

Jesus now calls us to take His yoke upon us as in **Matthew 11 (NASB**):28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

If we take the yoke of Jesus, we are led by the Spirit and we are not under the yoke of the law as Paul says in **Galatians 5 (NASB**):18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

We have a new master, Jesus. Sin is no longer our master since Jesus has set us free from sin. We are therefore no longer under law, but under grace as Paul says in **Romans 6 (NASB**):14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

Since we are now not under the law, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus as Paul says in **Romans 8 (NASB**):1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did:* sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh

and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

This does not mean that we are without law, but that we are under the yoke of Christ as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 9 (NASB)**:20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.

We are not to go back under the law as the Galatian church did, and received the rebuke of the apostle as we read in **Galatians 3 (NASB)**:1 You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed *as* crucified? 2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

And in **Galatians 4 (NASB)**:21 Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?

And Paul states that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. All have sinned and fall short, or lack, the glory of God as in **Romans 3 (NASB)**:21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Our justification is from sin. Sin is revealed by the law. Jesus showed the true nature of God's righteousness by clarifying what sin is. Jesus pointed to where sin is, that is, in the thoughts and intents of the heart. The law addresses our sin. It is not just disobedience to ritual laws, but all the laws of God reveal His righteousness and make us aware that we have sinned. It is for our sin that Jesus died. It was not just for our past sin but all sin that Jesus died for as Paul tells us in **Acts 13 (NASB)**:36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; 37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. 38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, 39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses. 40 Therefore take heed, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon *you:*

The word "freed" in verse 39 in the Greek is δικαιόω (pronounced dikaioō). Vine's says that this word means "primarily, to deem to be right, signifies, in the N.T., (a) to show to be right or righteous;" and "(b) to declare to be righteous, to pronounce righteous." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 284.**

This word is the same word translated "justified" in Romans 3:24 above. His blood is now a propitiation for all our sin. God now justifies all who have faith in Jesus based on His blood as in **Romans 3 (NASB)**:25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, *I say,* of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. 29 Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

Our justification is by faith whether we are Jew or Gentile. And we are justified from our sin. This is why the law cannot be divided up between the ceremonial or ritual laws and the Decalogue, the ten commandments. All the laws are the commands of God. Sin is disobeying the law of God, whether it was disobedience to the Decalogue or to the ritual law. It was for our sin that Jesus died. We now receive the righteousness of God as a gift by His grace through our faith in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 25: The Spiritual Man

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXIII

To summarize, in paragraph one, Irenaeus says that the spiritual man, who "truly receiving the Spirit of God," does indeed "judge all men, but is himself judged by no man." Irenaeus hints at the deity of the Spirit of God here for he says of the Spirit of God that He "was from the beginning, in all the dispensations of God, present with mankind, and announced things future, revealed things present, and narrated things past," meaning He is omniscient. Then he says this spiritual man judges "the Gentiles, who serve the creature more than the Creator," and judges the Jews who reject their Christ, their Savior, because they don't realize the Scriptures speak of "two advents." The first advent was when the Christ became a man, "a stone rejected by the builders, and was led as a sheep to the slaughter." Then, in the second advent, Irenaeus says, "He will come on the clouds bringing on the day which burns as a furnace," that is, the judgment day.

Irenaeus is to be commended for his staunch defense of the Church against the Gnostic heresies that were so vehement as stormy winds in his day. And he is to be commended for his stand against false prophets, and anyone who would say that Jesus was not truly man, or that He was not truly God. He is also to be commended for his stand against schisms in the Church.

However, it is important to note that the Greek word used in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 is ἀνακρίνω (pronounced anakrinō). This word means to examine or judge, investigate, scrutinse, sift, or question. It might be summarized by the word "discern" in the context of 1 Corinthians 2:14-15. The one who is spiritual discerns all things.

There is another Greek word translated "judge" in **Matthew 7 (NASB):**1 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

The Greek word translated "judge" in these verses is κρίνω (pronounced krinō). Vine's says that this words "primarily denotes to separate, select, choose; hence, to determine, and so to judge, pronounce judgment." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. II, page 280**.

We must be careful not to confuse discernment with pronouncing judgment. What Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 was that the spiritual man is aware of the spiritual realm, the Kingdom of God, and spiritual truths that are grasped by faith as we read in **Hebrews 11 (NASB):**1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Paul's desire for the Corinthians was that they might become spiritual. That is, that they would not be ruled by their fleshly desires, that is, be carnal. Paul's desire for the Corinthians was that they would be ruled by the Spirit of God. He wanted them to discern what was holy versus what was of the flesh. It they would do this there would be no division among them as there was when Paul first wrote to them. We discussed this more in **Chapter 8: On the Nature of Man** under the heading, **Book 4: Chapter XXXVIII**.

The spiritual man looks at the things not seen, that is, the things of the Spirit. He understands by faith that God, by His Spirit, made all things. In other words, He has a spiritual dimension to his understanding, and is not limited to just the physical realm. He sees vertically as well as horizontally. He looks at earthly things but also at heavenly things.

I believe Irenaeus is correct in his exhortation to judge, that is to be discerning, in that we are to discipline those who are within the bounds of the church so that they teach no other doctrine than that which agrees with the word of God. For example, we are to judge immorality as in **1 Corinthians 5 (NASB):**9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. 11 But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or

sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. 12 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? 13 God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you."

And we are to command people not to teach false doctrine in the church as we read in **1 Timothy 1 (New International Version):**1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, 2 To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer 4 or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. 5 The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. 7 They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. 8 We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. 9 We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, 10 for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine 11 that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

But to judge false doctrine, we must know the word of God for ourselves. This will give us discernment as to what is spiritual versus what is of the flesh. The Church must be a safe place and open sin must not be tolerated. But we must be safe people first. We need time and space to grow, and we must have the grace to allow others time and space to grow. And there are times when we must let God discipline, for we are all His children.

Irneaues is this section is trying to show us the authority of the believer. The Scriptures teach us that the believer who is spiritual has authority to judge what is true and what is not true. But we make no judgment on people. That is God's place.

Chapter 26: A Refutation of Two Gods

Book 4: Chapter XXXVI.—The prophets were sent from one and the same Father from whom the Son was sent.

In paragraph 4, Irenaeus then argues, "For that which had been said in the parable, "Behold, for three years I come seeking fruit," and in clear terms, again, [where He says], "How often would I have gathered thy children together," shall be [found] a falsehood, if we do not understand His advent, which is [announced] by the prophets—if, in fact, He came to them but once, and then for the first time." Irenaeus then testifies, "But since He who chose the patriarchs and those [who lived under the first covenant], is the same Word of God who did both visit them through the prophetic Spirit, and us also who have been called together from all quarters by His advent; in addition to what has been already said, He truly declared, "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall recline with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall go into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," referring to **Matthew 8 (KJV):**11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Irenaeus effectively concludes as he argues, "If, then, those who do believe in Him through the preaching of His apostles throughout the east and west shall recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, partaking with them of the [heavenly] banquet, one and the same God is set forth as He who did indeed choose the patriarchs, visited also the people, and called the Gentiles."

Chapter 28: Physical Death

Book 5: Chapter XXIII.—The devil is well practised in falsehood, by which Adam having been led astray, sinned on the sixth day of the creation, in which day also he has been renewed by Christ.

Irenaeus has done well to point out that man died a physical death because of Adam's sin which polluted the whole human race at its source. However it is clear in his summarizing that he does not completely understand that man died spiritually in the day that he sinned. That is, in the moment man sinned, he died spiritually, and needed to be born again. The Scriptures state that man without Christ is dead in trespasses and sins, and is by nature a child of wrath as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

And in Adam, all die as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

We are quickened, that is, made alive in Christ, in our spirit the moment we believe in Him, being born of the Spirit of God. The life of the Spirit of God is then the life of our spirit. This is referred to as "Christ in us" by Paul. Having Christ in us, we thus possess eternal life as John says in **1 John 5 (NASB):**11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Chapter 29: The Devil and Governments

Book 5: Chapter XXIV.—Of the constant falsehood of the devil, and of the powers and governments of the world, which we ought to obey, inasmuch as they are appointed of God, not of the devil.

In paragraph two, Irenaeus affirms, "For since man, by departing from God, reached such a pitch of fury as even to look upon his brother as his enemy, and engaged without fear in every kind of restless conduct, and murder, and avarice; God imposed upon mankind the fear of man, as they did not acknowledge the fear of God, in order that, being subjected to the authority of men, and kept under restraint by their laws, they might attain to some degree of justice, and exercise mutual forbearance through dread of the sword suspended full in their view, as the apostle says: "For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath upon him who does evil," referring again to Romans 13:4 above.

Irenaeus then explains as he affirms also, "And for this reason too, magistrates themselves, having laws as a clothing of righteousness whenever they act in a just and legitimate manner, shall not be called in question for their conduct, nor be liable to punishment. But whatsoever they do to the subversion of justice, iniquitously, and impiously, and illegally, and tyrannically, in these things shall they also perish; for the just judgment of God comes equally upon all, and in no case is defective. Earthly rule, therefore, has been appointed by God for the benefit of nations, and not by the devil, who is never at rest at all, nay, who does not love to see even nations conducting themselves after a quiet manner, so that under the fear of human rule, men may not eat each other up like fishes; but that, by means of the establishment of laws, they may keep down an excess of wickedness

among the nations." Indeed, earthly rule has been established by God as also Luke tells us as he quotes Paul in **Acts 17 (NASB):**26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Irenaeus affirms further, "And considered from this point of view, those who exact tribute from us are "God's ministers, serving for this very purpose," referring again to Romans 13:4 above.

In paragraph three, Irenaeus asserts, "As, then, "the powers that be are ordained of God," it is clear that the devil lied when he said, "These are delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give them," referring again to **Luke 4 (KJV):**6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

Irenaeus then testifies that, "The devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, [namely] to deceive and lead astray the mind of man into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavour to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as God," referring in part to **Isaiah 14 (KJV):**13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

The devil's sin was that he wanted to make himself like the Most High.

Chapter 30: Free Will

Commentary Summary Book 4: Chapter XXXVII

Irenaeus begins his argument in paragraph one as he says, "This expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God.

Irenaeus asserts here that man has free will, that is, that man possesses "his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God." So God will not make us accept His salvation, but has given us free will to choose whether we will be saved or not.

We see that Irenaeus' arguments for free will begin in paragraph one when he notices that the Lord said He would have gathered the children of Jerusalem together often but they were not willing. In Irenaeus' thinking, this places the power of choice in man. And he also notices that this power of choice was given to man from the beginning with Adam. Though he doesn't mention it specifically, he draws from the account in Genesis when God gave command to Adam that he may eat of any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now Irenaeus also notices that Paul says that men "despise the riches of His goodness," and that men will receive "glory and honor" as a reward for doing good, but wrath will be the reward for those who reject his goodness.

Irenaeus continues his argument in paragraph two where he says that "all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it." In other words, man was not made bad or good by nature, but he was given the power of choice to do good, and thus win God's approval, and "obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein;" Others, "because of their rejection of what is fair and good," are "blamed, and receive a just condemnation," he asserts. Irenaeus also asserts that the prophets gave "good counsel which the good God has given us to know" by means of their prophecy so that we would not "by excessive negligence" become "forgetful."

In paragraph three, Irenaeus notices that the Lord gives encouragement to us to let our lights shine so that men may see our good deeds, and glorify our Father in heaven. And Irenaeus notices that the Lord encourages us to take heed to ourselves, and by such encouragement He is demonstrating "the independent will of man."

In paragraph four, Irenaeus moves the focus of his attention to the writings of Paul, and he notices that this same "liberty of man" is implied by Paul's exhortations to walk as children of light, and to speak truth with our neighbor. However, it was Peter who encouraged us not to use "our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness," as we saw in 1 Peter 2:16. Irenaeus then asks why the Lord or the apostle Paul would speak such exhortations if it was "not in our power to do or not to do" some things and "to abstain from others." And, since God has free will, and man was created in God's likeness, "man is possessed of free will from the beginning," Irenaeus concludes.

In paragraph five, Irenaeus believed that "not merely in works, but also in faith, has God preserved the will of man free and under his own control, saying, "According to thy faith be it unto thee."

Man has his own opinion, Irenaeus argues, and therefore he has a faith "specially belonging" to him. By such a saying, Ireaneus asserts that the Lord demonstrated that "man is in his own power with regard to faith." Again, Irenaeus emphasized Matthew 23:37 again to show that He would have gathered Jerusalem's children like a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but they would not, and in saying this, Irenaeus believed He was revealing the independent will of man.

In paragraph six, Irenaeus implies that men were "made rational beings, endowed with the power of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will, but are drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (inflexibiles et sine judicio), who are incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created." Irenaeus also implies that God has placed man in a great contest in which he must strive to be victorious, and so obtain the crown.

And in paragraph seven, Irenaeus develops this thought of a contest more as he begins by saying, "On this account, too, did the Lord assert that the kingdom of heaven was the portion of "the violent;" and He says, "The violent take it by force;" quoting the Lord in Matthew 11:12. Irenaeus explains that the Lord was here asserting that it is "those who by strength and earnest striving are on the watch to snatch it away on the moment." Irenaeus also continues as he states, "On this account also Paul the Apostle says to the Corinthians, "Know ye not, that they who run in a racecourse," referring to 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

Irenaeus believed that our struggle is for the crown of immortality "which does not encircle us of its own accord," but must be won by our "earnest striving," and "reached by much anxious care." Irenaeus concludes as he says, "Since, then, this power has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by striving after it."

Now the crux of Irenaeus' argument for the free will of man is in his first statement, as he says at the beginning of paragraph one, "This expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God."

To be absolutely clear, Irenaues says that man possesses "his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God." As we look at all the instances where Irenaeus uses the word power, we see that he adheres to this assertion throughout his writing in this chapter. There are in fact fourteen instances as follows:

1. This expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own **power**, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (*ad utendum sententia*) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God. (paragraph 1)
2. And in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the **power** of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves. (paragraph 1)
3. God therefore has given that which is good, as the apostle tells us in this Epistle, and they who work it shall receive glory and honour, because they have done that which is good when they had it in their **power** not to do it; but those who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it in their **power** so to do. (paragraph 1)

4. But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the **power** to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good. (paragraph 2)
5. And therefore the prophets used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness, as I have so largely demonstrated, because it is in our **power** so to do, and because by excessive negligence we might become forgetful, and thus stand in need of that good counsel which the good God has given us to know by means of the prophets. (paragraph 2)
6. No doubt, if any one is unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his **power** [to reject it], but it is not expedient. For it is in man's **power** to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but [such conduct] brings no small amount of injury and mischief. (paragraph 4)
7. If then it were not in our **power** to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others? (paragraph 4)
8. Now all such expressions demonstrate that man is in his own **power** with respect to faith. (paragraph 5)
9. In the same manner therefore the Lord, both showing His own goodness, and indicating that man is in his own free will and his own **power**, said to Jerusalem, "How often have I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen [gathereth] her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Wherefore your house shall be left unto you desolate." (paragraph 5)
10. Those, again, who maintain the opposite to these [conclusions], do themselves present the Lord as destitute of **power**, as if, forsooth, He were unable to accomplish what He willed; (paragraph 6)
11. "But He should not," say they, "have created angels of such a nature that they were capable of transgression, nor men who immediately proved ungrateful towards Him; for they were made rational beings, endowed with the **power** of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will, but are drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (*inflexibiles et sine judicio*), who are incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created." (paragraph 6)
12. Since, then, this **power** has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by striving after it. (paragraph 7)

Again, to summarize Irenaeus' thinking, he asserts that man has free will. That is, God has made man from the beginning a free agent, possessing his own power, so that he may obey the commands of God voluntarily and not under compulsion by God. Man has been given the power of choice, and was made a rational being just as angels, and is endowed with the power of examining and judging so that man may justly possess what is good. In Irenaeus' thinking, this liberty to choose has not been abrogated because of the fall of man. Man must yield obedience, and so preserve the good given him by God. Man has the power to obey or not to obey God. Since all men "are of the same nature," and are able to "hold fast and to do what is good," and, "on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it," God is just to reward those who do what is good and condemn those who do not do good.

Irenaeus also believes that, since therefore man has this power, the prophets "used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness" in case "by excessive negligence we might become forgetful." God therefore supplied man's need for good counsel through the prophets. The Lord Himself and the apostle Paul also gave us counsel to do good and abstain from evil because it is in our power to do one or the other. Irenaeus also believes that the Lord Himself shows us that man has power to believe or not believe by His statements in the Gospels. And since we have this power to choose, Ireaneus asserts that Paul encouraged us to strive to win the prize of immortality by choosing to love God all the more.

Now, in Irenaeus' thinking, for God to be just, man must have free will so that, through this rational process of man's choosing, God is able to reward man with the crown of immortality for choosing the good, or allow man to reject it and fall under His just condemnation. Also in Irenaeus' thinking, man not only has free

will to choose good or reject it, but he also has the power to do what he has chosen to do as well, since having free will without the power to do what you have chosen would be nonsense to Irenaeus as he asserts in paragraph two, "But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally]." Irenaeus firmly believed that man has the power to carry out his choices as he asserts, "But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein."

Irenaeus sees man in a great contest, the last of which will be in the tribulation in the last days as he also says in **Book5: XXIX**, **paragraph 1**, "For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption."

According to Irenaeus, man must run the race by obeying the Decalogue and choosing the good and loving God more and more in order to reach the prize and be "crowned with incorruption." Man is striving to please God by doing good, and so be accepted by Him.

According to Irenaeus, the prize man is striving for is immortality, that is, to be "crowned with incorruption," which is obtained by a struggle. This is ordained by God so that we "may deem the crown precious, namely, that which is acquired by our struggle." Irenaeus' argument, however, implies a test by God to see if we are worthy to obtain eternal life. In Irenaeus' thinking, though we have believed, we still don't have eternal life yet, but we must first struggle in this life to obtain the prize of eternal life, that is, to be "crowned with incorruption." And when Irenaeus says that the crown "does not encircle us of its own accord," he is saying that we must run the race to win this prize.

It is evident that there is more at stake here than just the free will of man for Irenaeus. It is eternal life that is the prize in Irenaeus' thinking as he says, speaking of Paul in paragraph seven, "This able wrestler, therefore, exhorts us to the struggle for immortality, that we may be crowned, and may deem the crown precious, namely, that which is acquired by our struggle, but which does not encircle us of its own accord (sed non ultro coalitam). And the harder we strive, so much is it the more valuable; while so much the more valuable it is, so much the more should we esteem it."

I believe Irenaues raises three issues in his argument for man's free will which are as follows:

1.) What is the nature of man?
2.) What power does man possess?
3.) And what are his choices?

We must ask ourselves what is the Biblical truth about each of these issues if we are to answer these questions. Now Irenaeus' argument for man's free will really hinges on his statement about the nature of man in paragraph two where he asserts, "But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it,—some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good."

In arguing this way, Irenaeus assumes that the nature of man has not changed after the fall, and that God made man neither good or bad but simply gave them the ability "to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it." That Irenaeus assumed that the nature of man had not changed after the fall is also evident in his assertion that the "expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty," referring here to Jesus' words in Matthew 23:37. And he continues by saying, "because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God." However, we know that something changed after the fall for the Scriptures say that we are, before accepting Christ, all by nature children of wrath as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging

the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

The word "nature" in the Greek is φύσις (pronounced phusis). Vine's says that this word means "to bring forth, produce, signifies (a) the nature (i.e., the natural powers or constitution) of a person or thing." Also, the word means "(b) origin, birth," and "(c) the regular law or order of nature." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine**, **Vol. III, page 103.**

The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament, George V. Wigram, page 792, lists other Scriptures where this same Greek word is used. Here are some of the instances.

> The word is actually used twice, first as an adjective, "natural," and second as a noun, "unnatural," in **Romans 1 (NASB):**26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,
>
> This word is translated "instinctively" in **Romans 1 (NASB):**14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,
>
> And this word is translated "physically" in **Romans 2 (NASB):**27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

So when Paul said in Ephesians 2:3 that we were all by nature children of wrath, he meant that to sin was something natural or innate in us. That is, to sin was according to our natural constitution. It was our nature to sin. Thus when Irenaeus says that "all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good," this was true of Adam and Eve, but certainly not true of their descendants, for all of their descendants are "dead in trespasses and sin," and are "by nature children of wrath."

The Scriptures reveal far more about the effects of man's sin upon man and the creation after the fall than Irenaeus mentions in his argument for free will. We would do well to ask ourselves how we became children of wrath in the first place.

To start at the beginning, we know that sin was already in the universe before man fell because the tempter, that is, the serpent, was in the Garden of Eden before man fell. The tempter is the devil, who is called Satan as we read in **Revelation 12 (NASB):**9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

The tempter who was in the Garden of Eden is the same who tried to get the Son of God to sin in **Matthew 4 (NASB):**3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"

Jesus' final response to him was to be gone Satan as we read in **Matthew 4 (NASB):**10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

Now, in the beginning when man was in the Garden of Eden, he was innocent until he fell as we see in **Genesis 2 (NASB):**25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The account of man's sin is recorded in **Genesis 3 (NASB):**1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" 4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

After the man sinned, there were huge changes in man's being, and even the creation as a result. We

may note the following from the account in Genesis:

- Man and woman felt shame for the first time, and hid from God as a result as we see in **Genesis 3 (NASB):**7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. 8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
- Man felt fear for the first time as we read in **Genesis 3 (NASB):**9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."
- Man and woman practiced blame shifting for the first time as we see in **Genesis 3 (NASB):**11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."
- God placed a curse on the serpent and enmity between the serpent and the woman, but promised a victorious seed would come as we see in **Genesis 3 (NASB):**14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."
- Woman would have pain in childbirth as we note in **Genesis 3 (NASB):**16 To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."
- The ground was cursed and, as a result, man would have to toil and sweat for food to eat. Also, both man and woman would die physical death as we read in **Genesis 3 (NASB):**17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.18 "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

In addition to all of the above, man suffered spiritual death for we see that God promised the man that in the day he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he would surely die as we read in **Genesis 2 (NASB)**:16 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

That spiritual death, as well as physical death, is spoken of here, there can be no doubt as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

Again we read in **Colossians 2 (NASB)**:13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

It is evident that Adam and Eve polluted the human race at its source, and plunged us into spiritual death as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB)**: 21 For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

In this spiritual death we walked according to the course of this world and the prince of the power of the air, that is, according to Satan, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

In this state of spiritual death we lived in the lusts of our flesh and were by nature children of wrath just

as all others as Paul states in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

It was our nature to sin before we accepted Christ. Not only so, but before accepting Christ we walked in the futility of our mind, being darkened in our understanding, and excluded from the life of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

And before Christ in this state of spiritual death, both our mind and conscience were defiled as we note in **Titus 1 (NASB)**:15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

Therefore, before Christ, since our mind and conscience were defiled, and being just in our flesh without the Spirit of God, we do not have the right standards by which to judge right and wrong by. Our heart is also more deceitful than all else as we read in **Jeremiah 17 (NASB):**9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

The heart is the center of our emotions. We were all about this world, and the god of this world had blinded our minds as we read in **2 Corinthians 4 (NASB)**:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

We were without the Spirit of God, and we were thus mere natural men and women. Being just in this natural state, we could not understand the things of the Spirit of God as Paul states in **2 Corinthians 2 (NASB)**:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Before Christ, we were in the flesh and our minds were set on the flesh. Being in this state we were hostile toward God as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB):**5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so,* 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

We are all, without exception, spiritually dead in Adam, but when we accept Christ as our Savior, we are made alive as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (NASB)**:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

In addition to physical and spiritual death, man's condition is described as follows:

- He is under sin and does not understand his need for God as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):**9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
- He is useless, as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):**12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
  The word "useless" in the Greek is ἀχρειόω (pronounced achreioō). Wuest says that this word means "to make useless, render unserviceable," and that the Hebrew word here means "to go bad, become sour like milk." **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume 1, page 55.**
- In God's estimation, man does not do good. In fact, he does the opposite as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):**12 THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." 13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,"

"THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; 14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; 15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, 16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, 17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."

- Man in his spiritually dead state has no fear of God as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):**18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

Not only so, but ever since Adam, man is in possession of a nature that is on the downgrade and from which it is impossible to free himself apart from Christ. The apostle Paul describes man's condition in general in **Romans 1 (NASB):**18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Because of this Paul tells us that man sank even lower as we read in **Romans 1 (NASB):**24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

It is hard for us to understand, but because of this man sank even lower as we continue to read in **Romans 1 (NASB):**26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

It is hard for us to believe, but man sank even lower as Paul continues in **Romans 1 (NASB):**28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

The effects of man's fall were not limited to man, but the whole creation also is said to be longing for its freedom from corruption as Paul tells us in **Romans 8 (NASB):**18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Now since the man apart from Christ is in such a condition of spiritual death, it stands therefore that the whole world is guilty before God as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):**19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

Every mouth is closed because we all have sin. Since we all have sin, we are then all under the law, and we are accountable to God. Before we accept Christ, we are dead in trespasses and sins. In such a state of sin,

the law spoke to us and condemned us for all have sinned and fall short of God's glory as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB)**:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

Man who has not repented of his sin and been born again, that is, man who is in his unregenerate state, is said to be in the flesh and cannot please God as we read again in **Romans 8 (NASB)**:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so,* 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

In the flesh without the Spirit of God, man is not able to be subject to the law of God, and cannot please God. This is what it means to be by nature a child of wrath. As sinners by nature, we are not able to be subject to the law of God. Thus we are under the law's condemnation. Being just in the flesh, we cannot please God, and we all are under judgment, wrath, and a curse until we accept Christ as we read in **John 3 (NASB)**:18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

And **John 3 (NASB)**:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

And **Galatians 3 (NASB)**:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—

Before Christ, we were slaves of sin as Jesus told the Jews who trusted in their descent from Abraham for righteousness as we see in **John 8 (NASB)**:33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" 34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

It is the Son who makes us free. But before Christ, our whole being was impacted by sin. Our body, mind, will, and heart were controlled by our sinful nature. We ourselves walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. In such a state, we were helpless sinners as Paul states in **Romans 5 (NASB)**:6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The word "helpless" in the Greek is ἀσθενής (pronounced asthenēs). Vine says that this word is composed of two words (a, negative, sthenos, strength). The word literally means "without strength." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine**, **Vol II, page 252.**

This word is translated as "sick" or "weak" or "impotent" in other Scriptures, but it must be interpreted by the context in which it is used as we see in **Acts 4 (NASB):**8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, " Rulers and elders of the people, 9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well.

The man Peter is speaking of in verse 9 is the one who was begging at the gate called Beautiful, and who couldn't walk, and whom he healed in the name of Jesus Christ as we read in **Acts 3 (NASB):**1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth *hour,* the hour of prayer. 2 And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he *began* asking to receive alms. 4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!" 5 And he *began* to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!" 7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. 8 With a leap he stood upright and *began* to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God; 10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to *beg* alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

The man whom Peter and John healed in the name of Jesus Christ could not walk, and had to be carried to his place of begging. Therefore the better translation here is "impotent" as in **Acts 4 (King James Version):9** If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

In the same way, in our state of being sinners in spiritual death and darkness, we are impotent, without strength, and unable to save ourselves. In our state of spiritual death, we are oblivious to the spiritual world. Being just in our natural state, the word of God is foolishness to us as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB)**:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

In our state of spiritual death we were also enemies of God as Paul tells us in **Romans 5 (NASB)**:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

The word "enemies" in the Greek is ἐχθρός (pronounced echthros). This is the same Greek word used in **Acts 2 (NASB):**34 For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'"

We cannot change our nature as Jeremiah tells us in **Jeremiah 13 (NASB)**:23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.

Man in such a state has no power to do good. Even if he wanted to, he could not do good. Man in such a state needs a Savior. He is powerless to help himself in his present condition. We cannot save ourselves. We need God to save us. This is why Jesus came. Jesus came to save sinners as we read in **1 Timothy 1 (NASB)**:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

So man is spiritually dead. Man is in the flesh, and does not have the Spirit of God. He cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God being just a natural man. Man's conscience is defiled so that he does not have the right standards to judge right and wrong. And man is in possession of a nature that is on the downgrade, and from which it is impossible to free himself apart from Christ. In this state of spiritual death, man's heart is desperately wicked. His mind is set on the flesh, and is hostile toward God. Man in this state of spiritual death has no power to do good, even if he wanted to.

Now the only question is, what are our choices? In our sinful state of spiritual death, everything we do is tainted by sin. We may have the desire to do good, but since we have sin, all that we do is tainted by our sin and is unacceptable to God. According to the Scriptures, we were made good by God, but we became sinful by Adam's sin. Irenaeus' argument, that if "if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally]," is simply hypothetical. The reality, according to the Scriptures, is that all men became bad, that is, sinful, when Adam sinned, and because they have a sinful nature, they can only do bad. Man has no power in his sinful state to do good. He may wish to do good, but he does not have the power to do good because he has sin which taints everything he does.

Therefore, Irenaeus' statements that "God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God," is true of Adam before he sinned. After Adam sinned, however, he cannot "yield obedience" so that he "might justly possess what is good." Man cannot preserve the good given by God because he does not have the good any longer. Man after the fall of Adam has sin as a nature. Since man has a sin nature, he cannot do good. He does not have the power to not sin.

So sinful man, who is dead in trespasses and sin, and who walks according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, and who lives in the lusts of his flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and who is by nature a child of wrath, who is in darkness, and who is excluded from the life of God by the ignorance in him, who is without strength to save himself from his sin, who is a slave of sin and an enemy of God, whose heart is desperately sick, and whose mind and conscience are defiled, and who does not possess the power to do good, has really only one choice. He can believe in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior or reject Him. This is the statement of the apostle John in **John 3 (NASB)**:18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not

believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Until we accept Christ, we remain under the judgment of God. Until we accept Christ as our Savior, we do not have the power to do good, and our choices are limited. Now we may well ask how then does man in such a condition of spiritual death come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ? The answer is found in the Scriptures.

God saves us by His word, that is, the word which is preached by those He sends as we see in **Romans 10 (NASB)**:8 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

And in **Romans 10 (NASB):**14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

However, not all believe, but the word preached causes faith in some as Paul tells us in **Romans 10 (NASB):**16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" 17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

So we believe when we hear the message preached. Faith to believe comes by reading or hearing the word of Christ as it is preached by those He sends. Now when we hear His word, whether by reading it ourselves or hearing it through another believer, our minds are enlightened with the truth about who He is. We begin to change our minds about Him and our sin, and we see ourselves in a new light. The enlightening of our minds is the first stage of repentance, which is the Greek word μετάνοια (pronounced metanoia). This word means "lit. to perceive afterwards (meta, after, implying change, noeo, to perceive; nous the mind, the seat of moral reflection), in contrast to pronoeo, to perceive beforehand, hence signifies to change one's mind or purpose." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine**, **Vol III, page 281.**

The word "repentance" then has in it the idea of a change of mind, and ultimately a change of heart about something. Dr. Albert Grimes in his booklet, The Doctrine of Repentance, says this about repentance.

> "It stands to reason after our minds have been changed and we see ourselves as we really are, and Christ as He really is, that our emotions will be touched as in **2 Corinthians 7 (NASB):**9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance…
>
> The Greek word for repentance in this connection means "to be a care to one afterwards," "to cause great concern." The Hebrew is stronger and means "to pant," "to sigh," or "to moan." The emotions of the publican were so touched that he smote upon his breast as in **Luke 18 (NASB):**13 But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'
>
> Just how much emotion is necessary to true repentance no one can say. But a certain amount of emotion, even though it may not be shown, is evident in true repentance. It no doubt would depend upon the type of person themselves."

The Greek word which is used in 2 Corinthians 7:9 for "sorrowful" is ἐλυπήθητε (pronounced elupethete) and in context is ἐλυπήθητε εἰς μετάνοιαν (pronounced elupethete ace metanoian) which when translated means "were sorrowful unto repentance." The word elupethete comes from the Greek word λυπη (pronounced lupe) which means pain, distress, grief. The verb is λυπέω (pronounced lypeō) which means to occasion grief or sorrow to, to distress, according to **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition, by Harold K. Moulton**. So the idea of sorrow as a part of true repentance is shown here in this verse.

Repentance was foremost in Jesus' preaching as we read in **Mark 1 (NASB):**14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Repentance was also foremost in the apostle's preaching. When Peter preached for the first time after Jesus ascended and the Holy Spirit had come upon them in the upper room, at the end of his preaching when they asked him what they should do, he told his hearers to repent as we read in **Acts 2 (NASB**):37 Now when

they heard *this,* they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, " Brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." 40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!"

Peter was speaking to Jews here who were devout men from every nation under heaven as in **Acts 2 (NASB)**:5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.

Peter told them that they had crucified Jesus, the Christ as we read in **Acts 2 (NASB)**:22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this *Man,* delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. 24 But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

And in **Acts 2 (NASB)**:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."

Peter was telling them to change their minds about Jesus who is the Christ. This is what the prodigal son did after he had squandered his inheritance in riotous living as in **Luke 15 (NASB)**:17 But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."'

Confession of sin is involved in true repentance. When we truly repent, the Father's arms are wide open and He puts the best robe on us as Jesus tells us in **Luke 15 (NASB)**:20 So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him,* and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

It is only after our spiritual rebirth, which comes when we truly repent, that we can do any good. Until we repent, all our righteousness is as filthy rags as in **Isaiah 64 (NASB)**:6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Our nature is changed when we believe in Jesus Christ and we are born again. The Holy Spirit becomes the life of our Spirit. His life in us is eternal life. Our spirit is renewed to life and receives a new nature, the divine sinless nature of the Holy Spirit, who gives us new life when we are born of Him. Being born of the Spirit in this way, we are truly a new creation.

In this chapter Irenaeus leaves out the fall of man in his thinking. He treats man, the descendant of Adam, as if he were just as responsible as Adam himself before he sinned. We know that Adam was not made by God with a sin nature. Adam became sinful when he disobeyed God's command not to eat of the tree of good and evil. This made the new birth absolutely essential for every man afterwards. Man is as an Ethiopian who cannot change his skin or a leopord his spots. That is, man cannot change his nature. So being in this condition, we cannot do good until we have had a change in our nature. This only happens when we repent and are born again. Jesus tells us that, unless we repent, we will all perish as in **Luke 13 (NASB):**1 Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were *greater* sinners than all *other* Galileans because they suffered this *fate?* 3 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

So as we repent, we come to believe that Jesus is who He said He was. When we surrender our hearts to Him, believing that God raised Him from the dead, and confess Him as Lord of our lives, we are born again. God is said to have made us alive together with Christ as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our

transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

The apostle John says that this new birth was not by the will of man but of God as in **John 1 (NASB)**:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Again, James says in **James 1 (NASB)**:18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

And Peter says in **1 Peter 1 (NASB)**:23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

However hard this is to accept, we must understand that this is the plain teaching of the word of God as we see in **1 Corinthians 1 (NASB)**:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

It was God who sent those who preached the word to us. It was God who, through His Spirit acting in the word preached, gave us faith as a gift, and we then believed the good news, the Gospel as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

As a result, we were born of the Spirit, that is, we were born again. We now possess the life of the Spirit in our Spirit since we are born of Him as we read in **Ephesians 1 (NASB)**:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

Having believed, we are then God's possession and the Holy Spirit is given to us as a pledge of His redemption as we read in **Ephesians 1 (NASB)**:14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

Now Isaiah spoke in prophecy to Israel as we read in **Isaiah 30 (NASB)**:15 For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength." But you were not willing.

By this we understand that repentance is ongoing in the life of the believer. As we walk in the light of His word, He cleanses us of all unrighteousness. This will go on until we are raptured or resurrected. But the new birth is a one time experience in the life of the believer.

Now Paul describes his experience as a Christian in Romans, chapter seven. As a sinner before Christ, he was of flesh, sold into bondage to sin as we read in **Romans 7 (NASB):**14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

After accepting Christ, his spirit was made alive, and he was born of the Spirit. His inner being then was made a partaker of a new nature, that is, the divine nature. Peter explains this in **2 Peter 1 (NASB):**1 Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Being born of the Spirit, we now share or partake of the divine nature of God in our spirit. We are truly sons and daughters of God, but not made perfect yet in our soul. Our mind, will, and emotions compose our soul, and it is there that we are progressively cleansed as we walk in the light of His word and grow in grace and knowledge. Now after Paul was born again, he said that he joyfully concurs with the law of God in his inner man, but that evil is still present with him as we read in **Romans 7 (NASB):**21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

Before we accepted Christ, being dead in our trespasses and sins, our inner man only had a sinful nature. After we accept Christ, we are born again and receive a new nature in our inner man, our spirit. This is spoken of in **Ezekiel 36 (NASB):**26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Paul joyfully concurred with the law of God in his inner man made new by the new birth, but he still possessed a sinful nature in his flesh that disagreed with the new nature in his spirit as a result of being born again. There was a war between the two. Before he accepted Christ, there was no such war. He only had a sinful nature and sinned by nature. It was only afterwards that he found himself doing things that he hated doing as he says in **Romans 7 (NASB):**15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do,* but I am doing the very thing I hate. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do,* I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.

Paul tells us that now, as a result of the new birth in his spirit, he is no longer the one doing the thing he hates as he says in **Romans 7 (NASB):**17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Paul tells us that nothing good dwells in his flesh, but that he is now willing to do good as we read in **Romans 7 (NASB):**18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Paul says he is no longer the one doing the evil, but sin which dwells in him. If this is the case with the Christian, then the sinner is totally under the control of the flesh. Though he may will to do good, he cannot because of the sin that dwells in him. You can have all the free will you want, but if you don't have the power to carry out your choices, how much freedom do you really have? Man living in darkness believes he is truly free. It is only when we come to Christ that we realize that we were slaves to sin.

Paul continues by saying that, although the law of sin is in his flesh, he delights in the law of God in the inner man, and he finds the victory over his flesh in Jesus Christ our Lord as we see in **Romans 7 (NASB):**21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

And further, Paul says that in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set him free from the law of sin and death as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB):**1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

It is the Spirit of God who gives life to our spirit when we are born again. It is our spirit that is referred to as the new self which is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

The apostle John assures us that we have this life in our spirit if we have believed that Jesus is the Son of God as we read in **1 John 5 (NASB):**11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

We do not have to wait to see if we finish the race well before we can know that we have eternal life. Now, if the Christian has to submit in this way to the Spirit, what of the one who has not yet accepted Christ? His will is powerless against his flesh. He has sin, and without Christ, he has no way to keep from sinning. He or she is a slave of sin, but again, Paul says that the Christian is no longer a slave of sin as was the case before Christ as we read in **Romans 6 (NASB):**4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him,* in order that our body of

sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

So if we have become Christians by accepting Christ as Savior and have been born again, we now have a choice to make whether we will continue in sin, or present ourselves to God for His service as we see in **Romans 6 (NASB):**12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Before Christ, sin reigned in our death doomed body. We were slaves of sin. But after we accept Christ, we now have power not to sin and give in to our lusts. Now Paul is thankful that apparently the Romans made the choice to submit to God as he says in **Romans 6 (NASB):**17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

We are freed from sin when we accept Christ as Lord of our lives and are born again. This is why Paul says that it was for freedom that Christ set us free as we read in **Galatians 5 (NASB):**1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Before Christ, we are slaves to sin. This put us under the condemnation of the law, which was like a yoke of bondage because it only condemns us. After we accept Christ as Lord and Savior, we are set free from sin, and are given a standing as righteous before God. That is, we are justified by faith. We are therefore no longer under the law in any part. The law was a yoke of slavery because it kept us under sin. Until Christ came and died on the cross for us and rose again from the dead for our justification, we were helpless to keep from sinning. In Christ, our will has now been set free, and we are no longer the slaves of sin. We are now able to do good in God's estimation.

Now before Christ came, men and women trusted in Him who was to come. Their faith is what saved them, and not the keeping of the law. The law was their tutor to bring them to the Christ who was to come. They were born again by their faith, and were also children of Abraham by this faith, just as we who believe today are. When Jesus came, this truth was not being taught as we see in Jesus' remark to Nicodemus in **John 3 (NASB):**10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?

After Jesus explains to Nicodemus that, to see or enter the kingdom of God, you must be born again, all Nicodemus can say is in **John 3 (NASB):**9 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?"

This is why the prophets could speak to Israel as if they had a choice to obey or not to obey. The idea was that the law would bring them to faith in the Messiah, the Christ who was to come. This would give them inward freedom to obey the Lord's commands, and power over their sin. Some believed and some did not. The prophets spoke to the believers in Israel, that is, those who were sons and daughters of God by faith and who were therefore able to obey the prophet's words. Yet many were disobedient sons and were being chastened. As it was in Jesus' time, their was little faith, though there was some. But the nation as a whole was in unbelief as Jeremiah says in **Jeremiah 9 (NASB):**3 "They bend their tongue like their bow; Lies and not truth prevail in the land; For they proceed from evil to evil, And they do not know Me," declares the LORD.

And so Jesus told the Pharisees in the temple that they did not know Him or His Father as we read in **John 8 (NASB):**19 So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."

Jesus wants a personal relationship with us. He wants to be known, and He wants to know us. And He wants for us to do the same, that is, to know Him and be known by Him. This has not changed from the beginning.

So now that Christ has come, we are no longer under a tutor as Paul says in **Galatians 3 (NASB):**23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to

promise.

As a born again believer, I am now able to do good. This is what I was created for in Christ Jesus as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We are now able to put on the new self which God created in us by the new birth as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

The new birth was actually a resurrection in our spirit. We were dead in sins but have now been given new life. We now have Christ in us as the very life of our spirit as we read in **Colossians 3 (NASB)**:1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

The fruit of true repentance is manifest in a patient endurance of a good work. This is what Paul is saying in **Romans 2 (King James Version):**4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

Verse 6 in the Greek is as follows:

Ος αποδωσει εκαστω κατα τα εργα αυτου
who will give to each man according to his works

And verse 7 in the Greek is as follows:

τοις μεν καθ' υπομονην εργου αγαθου
to those on the one hand according to a patient endurance of a good work

δοξαν και τιμην και αφθαρσιαν ζητουσιν ζωην αιωνιον
glory and honor and incorruption are seeking life eternal

The preposition κατα (pronounced kata) is καθ' (pronounced kath), and is abbreviated because of the beginning vowel ὑ in the adjacent word υπομονην (pronounced hupomonen). Vine's says that this Greek word υπομονην (pronounced hupomonen) means "lit. an abiding under (hupo, under, meno, to abide)," and that this word "is almost invariably rendered "patience." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine**, **Vol III, page 169.** This Greek word, υπομονην, is in the accusative case, and therefore demands that the preposition καθ' preceding it be translated "according to." If it were in the genitive case, it could be translated as "by," but it is not in the genitive case. The Greek words εργου αγαθου (pronounced ergou agathou) are in the genitive, singular case and simply mean most literally "of a good work." The Greek word ζητουσιν (pronounced dzetousin) is the dative, singular, masculine, participle, present, active form of the verb ζητεω (pronounced zeteo), "to seek." The Greek words δοξαν και τιμην και αφθαρσιαν (pronounced timen kai aphtharsian), meaning "for glory and honor and incorruption," are all in the accusative singular form and are the objects of the verb, to seek. The Greek words, ζωην αιωνιον, are also accusative singular in form, and are the object of the verb, αποδωσει, "will give" in verse 6.

The verses together can be translated most literally as God "…who will give to each man according to his works: to those who on the one hand according to a patient endurance of a good work are seeking glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life…"

The verse does not read "to those who on the one hand by patiently doing good works are seeking glory

and honor and incorruption, eternal life." The use of the word "by" is not called for in the Greek. In the NASB, the word "by" is used, but this translation is missing the point of the verse. Paul is not saying that we are rewarded eternal life by doing good works. That is missing the point of the Gospel message Paul is preaching. Paul is preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that if we repent and believe that God raised Him from the dead and confess Him as Lord, we will be saved. That is, we will have eternal life and we will have it at the moment we believe. This is the moment when we receive the Spirit of God, who becomes the life of our spirit in us. Our nature is changed, and we are then pleasing to God, and in a position as a child of God to do good works which God ordained beforehand to His glory that we should walk in them.

The meaning of the literal translation of verse 7 is God "…who will give to each man according to his works: to those who on the one hand according to a patient endurance of a good work are seeking glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life…," could relate to the "good work" He is doing in each of us once we believe as we read in **Philippians 1 (NASB)**:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

As we are patient to wait on Him, enduring all things by His Spirit, He works a "good work" in us. We are His workmanship as Ephesians 2:10 states above. So Paul in Romans, chapter 2, verse 7, is stating the fact that it is all those who have truly repented who will manifest good works, and be rewarded accordingly with eternal life. Let us remember that it is God who is at work in us as we read in **Philippians 2 (NASB):**12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

Is God coercing my will? No, but He is working in me to will and to work for His good pleasure. My job is to present myself to God as in **Romans 12 (King James Version):**1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

We are only ashamed when we realize we have done wrong. This realization of wrongdoing is what the law does for us, and in this way leads us to Christ. Once we have accepted Christ, we are free from sin and must not continue in sin any longer, but yield to God's good work of sanctification in our lives as we read in **Romans 6 (NASB)**:21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Again, referring to paragraph two where Irenaeus says that the prophets exhorted men and women to act justly and work righteousness, "because it is in our power so to do," the prophets spoke for the most part directly to Israelites who were supposed to be children of God. That is, Israel was supposed to be God's peculiar people who were the people of God by faith. It is the children of God who have the power to do what God requires. Those who were born again by faith were the children of God in Israel.

Paul explains that the people of God are not so because they have physical descent from Abraham. It is the children of the promise that are counted as his descendants as we see in **Romans 9 (NASB)**:6 But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel; 7 nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "THROUGH ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE NAMED." 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.

The children of the promise are those descendants of Abraham who possess the righteousness of faith. In other words, they have the same faith that Abraham possessed, and are thereby his sons as Paul says in **Romans 4 (NASB):**13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. 16 For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 (as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and

calls into being that which does not exist.

What Paul is saying is that there is no need for faith if keeping the law makes us heirs. This would make the promise void. Then there is also the fact those who lived before Moses did not have the law for the law was given by Moses. For this reason, Paul says, we are made heirs by faith in accordance with grace so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants. Those of the law must also have the faith of Abraham in order to be sons. And those without the law, but who had the same faith as Abraham, will also be counted as his sons. Without this faith, it is impossible to please God as we see in **Hebrews 11 (NASB)**:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

The prophets encouraged and spoke to those who had faith. It is those who had faith who had the power to do what the prophets said to do. And those who had no faith had no power to do what the prophets said to do. However, the prophet's words also had the power to convert the faithless man so that he could to turn to the Lord. The prophets spoke the words of God to the people and their words brought about the faith that is needed for repentance and doing the will of God as we see in **Romans 10 (NASB)**:17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

It is the Spirit of God acting in the word of God spoken by those whom God sends that changes lives. The point is that it is only those who have faith who can do the will of God. So then we may ask, does man need free will in order to have faith, that is, can he get faith by his own choice? The Scripture seems to indicate otherwise as we read in **John 1 (NASB)**:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

John in his gospel states clearly that we are not born into the kingdom by natural descent or by anything in our flesh or even our own will but of God. The Scriptures also speak of faith as a gift from God as we see in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Faith is not something we work up in ourselves, or strive for, but it is the gift of God as Paul says. It comes by hearing the word of God preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. Also, faith doesn't come as the result of good works so that no one who does not have faith may boast of his good works. For it is impossible to please God without faith as we read in **Hebrews 11 (NASB)**:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Just as James says that faith without works is dead, we could also say that works without faith are dead works in **James 2 (NASB)**:26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

So when we act justly and work righteousness by faith, it is the result of His working in us as Paul says again in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

The one who has faith can do all things as Paul says in **Philippians 4 (NASB)**:13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

But the man who does not have faith believes that he can do all things, and that he has free will. However, the man who does not have faith is in darkness, and his choices are always limited by his fleshly nature. His vision is limited to this natural world as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB):**14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

The natural man, or the man without the Spirit, is missing something. He does not have the wherewithal to understand the word of God. It is foolishness to him. The Spirit of God must move in man to enlighten his mind so that he can see and understand what the word of God is saying. This happens during repentance. As the Spirit of God moves upon man and opens his heart to believe, man is then made to see his condition of sin. It is then that man surrenders his will to God and receives the Spirit who reveals to him or her the things of the spiritual world as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB):**10 For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

Man does not know that he is a wretch bound by sin. It is only after he has faith that he or she can say with Paul that they are wretched as we read in **Romans 7 (NASB):**24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me

free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Those without faith are totally in the flesh, serving the law of sin, and they make their choices accordingly.

Now, Irenaeus asserts in paragraph three that the Lord exhorts us to do good, implying our freedom to choose to do so or not, as in **Matthew 5 (NASB**):16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

However, Jesus also said that it is the one who follows Him who will have the Light of life as we read in **John 8 (NASB):**12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Those who have no faith walk in darkness, and do not know where they are going as in **John 12 (NASB):**35 So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.

And again in **John 12 (NASB):**36 "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

The idea here is that Jesus was the Light, and in order for us to let our light shine, we must become sons of the Light. We do this by believing in the Light. When speaking of Himself as the bread of life, Jesus told His followers that it is the Spirit that gives life as we read in **John 6 (NASB):**63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

The way we get this life is through the new birth as we read in **John 6 (NASB):**54 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

By eating Jesus' flesh and blood, that is, by identifying with the sacrifice of His body on the cross, and resurrection from the dead, we are born again, and in this way receive eternal life. It is then that we can say we have the light of life. We must have this new life as a result of the new birth in order to have the light of this new life in ourselves. It is only after we have believed in the Son of God that we can do what Jesus said to do, that is, to let our light shine before men so that they can see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. And it is only after we are born again that we can call God our Father.

Again in paragraph three, Irenaeus adds that the Lord also spoke as in **Luke 21 (NASB):**34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;

First of all, to put this verse in context, we see that Jesus is speaking here to the one who has repented and believed in Him, that is, His disciples as we read in **Luke 20 (NASB**):45 And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples, 46 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, 47 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

It was to these disciples that Jesus spoke of a future time when the temple would be torn down as we read in **Luke 21 (NASB):**5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said, 6 "*As for* these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."

It was these disciples who asked him when this would happen as we see in **Luke 21 (NASB**):7 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what *will be* the sign when these things are about to take place?"

Jesus then began to teach His disciples what must happen before He returns in **Luke 21 (NASB):**8 And He said, "See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He,*' and, 'The time is near.' Do not go after them. 9 When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end *does* not *follow* immediately." 10 Then He continued by saying to them, "Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, 11 and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

Jesus was preparing His disciples for His return as He says in **Luke 21 (NASB):**25 "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the

waves, 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. 28 But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

And so in verse 34 of Luke, chapter 21, Jesus warns His disciples to be on guard so that they will recognize the time of His coming and not be caught off guard. He continues by telling them to keep alert at all times in prayer as we read in **Luke 21 (NASB):**34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; 35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. 36 But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Jesus is indicating here that a disciple has a responsibility to stay on the path. The disciples were all, except for Judas, believers. As believers they had the light of life in themselves. Jesus was telling these believers to be careful, and not to let the cares of this life distract from what He had taught them before about being a disciple. As a believer in Christ, we have been given a purpose and a work, which we will be held accountable for. As believers, our choices are different than when we were unsaved.

The one who has the Light of life, that is, who has been born again and is a son of the Light, will most certainly have the strength to escape all the things of this life as Paul says in **Romans 8 (NASB):** 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nevertheless, let him who stands take heed lest he fall as Paul warns in **1 Corinthians 10 (NASB):**12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

Now, verse 34 of Luke, chapter 21, also has a secondary application, and that is for those who have not believed in Jesus Christ, and so have no strength to escape that day when all that Jesus describes will come upon the earth and those living upon it. Jesus is warning them that there will be consequences for unbelief in **Luke 13 (NASB):**5 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

Again in paragraph three, Irenaeus then refers to Jesus' words in **Luke 12 (NASB):**35 "Be dressed in readiness, and *keep* your lamps lit. 36 Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open *the door* to him when he comes and knocks.

This verse assumes that the master of these men is the Lord Jesus, for the warning is to be dressed in readiness with your lamps lit. The way we light our lamps is to believe in the light, that is, in Jesus. And those who have their lamps lit in this way will be free to obey His command. Those who do not believe in Him will not be able to obey His command.

Irenaeus then refers to verses in continuation of the previous parable in **Luke 12 (NASB):**45 But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, *both* men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; 46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect *him* and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. 47 And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes.

In verse 47 above, Irenaeus asserts that the context of the verse implies the ability of the slave to do or not to do his master's will. However, the context of the verse must also include who Jesus was speaking to. In this case, Jesus is speaking to His disciples and explaining to them that they now have a responsibility to their Lord and master to abide in His teaching and not just be hearers only. As Paul says in **Galatians 5 (NASB**):1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

The idea here is that the born again disciple has true freedom in Christ, and is able, or has power, to do His will since this one is renewed in his spirit and his spirit has a new nature. This one who is renewed or made alive in Christ now has a responsibility to do His will since he is able. Now this one must abide in Him. Jesus said as much to the Jews who had believed in Him as we read in **John 8 (NASB**):31 So Jesus was saying to

those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

The Jews thought they were free, that is, that they had free will, but Jesus explains to them that the one who commits sin is the slave of sin as we read in **John 8 (NASB):**34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

It is the Son that makes us free indeed, or really free. But Jesus knew their hearts and He knew they wanted to kill Him as we continue in **John 8 (NASB)**:37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak the things which I have seen with *My* Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from *your* father."

Jesus acknowledged that these Jews were Abraham's descendants, but they were not doing the deeds that Abraham did as He continues in **John 8 (NASB)**:39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. 40 But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.

The Jews insisted that they were children of God, but Jesus was adamant that they were children of another father as He says in **John 8 (NASB)**:41 You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word. 44 You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature,* for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them,* because you are not of God."

These Jews did not believe Jesus. They were not children with the faith of Abraham, for Abraham heard God's words and believed. These Jews did not believe God's words, and Jesus knew therefore that they were not of God. It is evident that they were not born again. They did not have ears to hear or eyes to see. They were still bound by sin and the devil. Not being free from sin, and having to do the desires of their father the devil, these Jews no doubt did not have much freedom of will. These Jews only had one choice, and that was to repent and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, or perish.

Irenaeus continues in parasgraph three to try to prove the free will of man as he then refers to Jesus' words in **Luke 6 (NASB):**46 "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like:

Irenaeus asserts that this verse demonstrates "the independent will of man." However, neither this verse nor the previous verses Irenaeus references even mention man's will specifically, and whether it is free or not. Jesus is primarily speaking to Jews, the people of Israel, who were His own people as John mentioned in **John 1 (NASB):**11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

The Pharisees and scribes, the leaders of the Jews, obeyed outwardly. That is, they taught the law of Moses. But they did not practice what they preached as Jesus says in **Matthew 23 (NASB):**1 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, 2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; 3 therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say *things* and do not do *them.*

The Pharisees and the scribes were saying "Lord, Lord," but not doing what the Lord was commanding them. They were like the son who said he would go work in the vineyard but didn't go, as in the parable that Jesus taught in **Matthew 21 (NASB):**28 "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' 29 And he answered, 'I will not'; but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, 'I *will,* sir'; but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and

you, seeing *this,* did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him.

The Jews in their past had a history of falling away, then repentance, obedience, and then disobedience again. Isaiah prophesied in his time of their need for repentance in **Isaiah 29 (NASB):**13 Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote,..*

And again we read in **Isaiah 29 (NASB):**8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" 9 He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' 10 "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

Jesus also refers to Isaiah's words in **Matthew 15 (NASB):**7 You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. 9 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"

In Jesus' time, the Jews as a nation were in a state of disobedience, and so He came preaching repentance foremost as we read in **Mark 1 (NASB):**14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Repentance brings a change of heart, and is the doorway to the born again experience as we read in **Ezekiel 36 (NASB**):26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

Though these verses speak of a future time of blessing for Israel, this is the experience of all who are born again. It is only after this experience that the believer can do the will of God and obey His commands.

The last verse Irenaeus mentions in paragraph three in context is **Matthew 24 (NASB):**45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 47 Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' 49 and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect *him* and at an hour which he does not know, 51 and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This segment of Jesus' teaching begins in **Matthew 24 (NASB):**36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 37 For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

In Matthew, chapter 24, Jesus is teaching about His return, that is, His second coming. In this segment He warns us to stay alert as we read in **Matthew 24 (NASB):** 42 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will.*

Here, Irenaeus is pointing out that the Lord will punish man for his disobedience, and justly reward him for his obedience. Irenaeus infers that man has free will, for otherwise the Lord could not hold him accountable for his disobedience. However, we must remember that this is a parable. We cannot make it walk on all fours, as it were. Jesus used parables to reach the Jews who were for the most part in unbelief. Parables illustrate a single truth in simple terms. Jesus is teaching us in this parable that we must be servants who are steadfast and alert, and waiting expectantly for His coming. Our reward will depend on how we serve Him. If we have truly repented, He is now our Master and a worthy Master He is. The one who has truly repented is now a child of God. As such, he or she will be treated as a son or a daughter. If he or she is disobedient, they will be disciplined accordingly. However, Jesus is also pointing out the severity of punishment on the one who has not

believed in Him, and therefore not His child. The unbeliever will be cut "in pieces" and assigned "a place with the hypocrites," a place where "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Irenaeus concludes paragraph three with the statement, "All such passages demonstrate the independent will of man, and at the same time the counsel which God conveys to him, by which He exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him, and seeks to turn us away from [the sin of] unbelief against Him, without, however, in any way coercing us." While it is true that God "exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him" and that He "seeks to turn us away from the sin of unbelief against Him," whether He coerces us or not, and whether man's will is independent or not, are not things which these verses address. Irenaeus tries to prove free will from these verses, and he combines them all together as if they all spoke about "the independent will of man." However, in the context in which they were written, the verses Irenaeus references are primarily addressed to believers as a warning of God's discipline, and to unbelievers as a warning of the severity of the punishment for unbelief.

Now Irenaeus states in paragraph four that if man is "unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his power to reject it, but it is not expedient. For it is in man's power to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but [such conduct] brings no small amount of injury and mischief." And Irenaeus says that Paul the apostle implied the liberty of man when he said "all things are lawful for me but all things are not expedient;" And Irenaeus says that Paul also exhorted us to do good, implying that we have a choice.

Irenaeus is referring to when Paul was speaking to the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):**9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. 12 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

Irenaeus seems to particularly notice the word "expedient" in these verses. The word in Greek is συμφέρει (pronounced sumpherei) and is used in 1 Corinthians 6:11 as a verb, in the 3rd person, singular, present, indicative, active tense. Vine's says that this word when used transitively literally means "to bring together" and intransitively, it means "to be an advantage, profitable, expedient (not merely 'convenient'). **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W. E. Vine, Vol. II, page 62**.

The intransitive meaning is the correct one in 1 Corinthians 6:11. It is important to note here who Paul is speaking to in this verse. Paul says to the Corinthians that some of them were fornicators and some were idolators, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers. But, Paul says, they were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. In other words, after they accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, in addition to being renewed in their spirits, they were also given a legal standing before the Lord as righteous, that is, as sons and daughters. As such, all things were lawful to them, but not all things were profitable to them. As children of God, sin would not profit them anything. Walking in obedience to the Lord brings blessing and reward. Walking in sin brings discipline, pain, and punishment, and ultimately death.

So yes, Paul does imply the liberty of the child of God with the warning of punishment for sin. But Paul is not talking primarily to the unbeliever in these verses. Irenaeus does not seem to recognize the change in nature of the believer in his spirit when one is born again. This change in nature is what makes the believer a child of God. As such, the Lord deals differently with us. As sinners, we must first enter by the Door before we can do anything that pleases God as Jesus said in **John 10 (NASB):**9 "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

Irenaeus asserts again in paragraph four that, "If then it were not in our power to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things, and to abstain from others?"

In the year 1524, a man named Erasmus wrote a booklet entiltled, "De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio," otherwise known as "The Diatribe," in which he defends man's free will. In the year 1525 a man named Martin Luther wrote his book, "De servo arbitrio," otherwise knows as "The Bondage of the Will." In this book, Martin Luther quotes Erasmus as saying in the Diatribe, "Is it not ridiculous to say to a blind man: "if thou art willing to see, thou wilt find a treasure"? or to a deaf man: "if thou art willing to hear, I will tell thee a

good story"? That would be mocking their misery." **The Bondage of the Will, page 152**.

In this quote from Erasmus, we hear the most succinct summary of the argument for free will, which is similar to what Irenaeus is arguing here in paragraph four. That is, why would the Lord give us a command and hold us accountable if we were not able to carry it out in our own power.

Luther responds to Erasmus with the following, "How often do parents thus play with their children, bidding them to come to them, or do this or that, only in order that it may appear how impotent they are, and that they may be compelled to call for the help of the parent's hand?" **The Bondage of the Will, page 152**.

Luther continues by stating that by the law "man is admonished of his own impotence." **The Bondage of the Will, page 156**. Again, Luther states emphatically, "'By the law is the knowledge of sin,' says Paul. He does not say: abolition, or avoidance, of sin. The entire design and power of the law is just to give knowledge, and that of nothing but of sin; not to display or confer any power. This knowledge is not power, not does it bring power; but it teaches and displays that there is here no power, and great weakness. What can 'knowledge of sin' be, but knowledge of our weakness and badness? He does not say: 'by the law comes knowledge of power or goodness'! All that the law does, on Paul's testimony, is to make sin known." **The Bondage of the Will, page 158**.

Luther is speaking of Romans 3:20. Here is the verse in context in **Romans 3 (NASB):**19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

Luther replies to Erasmus when he states, "It is from this passage that I derive my answer to you: that by the words of the law man is admonished and taught, not what he can do, but what he ought to do; that is, that he may know his sin, not that he may believe that he has any strength. Wherefore, my good Erasmus, as often as you confront me with the words of the law, so often shall I confront you with the words of Paul: 'By the law is knowledge of sin' –not power of will!" **The Bondage of the Will, page 158-9**.

The Lord does give us counsel to do His will. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, Jesus told him about the first step into relationship with God, that is, to be born again. When Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, did not know about this, Jesus asked him how it was that he was a leader of Israel and didn't know about being born again. But this was the state of Israel for the most part when Jesus came to His own. Isaiah says as much when he prophesies of Israel's messiah in **Isaiah 53 (NASB**):2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately* form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. 3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Israel was like parched ground when Jesus came to them. The Jews did not understand what He was saying. They did not esteem Him or His words as of any value. As a result, Jesus told the Jews that they had not even taken the first step into relationship with God. It is relationship that God wants with us. Jesus knew this and called the Jews back to God. This is why He told them to keep the commandments for He knew that the commandments would give them knowledge of their sins, and would lead them back to relationship with God, and so be led to Himself and be born again. The law would show the Israelites, that is, the Jews, their sin and their impotence in keeping the law, and their need for repentance and a Savior which would lead them to Jesus. This was and is the purpose of the law. This is what Luther was saying. This is what the Scriptures teach.

Irenaeus asserts lastly in paragraph four that, since "man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God."

Again, it is true that, in the beginning, Adam and Eve had free will in the Garden of Eden before they sinned. It is also true that God has free will, and it is true that man was created in the image and likeness of God. But it does not follow that, because man is made in God's image, he has the same freedom of will that God has. Indeed, such a comparison is blasphemous. To compare the creature with the creator is very bold of Irenaeus. Certainly we would not say that God is possessed of almighty power, and so man is possessed of almighty power since he is created in God's image and likeness. We could go on and on about all the attributes of God, and there would still be none to compare with the Lord as Isaiah says in **Isaiah 46 (NASB**):5 "To

whom would you liken Me And make Me equal and compare Me, That we would be alike?

And again the Lord alone can say as in **Deuteronomy 32 (NASB)**:40 'Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven, And say, as I live forever.

And again in **Isaiah 55 (NASB):**8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 9 "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

From the beginning, man was to submit himself to God's will, and not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, man was to surrender his will to God's will. After Adam and Eve rebelled, and in the very day they sinned, they both died spiritually and were doomed to die physically as well as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB)**:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—.

After Adam and Eve sinned, all men must repent and believe God before they can "keep fast the good," or do any good. Adam and Eve repented and were born again as it says in **Luke 3 (NASB)**:38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

But after Adam, both men and women are born spiritually dead in sin, and our bodies are mortal, that is, death doomed. We must surrender our wills to God and repent and be born again, or forever be banned from the Kingdom of Heaven. This is God's command to all men and women everywhere. We must make up our minds to repent and return to the Father as the prodigal son did whom Jesus spoke of in **Luke 15 (NASB)**:17 But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' 20 So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him,* and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

We were dead in sin, but made alive again when we surrender to the Father's will. It is the decision to surrender all we are to the Father and obey Him that saves us. And His will is that we believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, that we might be saved as in **John 3 (NASB)**:17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be **saved** through Him.

And again in **John 5 (NASB)**:34 "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be **saved**.

And in **John 10 (NASB)**:9 "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be **saved**, and will go in and out and find pasture.

This is what Jesus was teaching us in the parable of the prodigal son in **Luke 15 (NASB)**:18 'But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.'"

Now Irenaeus asserts in paragraph five that God has "preserved the will of man free and under his own control" in works and also in faith. Irenaeus asserts also that the Lord Jesus shows us that man is free in regards to faith when He spoke in the gospel of Matthew in **Matthew 9 (NASB)**:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you..

Irenaeaus is saying that man can believe or not believe under his own power because Jesus was showing us that "there is a faith specially belonging to man, since he has an opinion specially his own," according to Irenaeus. Irenaeus also quotes the gospel of Mark to support this in **Mark 9 (NASB)**:23 And Jesus said unto him, If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth.

Irenaeus also asserts that Jesus also demonstrated that "man is in his own power with respect to faith" when He spoke as in **Matthew 8 (NASB)**:13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that *very* moment.

However, Irenaeus unknowingly has here asserted what is the blindness of man. That is, man thinks he is under his own control, and that his will is free. Before a man comes to Christ, he is blind to his impotence as

Paul says in **2 Corinthians 4 (NASB)**:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Regarding faith, the Scriptures say that faith that saves us is the gift of God, and not of ourselves as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

In the life of Lydia, we see that the Lord opened her heart to believe in **Acts 16 (NASB)**:14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

Yes, man has an opinion of his own. But he cannot of himself conjure up faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God as we are taught, or by just reading it ourselves as Paul tells us in **Romans 10 (NASB)**:17 So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Peter tells us to long for the pure milk of the word so that we grow with respect to our salvation as in **1 Peter 2 (NASB)**:2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.

Our faith grows as we walk in the light of what He shows us in His word. He does not give us everything at once, but nurtures us as babies into adulthood. And so it is not as though we become supermen by faith, doing anything we please. All things are possible to the one who has the faith which comes from the Spirit of God to do the will of God. As we ask according to His will, our faith will be evident in the works He has ordained for us to walk in. Rather than having free will to do just as we please, we are to grow in submission to His will, doing as His word instructs.

Irenaeus also asserts in paragraph five that man has free will, and can choose to have eternal life or reject it for Jesus said, referring to John 3:36, that "he that believeth in Him has eternal life while he who believeth not the Son hath not eternal life, but the wrath of God shall remain upon him." With this assertion, Irenaeus is building on his previous assertion that man "has an opinion specially his own." "Opinion" in Irenaeus' thinking is the basis of belief. Therefore, because man is able to have his own opinions, "man is in his own power with respect to faith."

Certainly man can have his own opinions, and have faith in whatever he believes. However, the faith that God requires is something beyond man's natural abilities as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB)**:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Paul explains that the things concerning God and His salvation are revealed to man by His Spirit as he says in **1 Corinthians 2 (NASB)**:10 For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words.*

This is why the word of God is so important, and weighs in so heavily against tradition. The word of God is God's thoughts written down as inspired by the Spirit of God. And this word of God is even then not understood by the natural man. The man or woman who would understand the things of God and His salvation message must receive the Spirit of God in order to understand anything about God. This is what Jesus meant when He spoke as in **John 6 (NASB)**:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

Again Jesus spoke as in **John 6 (NASB)**:64 But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

Luther said, "We know that man was made lord over things below him, and that he has a right and a free will with respect to them, that they should obey him and do as he wills and thinks. But our question is this: whether he has 'free will' God-ward, that God should obey man and do what man wills, or whether God has not

rather a free will with respect to man, that man should will and do what God wills, and be able to do nothing but what He wills and does." **The Bondage of the Will, Martin Luther, page 310**.

When we realize that we have no power to save ourselves, there is only one thing we can do. We must surrender to Him. And this is the will of God, that we submit our will to His. Whether we have free will or not is not the question. The question is, "Will we submit our will to His?" Will we surrender our will to His will? That is, will we surrender the inmost part of us to Him? Is this not what Jesus was saying when He spoke as in **Matthew 16 (NASB)**:25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

This surrender of all that we are to Him feels like we are losing our life. But in reality we are finding it. Jesus came to give us fullness of life, not to take it away, as He says in **John 10 (NASB)**:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.

This act of surrender is how we get new life in Jesus. And as we have received Him, in this way we are to also walk in Him as we read in **Colossians 2 (NASB)**:6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk in Him.

This surrendering manifests itself in the presenting of our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice as Paul says in **Romans 12 (NASB)**:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

This is how we prove what the will of God is. If we want to know the will of God, we find that our will is not really that important. It is in the yielding of ourselves to Him that we will be able to discern what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Irenaeus also asserts in paragraph five that "the Lord, both showing His own goodness, and indicating that man is in his own free will and his own power, said to Jerusalem, "How often have I wished to gather thy children together, as a hen [gathereth] her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Wherefore your house shall be left unto you desolate.""

Irenaeus here asserts that the whole point of Jesus' words in Matthew 23:37 is to show that "man is in his own free will and his own power." But the verse does not specifically mention free will. Irenaeus infers free will from Jesus' words. Jesus was however lamenting over the Jews in Jerusalem, and their current state of disobedience to God. Jesus does not speak of every man, woman, and child in Jerusalem, but of the people living in Jerusalem in general. There is always a remnant that will be saved. This passage does infer some freedom of will in a general sense, but to infer that "man is in his own free will and his own power" goes beyond its scope. The Lord was speaking of His love for Israel, and His desire that they be saved. He was looking at the situation from a human perspective as a man while He was here on earth. Yet He knew that there was, hidden in the mind of God, the purpose of the Father, which does not allow for all to be saved. Some will be lost. Sin will be judged, and here Jesus speaks prophetically of the judgment that was to come on Israel.

Irenaeus then asserts in paragraph six that those who oppose his conclusions on free will, that is to say the Gnostics, "do themselves present the Lord as destitute of power, as if, forsooth, He were unable to accomplish what He willed; or, on the other hand, as being ignorant that they were by nature "material," as these men express it, and such as cannot receive His immortality." Irenaeus states that the Gnostics assert that God should not have created angels capable of transgressions, "nor men who immediately proved ungrateful towards Him; for they were made rational beings, endowed with the power of examining and judging, and were not [formed] as things irrational or of a [merely] animal nature, which can do nothing of their own will." The Gnostics also assert that men are not "drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good, in which things there is one mind and one usage, working mechanically in one groove (inflexibiles et sine judicio)," as if they were "incapable of being anything else except just what they had been created."

The Gnostics here are reproving God for making man able to transgress which is the heighth of hubris. Do they not know that the God who created all things holds our souls in life as is stated in **Psalm 66 (NASB)**:9 Who keeps us in life And does not allow our feet to slip.

Don't they know that He sustains all things, upholding them by the word of His power, as we read in **Hebrews 1 (NASB)**:1 "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in

many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Irenaeus, to his credit, is rebuking them for such arrogance and audacity. Irenaeus also says that the Gnostics present God as powerless to fulfill His will and design, as if the universe were out of control with man who transgressed. Yet man's transgression was known before the foundation of the world, and a plan of salvation was made by God even before man sinned as we see in **Acts 2 (NASB)**:22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this *Man,* delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

And in **Revelation 13 (NASB)**:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

Still however, Irenaeus would agree with the Gnostics for the purposes of his own argument that man is a rational being "endowed with the power of examining and judging." Irenaeus would also agree that man is not irrational nor of an animal nature "which can do nothing" of his own will. Further, Irenaeus would also agree that man is not "drawn by necessity and compulsion to what is good," nor is he "incapable of being anything else except just what" he was created for.

Now in paragraph six, based on the Gnostic suppositions that God should not have created man as rational and able to disobey Him, Irenaeus then asserts that "neither would what is good be grateful to them, nor communion with God be precious, nor would the good be very much to be sought after, which would present itself without their own proper endeavour, care, or study, but would be implanted of its own accord and without their concern."

Here we find the gist of Irenaeus' argument for free will. If man is not able to exert some "endeavor, care, or study," he would not know how good the good really is. That is, man would not value the good very much. Irenaeus cannot conceive of God being just if man does not have a choice to obey or not to obey. Man must have free will so that he can choose the good or reject it. God can then justly reward him for his good choices, and justly punish him for his bad ones. This is the gist of what Irenaues is arguing.

Also in paragraph six, Irenaeus asserts that, if good were "implanted of its own accord and without their concern," then for men "their being good would be of no consequence, because they were so by nature rather than by will, and are possessors of good spontaneously, not by choice;" Irenaeus asserts also that man has to have free will, otherwise, "how can those who are ignorant of good enjoy it? Or what credit is it to those who have not aimed at it? And what crown is it to those who have not followed in pursuit of it, like those victorious in the contest?" Irenaeus is saying in so many words that the creature is more valuable and of a higher rank because God has given it the power to choose to do good or not. For all of these reasons, man must have free will. According to Irenaeus, God has so designed the world of mankind so that His justice is preserved and so that those who do good are rewarded, and those who do wrong are condemned.

Irenaeus then also argues in paragraph seven that our good would be irrational if we didn't have it by trial. That is, we are rational because we have a choice. Then lastly in paragraph seven Irenaeus asserts that, "Since, then, this power has been conferred upon us, both the Lord has taught and the apostle has enjoined us the more to love God, that we may reach this [prize] for ourselves by striving after it." In other words, man has to have free will so that through this rational process of man's choosing the good he is able to continue in God's perfect love and thus win the crown of immortality.

It is clear by this statement that, for Irenaeus, the goal of man's free will is the crown of immortality. According to Irenaeus, the way to win the crown of immortality is to strive after it by loving God, and by exercising our free will to choose the good and so continue in God's perfect love. In Irenaeus' thinking, free will makes observance of the law a logical necessity since the law represents good choices that God has set before man. Breaking the law represents the bad choices of free will.

And so what is the truth about free will? Is it really true that there is no other way for God to be just and grant man eternal life unless man has free will, and is able to make his own good choices and so win the crown

of immortality as it were, lawfully, and under his own power? Is our salvation dependent on the exercise of our free will in order to continue in God's perfect love by choosing the good, and so earning, or making ourselves worthy, of our salvation by our goodness? Is this what the Scriptures teach, or is there another way?

Irenaeus' tact has been to show by inference what the Scriptures and common sense teach us about man's free will. Irenaues does not need the Scriptures to support his assertions on free will. Simply observing a young child running away from its mother is enough to substantiate Irenaues' assertions on free will. Irenaeus simply does not understand the effects of sin on man's being. Sin placed man in bondage. His will is not free, and man is being coerced by his sin. Yet the word of God preached in the power of the Spirit gives light to man's mind, and empowers him to accept the truth of the Gospel, and so be saved. Paul tells us that if we confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved as we read again in context in **Romans 10 (NASB)**:5 For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." 8 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Can it be this simple? How can one act of faith save us for all eternity? Yet this is what Paul states emphatically in Romans 10:9. If we look at the process of salvation, we will understand the place of our will in believing.

Our salvation begins with God as we see in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):**13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

The word sanctification means to set apart for God's use, or to separate to God. It is the Holy Spirit who begins this work of separation to God in our lives. It is the Holy Spirit working in the word of God that convicts us of our sin. In our sinful state, as a son of Adam, we were enemies of God as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):**10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

It is the Holy Spirit who begins the work of repentance in our lives as He convicts us of our sin and rebellion to God. As we hear the word of the truth of the Gospel, we begin to change our minds about our sin and about God and His Son, Jesus Christ as we understand from **Psalm 119 (NASB)**:130 The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.

And in **Psalm 36 (NASB)**:9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

Our minds were blinded by the god of this world and we were perishing, but the entrance of the Gospel words brought light into our hearts as we read in **2 Corinthians 4 (NASB)**:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Our minds were enlightened by the Gospel as we read in **Job 33 (NASB)**:30 To bring back his soul from the pit, That he may be enlightened with the light of life.

And in **Hebrews 10 (NASB)**:32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

We were enlightened with the knowledge of the truth of the Gospel. But before Christ, that is when we were unbelievers, both our mind and our conscience were defiled as we read again in **Titus 1 (NASB)**:15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

As unbelievers, our hearts were deceitful as we read in **Jeremiah 17 (NASB)**:9 "The heart is more

deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

We did not care about walking in the truth as we read in **Genesis 6 (NASB):**5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

But when the light of the gospel shines in our hearts, we are made to see ourselves as we really are for the first time in our lives and our emotions are touched. We feel sorrow for our sin as we read in **2 Corinthians 7 (NASB)**:10 For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

It is at this point that the Lord opens our hearts to believe as he did with Lydia in **Acts 16 (NASB)**:14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

Our minds are changed and we make a decision to turn to God just as the prodigal son did in **Luke 15 (NASB)**:18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'"

After Lydia believed, she and her household were baptized as we read in **Acts 16 (NASB)**:15 And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

There is no waiting period with God. And so we are saved when we believe with our heart as we read again in **Romans 10 (NASB)**:8 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

So it is with the heart that a person believes resulting in righteousness. It is the heart that directs the will as it did those who heard Peter's message in **Acts 2 (NASB):**37 Now when they heard *this,* they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, " Brethren, what shall we do?"

And Jesus says that we can know the truth if we are willing in **John 7 (NASB):**17 "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.

This willingness to know and do His will speaks of a surrender of the heart to Him. It speaks of an openness to God to hear His voice and surrender to Him. It is relationship that God wants with us. This is shown by Samuel's response to Saul when Saul kept some of the things devoted to destruction by the command of the Lord in **1 Samuel 15 (NASB):**22 Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams. 23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king."

God wants us to hear His voice and obey His will. When we hear His voice and surrender our hearts to Him, He then changes us on the inside so that we are born again in our spirit. This is the beginning of our relationship with God. This is entering by the doorway of Jesus Christ. Without this experience we are still in our sins. It is only after this experience that we are truly free. After this experience we can say with Paul that we have been freed from sin as in **Romans 6 (NASB):**22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

That is, we no longer have to live in sin as if we were slaves to sin. Because of the new life in our spirit as a result of the new birth, we now have the victory over sin because the Holy Spirit is the life of our spirit. It is not that we cannot sin, but that we now have a choice not to sin. In our spirit we have become partakers of the divine nature because of the life of the Spirit in our spirits. But in our flesh we still have sin. Thus we now have two natures, one the sinless nature of God, and the other the Adamic sin nature of our flesh. This is why we as Christians are commanded to put off the old man and put on the new as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):**22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

It is the truth that makes us free as Jesus said in **John 8 (NASB):**31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will

know the truth, and the truth will make you free." 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

And it is the Son who makes us free as we read in **John 8 (NASB):**34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35 "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 36 "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

The Son can say this because the Son is the truth as we read in **John 14 (NASB):**6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

We will never be free in any true sense of the word until we know Him.

Chapter 31: Future Events

Commentary Summary Book 5: Chapter XXXIII

Irenaeus is quite correct in his assertion that Isaiah 11:6-9 is a future event, though it has application in a secondary sense to us today. Irenaeus says that he is aware of some who "endeavor to refer these words to the case of savage men, both of different nations and various habits, who come to believe, and when they have believed, act in harmony with the righteous." Irenaeus correctly shows that it has a secondary application in this sense. That is, when we believe in Christ there is a transformation of character that takes place which is undeniable. But the primary application of these verses in Isaiah, which Irenaeus referred to in the previous chapter, is of a future time when creation will be set free from its slavery into the glorious freedom of the children of God as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB**):18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Commentary Summary: Future Events

It is important to understand Irenaeus' thinking as we try to summarize what he believed would happen in the end times.

Ireaneus' Timeline:

Irenaeus believed that the Antichrist will come.

- **Book3: Chapter VII, paragraph 2,** "And again, in the Second to the Thessalonians, speaking of Antichrist, he says, "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the presence of his coming; [even him] whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.""
- **Book 3: Chapter XVI, paragraph 5,** "…as John, the disciple of the Lord, verifies, saying: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have eternal life in His name," —foreseeing these blasphemous systems which divide the Lord, as far as lies in their power, saying that He was formed of two different substances. For this reason also he has thus testified to us in his Epistle: "Little children, it is the last time; and as

ye have heard that Antichrist doth come, now have many antichrists appeared; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but [they departed], that they might be made manifest that they are not of us. Know ye therefore, that every lie is from without, and is not of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is Antichrist.""

- **Book 3: Chapter XVI, paragraph 8,** "These are they against whom the Lord has cautioned us beforehand; and His disciple, in his Epistle already mentioned, commands us to avoid them, when he says: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Take heed to them, that ye lose not what ye have wrought." And again does he say in the Epistle: "Many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which separates Jesus Christ is not of God, but is of antichrist.""
- **Book 5: Chapter XXV, paragraph 1,** "And not only by the particulars already mentioned, but also by means of the events which shall occur in the time of Antichrist is it shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God; and that, although a mere slave, he wishes himself to be proclaimed as a king. For he (Antichrist) being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, [i.e., one] in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade [men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians: "Unless there shall come a failing away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God." The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped—that is, above every idol —for these are indeed so called by men, but are not [really] gods; and that he will endeavor in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God."
- **Book 5: Chapter XXV, paragraph 4,** "The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in Him: "I have come in my Father's name, and ye have not received Me: when another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," calling Antichrist "the other," because he is alienated from the Lord. This is also the unjust judge, whom the Lord mentioned as one "who feared not God, neither regarded man," to whom the widow fled in her forgetfulness of God,—that is, the earthly Jerusalem,—to be avenged of her adversary. Which also he shall do in the time of his kingdom: he shall remove his kingdom into that [city], and shall sit in the temple of God, leading astray those who worship him, as if he were Christ. To this purpose Daniel says again: "And he shall desolate the holy place; and sin has been given for a sacrifice, and righteousness been cast away in the earth, and he has been active (fecit), and gone on prosperously." And the angel Gabriel, when explaining his vision, states with regard to this person: "And towards the end of their kingdom a king of a most fierce countenance shall arise, one understanding [dark] questions, and exceedingly powerful, full of wonders; and he shall corrupt, direct, influence (faciet), and put strong men down, the holy people likewise; and his yoke shall be directed as a wreath [round their neck]; deceit shall be in his hand, and he shall be lifted up in his heart: he shall also ruin many by deceit, and lead many to perdition, bruising them in his hand like eggs." And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: "And in the midst of the week," he says, "the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation [shall be brought] into the temple: even unto the consummation of the time shall the

desolation be complete." Now three years and six months constitute the half-week."

- **Book 5: Chapter XXVIII, paragraph 2,** "For when he (Antichrist) is come, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly "be cast into the lake of fire:" [this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and at the proper time sending such a man, "that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness;" whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: "And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might. And one of his heads was as it were slain unto death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave power to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto this beast, and who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemy and power was given to him during forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation. And all who dwell upon the earth worshipped him, [every one] whose name was not written in the book of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any one have ears, let him hear. If any one shall lead into captivity, he shall go into captivity. If any shall slay with the sword, he must be slain with the sword. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints.""
- **Book 5: Chapter XXIX, paragraph 2,** "And there is therefore in this beast, when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit, in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire. Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six, since he sums up in his own person all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge, due to the apostasy of the angels. For Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth, sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah. And [Antichrist] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just."

Irenaeus believed that there will be a time of great tribulation.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXV, paragraph 2,** "…"in which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavouring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares: "But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains; and he who is upon the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: for there shall then be great hardship, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.""
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 1,** "…and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one."

Irenaeus believed that the Church will go through this tribulation but suddenly be caught up from it. He does not say when during the tribulation this will happen, or whether it is after or just before.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXIX, paragraph 1;** "And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, "There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be." For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption."

Irenaeus believed in the "resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule."

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 1**, "For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one."
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXII, paragraph 1,** "Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature and it is necessary to tell them respecting those things, that it behooves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards."
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXIV, paragraph 1,** "Then, too, Isaiah himself has plainly declared that there shall be joy of this nature at the resurrection of the just, when he says: "The dead shall rise again; those, too, who are in the tombs shall arise, and those who are in the earth shall rejoice. For the dew from Thee is health to them." And this again Ezekiel also says: "Behold, I will open your tombs, and will bring you forth out of your graves; when I will draw my people from the sepulchers, and I will put breath in you, and ye shall live; and I will place you on your own land, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.""

Irenaeus believed that the creation would be renovated to its primeval condition during the kingdom reign of the righteous.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXII, paragraph 1, "…**when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards."
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXII, paragraph 2**, "But in the times of the kingdom, the earth has been called again by Christ [to its pristine condition], and Jerusalem rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above, of which the prophet Isaiah says, "Behold, I have depicted thy walls upon my hands, and thou art always in my sight."
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXIII, paragraph 4**, "When prophesying of these times, therefore, Esaias says: "The wolf also shall feed with the lamb, and the leopard shall take his rest with the kid; the calf also, and the bull, and the lion shall eat together; and a little boy shall lead them. The ox and the bear shall feed together, and their young ones shall agree together; and the lion shall eat straw as well as the ox. And the infant boy shall thrust his hand into the asp's den, into the nest also of the adder's brood; and they shall do no harm, nor have power to hurt anything in my holy mountain." And again he says, in recapitulation, "Wolves and lambs shall then browse together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the serpent earth as if it were bread; and they shall neither hurt nor annoy anything in my holy mountain, saith the Lord," referring to Isaiah 11:6-9.

Irenaeus believed that there will be a new heaven and a new earth after the times of the kingdom and the reign of the righteous.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 2** "For after the times of the kingdom, he says, "I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them."
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 2,** "And after this, he says, "I saw a new heaven and a new

earth, for the first heaven and earth have passed away; also there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband.""

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 2,** "And in the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth."

Irenaeus believed that there will be a judgment after the kingdom reign of the righteous is over.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXII, paragraph 1,** when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards."
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXV, paragraph 2,** "For after the times of the kingdom, he says, "I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them." And he sets forth, too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgment, mentioning "the dead, great and small." "The sea," he says, "gave up the dead which it had in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead that they contained; and the books were opened. Moreover," he says, "the book of life was opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works; and death and hell were sent into the lake of fire, the second death."

Irenaeus believed that rewards for the righteous differ.

- **Book 5: Chapter XXXVI, paragraph 2; "**there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold: for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that was on this account the Lord declared, "In My Father's house bare many mansions.""
- **Book 5: Chapter XXXVI, paragraph 2,** "this is the gradation and arrangement of those who are saved, and that they advance through steps of this nature;

So we see that Irenaeus believed in the following timeline:

- The coming of the Antichrist;
- The great tribulation;
- The coming of the Lord;
- The destruction of the Antichrist and the nations under his rule;
- The renovation of the earth to its primeval condition;
- The resurrection of the righteous and the commencement of incorruption;
- The reign of the righteous in the earth during the times of the kingdom;
- The judgment at the great white throne and the general resurrection after the times of the Kingdom;
- The new heaven and the new earth;
- The rewards of the righteous;

Irenaeus clearly believed in the resurrection of the just. Irenaeus sees eternity with God for the redeemed in a sinless and incorruptible state in which "the new man shall remain [continually], always holding fresh converse with God," as he says in **Book 5: Chapter XXXVI**. What a beautiful picture of eternal life with the Father.

However, Irenaeus does not mention Israel as restored and made the head of the nations in the end times as Isaiah prophesies in **Isaiah 60 (NASB):**1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. 4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. 5 Then hhh thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

Then in **Isaiah 60 (NASB):**12 "For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, And the nations will be utterly ruined.

That Irenaeus believed that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plans and purposes, there can be no doubt as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XXI, paragraph 3**, "If any one, again, will look into Jacob's actions, he shall find them not destitute of meaning, but full of import with regard to the dispensations. Thus, in the first place, at his birth, since he laid hold on his brother's heel, he was called Jacob, that is, the supplanter—one who holds, but is not held; binding the feet, but not being bound; striving and conquering; grasping in his hand his adversary's heel, that is, victory. For to this end was the Lord born, the type of whose birth he set forth beforehand, of whom also John says in the Apocalypse: "He went forth conquering, that He should conquer." In the next place, [Jacob] received the rights of the first-born, when his brother looked on them with contempt; even as also the younger nation received Him, Christ, the first-begotten, when the elder nation rejected Him, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar." But in Christ every blessing [is summed up], and therefore the latter people has snatched away the blessings of the former from the Father, just as Jacob took away the blessing of this Esau. For which cause his brother suffered the plots and persecutions of a brother, just as the Church suffers this self-same thing from the Jews."

Irenaeus continues in the same paragraph as he says, "But he (Jacob) did all things for the sake of the younger, she who had the handsome eyes, Rachel, who prefigured the Church, for which Christ endured patiently; who at that time, indeed, by means of His patriarchs and prophets, was prefiguring and declaring beforehand future things, fulfilling His part by anticipation in the dispensations of God, and accustoming His inheritance to obey God, and to pass through the world as in a state of pilgrimage, to follow His word, and to indicate beforehand things to come. For with God there is nothing without purpose or due signification."
In this way, Irenaeus believed that all the promises in the Old Testament that relate to Israel now relate to the Church. Therefore, when Irenaeus states in **Book 5: Chapter XXXIV, paragraph 1,** "And this again Ezekiel also says: "Behold, I will open your tombs, and will bring you forth out of your graves; when I will draw my people from the sepulchers, and I will put breath in you, and ye shall live; and I will place you on your own land, and ye shall know that I am the Lord," referring to Ezekiel 37:12, he is asserting that this relates to the Church.

Again, as Irenaeus continues in the same paragraph, he says, "And again the same speaks thus: "These things saith the Lord, I will gather Israel from all nations whither they have been driven, and I shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the sons of the nations: and they shall dwell in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell in it in peace; and they shall build houses, and plant vineyards, and dwell in hope, when I shall cause judgment to fall among all who have dishonoured them, among those who encircle them round about; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and the God of their fathers," referring to Ezekiel 38:25-26. Here Irenaeus sees Israel as the Church, gathered from all nations.

Irenaeus again continues as he says, "Now I have shown a short time ago that the church is the seed of Abraham; and for this reason, that we may know that He who in the New Testament "raises up from the stones children unto Abraham," referring to Matthew 3:9, "is He who will gather, according to the Old Testament, those that shall be saved from all the nations, Jeremiah says: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, who led the children of Israel from the north, and from every region whither they had been driven; He will restore them to their own land which He gave to their fathers," referring to Jeremiah 23:6-7.

And Irenaeus continues in **Book 5: Chapter XXXIV, paragraph 3, "**Now, that the promises were not announced to the prophets and the fathers alone, but to the Churches united to these from the nations, whom also the Spirit terms "the islands" (both because they are established in the midst of turbulence, suffer the storm of blasphemies, exist as a harbour of safety to those in peril, and are the refuge of those who love the height [of heaven], and strive to avoid Bythus, that is, the depth of error), Jeremiah thus declares: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye nations, and declare it to the isles afar off; say ye, that the Lord will scatter Israel, He will gather him, and keep him, as one feeding his flock of sheep. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and rescued him from the hand of one stronger than he. And they shall come and rejoice in Mount Zion, and shall come to what is good, and into a land of wheat, and wine, and fruits, of animals and of sheep; and their soul shall be as a tree bearing fruit, and they shall hunger no more. At that time also shall the virgins rejoice in the company of the young

men: the old men, too, shall be glad, and I will turn their sorrow into joy; and I will make them exult, and will magnify them, and satiate the souls of the priests the sons of Levi; and my people shall be satiated with my goodness," referring to Jeremiah 31:10-14.

Again, Irenaeus shows how the Church has taken Israel's place as he continues in the same paragraph, "Now, in the preceding book I have shown that all the disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests, they who used in the temple to profane the Sabbath, but are blameless," referring to Matthew 12:4.

We have already discussed Irenaeus' arguments that the Church has supplanted Israel, and refuted them in **Chapter 21: The Church** under the heading, **Book 4: Chapter XXI** in this volume. There we found that Irenaeus freely joined disparate passages of Scripture to defend what was most probably the position of the Church in his time.

Now here in this chapter on Future Events, it is important to remember that the Bible does not teach that Israel will supplant the Church permanently. When we understand that the Church has taken Israel's place only until the fullness of the Gentiles is come into the Kingdom, and that God will again deal with Israel as a nation, we will see that prophecy begins to all fall in place, and future events then appear in their proper sequence.

Now in order to understand the correct sequence of events that the Scriptures teach, we look to the prophet Daniel. In chapter 9 of the book of Daniel, we see that Daniel is in Babylon, which is now ruled by the Mede, Darius. Daniel has read Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a prophet of Israel, as we read in **Jeremiah 25 (NASB):**1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), 2 which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 3 "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, these twenty-three years the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

Jeremiah told the Israelites by the word of the Lord that the Lord was going to place Israel into captivity for seventy years as we read in **Jeremiah 25 (NASB):**11 This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.

It is by these words in Jeremiah that Daniel understood that the years of their captivity were almost over as we read in **Daniel 9 (NASB):**1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans— 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed as* the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, *namely,* seventy years. 3 So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him by* prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

Daniel began to seek the Lord about what should happen next for Israel. As he was praying, he was visited by the angel Gabriel as we read in **Daniel 9 (NASB):**20 Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, 21 while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in *my* extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. 22 He gave *me* instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell *you,* for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision.

The angel Gabriel then told Daniel that seventy weeks have been determined upon Israel as we read in **Daniel 9 (NASB):**24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place.* 25 So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one

who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Though this is not immediately apparent from this passage, the seventy weeks in this Scripture are seventy weeks of years. That is, each week is a period of seven years. Daniel was interceding for his people, Israel, and he received revelation as to what would take place in the future for Israel after the 70 years in captivity in Babylon were over.

Dr. Albert Grimes explains the seventy weeks in his book, **Future Events, Part 2**:

"These seventy weeks would be separated into four different events. The first event would relate to the building of the city and temple Daniel 9:25,26 which would take seven weeks, or forty-nine years. Then added would be another period of sixty-two more weeks, or 434 years which would bring Israel to the next event, the death of Christ.

Then the next event would be the scattering of Israel amongst the nations which took place in 70 A.D. After these three events sixty-nine of the seventy would be fulfilled. Israel would be amongst the nations out of favour with God, and in blindness, as stated in Romans 11:25, "That blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

At the sixty-ninth week when Israel was scattered among the nations, the church Age came in and God left off dealing with Israel, until the Church Age would be completed, and the church taken out of the world. Then the seventieth week will begin.

This last week, which would be the fourth event spoken of in this period of time in which the tribulation will take place, is also spoken of in relation to the Antichrist who will rule during that same period, which is mentioned as one week in Daniel 9:27, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week..."

This tribulation spoken of is a period of seven years, or one week and it is divided into two periods of three and a half years.

The division in the seven years is brought out in Daniel 9:27, "…and in the midst of the week…" or the middle of the week."

This same period of three and a half years is mentioned in other scriptures. Revelation 11:2, "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" or "three and a half years." Then in Revelation 11:3, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days clothed in sackcloth," same period of time. Then also in Revelation 13:5 "And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

The period of tribulation is seven years and these seven years are divided into two shorter periods of three and a half years. The Great Tribulation will take place in the second three and a half years.

This whole period of seven years is described to us in Revelation 6:1 to Revelation 19:21. Chapters 6 to 10 describe the first three and a half years. Chapters 11 to 19 describe the second three and a half years. Chapter 12 describes what takes place in the middle of the week, in relation to Daniel 9:27 "in the midst of the week.""

So we see that there will be four events related to the seventy weeks.

1.) The city of Jerusalem and the temple will be rebuilt relating to the first seven weeks.
2.) Messiah will be cut off, speaking of the death of Christ after the completion of the first seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks, or after 483 years.
3.) The scattering of Israel among the nations.
4.) The final week of seven years relates to the tribulation period, a time of great distress.

In regards to the first event, we read in **Ezra 1 (NASB):**1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying: 2 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whoever there is among you of all

His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.'"

The book of Ezra describes the rebuilding of the temple Zerubbabel headed up. And also in the book of Ezra is described in minute detail the return from captivity as we read in **Ezra 2 (NASB):**1 Now these are the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his city. 2 These came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum *and* Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: 3 the sons of Parosh, 2,172…

This refers to the return of Israel to their land from the first scattering of Israel.

Then also we read in **Nehemiah 1 (NASB):**1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capitol, 2 that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped *and* had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem. 3 They said to me, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire."

Then we read Nehemiah's prayer in **Nehemiah 1 (NASB):**8 Remember the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; 9 but *if* you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.'

The Lord scattered Israel the first time when He deported them to Assyria and Babylon. And He brought them back to the land for the first time after the seventy years of captivity that Jeremiah had prophesied. The Book of Nehemiah describes the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem which was the first step in rebuilding the city.

Now, in regards to the second event, we read that a shepherd would be raised up in Israel. However this Shepherd would be wounded by the very people He was sent to heal as we read in **Zechariah 13 (NASB):**6 And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will say, '*Those* with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' 7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones.

That Jesus was crucified is confirmed in **Matthew 27 (NASB):**35 And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots.

And now although the third event, the second scattering of Israel, is not mentioned specifically in Daniel, it is mentioned in other Scriptures as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (NASB):**11 'For I am with you,' declares the LORD, 'to save you; For I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, Only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly And will by no means leave you unpunished.'

And in **Jeremiah 31 (NASB):**10 Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, And declare in the coastlands afar off, And say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock."

This second regathering of Israel is also mention in **Isaiah 11 (NASB):**11 Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the second time with His hand The remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea.12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

Again, regarding the second scattering of Israel, Jesus states in **Luke 21 (NASB):**20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. 23 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people; 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will

be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

This scattering of Israel, Jesus says, will last until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Now the fourth event, the final week of Daniel's seventy weeks relating to the tribulation period, is mentioned in **Daniel 12 (NASB):**1 "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.

Again, this final week is mentioned in **Daniel 9 (NASB):**27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Again, to repeat what Dr. Albert Grimes in his book, **Future Events, Part 2**, states,

"This tribulation spoken of is a period of seven years, or one week and it is divided into two periods of three and a half years.

The division in the seven years is brought out in Daniel 9:27, "…and in the midst of the week…" or the middle of the week.

This same period of three and a half years is mentioned in other scriptures. Revelation 11:2, "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" or "three and a half years." Then in Revelation 11:3, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days clothed in sackcloth," same period of time. Then also in Revelation 13:5 "And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

The period of tribulation is seven years and these seven years are divided into two shorter periods of three and a half years. The Great Tribulation will take place in the second three and a half years.

This whole period of seven years is described to us in Revelation 6:1 to Revelation 19:21. Chapters 6 to 10 describe the first three and a half years. Chapters 11 to 19 describe the second three and a half years. Chapter 12 describes what takes place in the middle of the week, in relation to Daniel 9:27 "in the midst of the week.""

Now note that this time of distress will be so great that it is such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time, and so it is known as the "great tribulation" which is also mentioned by Jesus Himself in **Matthew 24 (NASB):**21 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

This will be a time of trouble so great that if it were not cut short by the Lord, no life would be saved as Jesus tells us in **Matthew 24 (NASB):**22 "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

Again, the time that this great tribulation will occur is revealed to Daniel as "the end time" as in **Daniel 12 (NASB):**8 He said, As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what *will be* the outcome of these *events?*" 9 "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.

And Jeremiah speaks of that great day of Jacob's distress when Israel will be rescued, just as Daniel prophesied in Daniel 12:1, as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (NASB):**1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book. 3 For behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah.' The LORD says, 'I will also bring them back to the land that I gave to their forefathers and they shall possess it.'" 4 Now these are the words which the LORD spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah: 5 "For thus says the LORD, 'I have heard a sound of terror, Of dread, and there is no peace. 6 'Ask now, and see If a male can give birth. Why do I see every man *With* his hands on his loins, as a woman in childbirth? And *why* have all faces turned pale? 7 'Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob's distress, But he will be saved from it. 8 'It shall come about on that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from off their neck and will tear off their bonds; and strangers will no longer make them their slaves. 9 But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. 10 'Fear

not, O Jacob My servant,' declares the LORD, 'And do not be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar And your offspring from the land of their captivity. And Jacob will return and will be quiet and at ease, And no one will make him afraid. 11 'For I am with you,' declares the LORD, 'to save you; For I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, Only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly And will by no means leave you unpunished.'

Notice that the Lord said in verse three that He would bring Israel back to the land that He gave their forefathers and that they shall possess it**.** God has in no way forgotten His plans for Israel. It is true that the meek will inherit the earth, but it is also true that Israel will one day inherit the land of Canaan as their inheritance. This has been God's plan all along, even from the time of Abraham.

The world will go through a time of distress so great that it will be unequalled since the beginning of nations. Israel also will go through this time of great distress, but will be rescued out of it by the Lord. This understanding is critical to an analysis of what the Bible teaches concerning future events. It is this understanding that is missing from Irenaeus' thinking. He does not understand that Israel will eventually be saved by the Lord. He believes that the promises in the Old Testament have been taken over and subsumed by the Church. However, the Lord is not done with Israel. He has promised to save Israel, and we know that the Lord is faithful to His word.

Now Paul explains that the coming of the Lord will not precede the apostasy and the revealing of the man of lawlessness as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):**1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

From this passage we see that the Jewish temple will be rebuilt, for it mentions the temple of God. And there will be a man who will actually set himself up as God in the temple of God displaying himself as being God. Now there have been many antichrists, or false messiahs, but there has never been this man as antichrist before. Paul also reveals by the Spirit of God that this man will be revealed at a specific time in the plan and purpose of God. God is restraining him until the set time He has appointed as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):**6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 *that is,* the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

God restrains lawlessness by His Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way, all hell will be let loose as it were. Now the Holy Spirit is in the Church, and He fills all believers. The Church therefore must be taken out of the way as well in order for God to complete His plans and purposes for Israel. This is also mentioned in the letter to the Church at Philadelphia as we read in **Revelation 3 (NASB):**7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: 8 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Behold, I will cause *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and *make them* know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and

the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Though this prophecy was written to the Church at Philadelphia which existed in the time of John's writing, it has application in a future sense as well. This is why the Church will not go through the tribulation. In order for the man of sin to come to power, the Holy Spirit will have to be taken out of the way. This means that the Church will have to be taken out of the way. Then the tribulation period will begin. This tribulation period is the time when the Lord will again deal with Israel. Israel will be born again in one day during this period as we read in **Isaiah 66 (NASB):**7 "Before she travailed, she brought forth; Before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy. 8 "Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons. 9 "Shall I bring to the point of birth and not give delivery?" says the LORD. "Or shall I who gives delivery shut *the womb?*" says your God. 10 "Be joyful with Jerusalem and rejoice for her, all you who love her; Be exceedingly glad with her, all you who mourn over her, 11 That you may nurse and be satisfied with her comforting breasts, That you may suck and be delighted with her bountiful bosom." 12 For thus says the LORD, "Behold, I extend peace to her like a river, And the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; And you will be nursed, you will be carried on the hip and fondled on the knees. 13 "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; And you will be comforted in Jerusalem."

The Lord explains how this will happen in the book of Zechariah. Zechariah prophesies that there will come a time when all the nations of the earth will be gathered against Jerusalem. It is at this time that the Lord will save Israel, for this word of the Lord concerns Israel. It is at this time that the Lord will fight for Israel, and Israel will look on Him whom they pierced as we read in **Zechariah 12 (NASB):**1 The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. 2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. 3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. 4 In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. 5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God. 6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. 7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah. 8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. 11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. 12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; 14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

Zechariah continues the Lord's narrative of what He is going to do with Jerusalem as we read in **Zechariah 13 (NASB):**1 "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. 2 "It will come about in that day," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land. 3 And if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the LORD'; and his father and mother who gave birth to him will pierce him through when he prophesies. 4 Also it will

come about in that day that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a hairy robe in order to deceive; 5 but he will say, 'I am not a prophet; I am a tiller of the ground, for a man sold me as a slave in my youth.'

Prophecy will cease in the Kingdom period as Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 13 (NASB):**8 Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of* prophecy, they will be done away; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Zechariah continues in chapter 13, and describes the scattering of the flock when the Shepherd is slain in **Zechariah 13 (NASB):**6 And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will say, '*Those* with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' 7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones. 8 "It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off *and* perish; But the third will be left in it. 9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

Zechariah tells us that Israel will recognize Jesus by His wounds. By this we know that Israel will answer God one day and say, "The Lord is my God." That day has not come yet, but we have the assurance of the word of God that it will.

Now in chapter 12, verse 3 of Zechariah we saw that "all the nations of the earth will be gathered against" Jerusalem. Irenaeus apparently only tells us that the antichrist will be destroyed and all the nations that followed him as well. He does not mention specifically the battle of Armageddon, which is the final battle before Christ returns, when all the armies of the nations will gather against Jerusalem. Dr. Grimes in his book, **Future Events, Part 2, Lesson 12: The Revelation of Christ**, says this about this battle.

"As the Tribulation upon the earth comes to its close, the sixth angel from heaven will pour out his vial upon the great River Euphrates to dry up the waters in order that the Kings of the East may cross over in their march towards Palestine. Satan will send his demon spirits to gather those nations from all over the world, and they shall gather outside of the city of Jerusalem. Gathered by Satan, but in their blind delusion it is God Himself that has gathered them, that He might destroy them. This is referred to in Revelation 16:16, "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. This is further described in Joel 3:2,12,14, "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land." "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about." "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great." "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

They gather in their own hate against Christ, but only for their own destruction. Revelation 19:19, "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."

The Lord with his armies of heaven will meet them in battle and will overcome them.

There is never any doubt as to the outcome of this great battle. Christ IS the victor. The armies of the Antichrist are destroyed, and both the beast, the leader of this great host, and the false prophet are taken captive. Revelation 19:20, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimestone." The battle will be so dreadful that blood will flow for two hundred miles. Revelation 14:20, "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse's bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." (By angel from heaven the birds will be invited to come and feast upon the bodies of the slain). Revelation

19:17,18, “And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.”

After this great battle, Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit, and the beast and false prophet in the Lake of fire.””

So indeed, all nations under the rule of the Antichrist will be destroyed. Now Irenaeus states correctly that the earth will be restored to its primeval condition which existed before the flood. And the righteous will be resurrected when Jesus comes as stated in **1 Thessalonians 4 (NASB):**13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Therefore the commencement of incorruption shall indeed begin at this time, for this is how the dead in Christ are raised. This is the first resurrection as stated in **Revelation 20 (NASB):**5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

Now since the righteous dead are resurrected at this time, the Scriptures seem to indicate that they will be rewarded at the commencement of the kingdom age of one thousand years. That is, the judgment of the righteous will occur at this time as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (NASB):**10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Irenaeus does not mention this judgment as a separate judgment from the White Throne judgment in his writing. But Jesus states that the apostles will reign in the kingdom with Him in the regeneration in **Matthew 19 (NASB):**28 And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The reward of position in the kingdom implies that the righteous have already been before the judgment seat of Christ, and recompensed for the deeds done in the body. This judgment is not about salvation but of rewards as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 3 (NASB):**10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. 14 If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The fire Paul speaks of relates to this life. If we build wood, hay, or straw, we will reap what we have sown, and suffer the consequences in this life. Yet we will still be saved. However, unfortunately, we will have no rewards.

Now the reign of the righteous is also described in **Revelation 20 (NASB):**1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. 4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years

were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Irenaeus does state correctly that the judgment at the great white throne and the general resurrection will occur after the times of the kingdom. This is clearly stated in **Revelation 20 (NASB):**7 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This judgment is the judgment of the wicked dead. It is after the second or general resurrection, and it is a judgment about works in this sense, that if anyone was found still in their sin, that is, they have not accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, they are then responsible for their sin and will be judged accordingly. The penalty is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire.

Again, Irenaeus describes correctly the new heaven and the new earth which will be after the times of the kingdom. This is also mentioned in **Revelation 21 (NASB):**1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

There will be no more sorrow or pain in the new heaven and the new earth. John continues to describe the new earth as we read in **Revelation 21 (NASB):**5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." 6 Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. 7 He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. 8 But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." 9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. 12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names *were* written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 13 *There were* three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them *were* the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Now the Lord warns us in **Revelation 3 (NASB):**11 'I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

And again in **Revelation 22 (NASB):**3 "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

And in **Revelation 22 (NASB):**12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Let us say “Amen” with John in **Revelation 22 (NASB):**20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Now I have only given a brief sketch of the teaching of the word of God about future events, and for that matter, any other teaching of the word of God that Irenaeus has touched on. There is much more in the word of God about each of the themes we have discussed. Irenaeus did not concern himself with stating the complete doctrine of the word of God about future events, or any other doctrine in the word of God. His intent was to refute the Gnostic teaching of his day, and in so much as his arguments carried him to this end, he includes the references we have examined in this **Chapter 31: Future Events.**

Chapter 32: Faith and Love

Fragment XXXVIII.

Irenaeus here testifies that “The apostles ordained, that “we should not judge any one in respect to meat or drink, or in regard to a feast day, or the new moons, or the Sabbaths,” referring to Colossians 2:16. Irenaeus asks, “Whence then these contentions? whence these schisms?” Irenaeus then testifies, “We keep the feast, but in the leaven of malice and wickedness, cutting in pieces the Church of God; and we preserve what belongs to its exterior, that we may cast away these better things, faith and love.” Irenaeus concludes as he affirms, “We have heard from the prophetic words that these feasts and fasts are displeasing to the Lord.”

Chapter 33: Repentance

Commentary Summary: Repentance

Irenaeus also mentions repentance in **Book 3: Chapter XXXIII, paragraph 3** of his writing as we read here, “And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels;” referring to Matthew 25:41, “indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for him who beguiled man, and caused him to offend—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy, and for those angels who became apostates along with him; which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps.”

We have already discussed this paragraph in **Chapter 8: On the Nature of Man**. It is sufficient to note here that in paragraph three, Irenaeus testifies, **“**And this same thing does the Lord also say in the Gospel, to those who are found upon the left hand: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels,” referring to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

And Irenaeus continues as he explains, “indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for him who beguiled man, and caused him to offend—for him, I say, who is chief of the apostasy, and for those angels who became apostates along with him;” Irenaeus then affirms, “which [fire], indeed, they too shall justly feel, who, like him, persevere in works of wickedness, without repentance, and without retracing their steps.”

It is interesting that Irenaeus mentions repentance here, and that he adds “without retracing their steps.” Irenaeus seems to imply some need for making amends in regards to repentance. Irenaeus does say in **Book 3: Chapter IX**, **paragraph one**, that John the Baptist was “preaching that repentance which should call them back from their evil doings, said, “O generation of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham [to our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,” referring to Matthew 3:7-9.

And in **Book 3: Chapter X, paragraph one,** Irenaeus testifies **“**that every tongue should confess to

Him, and that He should execute just judgment towards all; that He may send "spiritual wickednesses," and the angels who transgressed and became apostates, together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men, into everlasting fire; but may, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, and holy, and those who have kept His commandments, and have persevered in His love, some from the beginning [of their Christian course], and others from [the date of] their repentance, and may surround them with everlasting glory."

Irenaeus seems to allow for repentance even after baptism, which in his thinking is when a Christian begins his course.

And in **Book 4: Chapter XL, paragraph one**, Irenaeus affirms that God makes "peace and friendship with those who repent and turn to Him, and bringing [them to] unity, but preparing for the impenitent, those who shun the light, eternal fire and outer darkness, which are evils indeed to those persons who fall into them."

And in **Book 1: Chapter XXXI, paragraph three**, Irenaeus allows for repentance from Gnostic beliefs as he affirms, "It was necessary clearly to prove, that, as their very opinions and regulations exhibit them, those who are of the school of Valentinus derive their origin from such mothers, fathers, and ancestors, and also to bring forward their doctrines, with the hope that perchance some of them, exercising repentance and returning to the only Creator, and God the Former of the universe, may obtain salvation, and that others may not henceforth be drawn away by their wicked, although plausible, persuasions, imagining that they will obtain from them the knowledge of some greater and more sublime mysteries.

And in **Book 2: Chapter XXXII, paragraph one,** Irenaeus testifies that the Lord taught that we are **"**not only not to injure their neighbours, nor to do them any evil, but also, when themselves wickedly dealt with, to be long-suffering, and to show kindness towards those [that injured them], and to pray for them, that by means of repentance they might be saved—so that we should in no respect imitate the arrogance, lust, and pride of others."

And in **Book 3: Chapter V, paragraph two**, Irenaeus reasons, "Or what medical man, anxious to heal a sick person, would prescribe in accordance with the patient's whims, and not according to the requisite medicine? But that the Lord came as the physician of the sick, He does Himself declare saying, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." How then shall the sick be strengthened, or how shall sinners come to repentance? Is it by persevering in the very same courses? or, on the contrary, is it by undergoing a great change and reversal of their former mode of living, by which they have brought upon themselves no slight amount of sickness, and many sins? But ignorance, the mother of all these, is driven out by knowledge. Wherefore the Lord used to impart knowledge to His disciples, by which also it was His practice to heal those who were suffering, and to keep back sinners from sin. He therefore did not address them in accordance with their pristine notions, nor did He reply to them in harmony with the opinion of His questioners, but according to the doctrine leading to salvation, without hypocrisy or respect of person."

And in **Book 3: Chapter X, paragraph one**, Irenaeus affirms, "For whom, then, did he prepare the people, and in the sight of what Lord was he made great? Truly of Him who said that John had something even "more than a prophet," and that "among those born of women none is greater than John the Baptist;" who did also make the people ready for the Lord's advent, warning his fellow-servants, and preaching to them repentance, that they might receive remission from the Lord when He should be present, having been converted to Him, from whom they had been alienated because of sins and transgressions. As also David says, "The alienated are sinners from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born." And it was on account of this that he, turning them to their Lord, prepared, in the spirit and power of Elias, a perfect people for the Lord."

And in Irenaeus' defense of the Church against the Gnostics, Irenaeus in **Book 3: Chapter XII, paragraph nine**, quotes Paul in Acts, chapter 17, when he spoke to the Greeks in Athens saying, "Therefore God, winking at the times of ignorance, does now command all men everywhere to turn to Him with repentance; because He hath appointed a day, on which the world shall be judged in righteousness by the man Jesus; whereof He hath given assurance by raising Him from the dead."

And in **Book 3: Chapter XVI, paragraph five**, Irenaeus quotes Jesus' words in Luke, chapter 24, as he says, "Then opened He their understanding, that they should understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, and that repentance for

the remission of sins be preached in His name among all nations."

And in **Book 3: Chapter XXIII, paragraph five**, Irenaeus affirms, "The case of Adam, however, had no analogy with this, but was altogether different. For, having been beguiled by another under the pretext of immortality, he is immediately seized with terror, and hides himself; not as if he were able to escape from God; but, in a state of confusion at having transgressed His command, he feels unworthy to appear before and to hold converse with God. Now, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" the sense of sin leads to repentance, and God bestows His compassion upon those who are penitent. For [Adam] showed his repentance by his conduct, through means of the girdle [which he used], covering himself with fig-leaves, while there were many other leaves, which would have irritated his body in a less degree.

And in **Book 4: Chapter XXXIX**, **paragraph one**, Irenaeus states, "For just as the tongue receives experience of sweet and bitter by means of tasting, and the eye discriminates between black and white by means of vision, and the ear recognises the distinctions of sounds by hearing; so also does the mind, receiving through the experience of both the knowledge of what is good, become more tenacious of its preservation, by acting in obedience to God: in the first place, casting away, by means of repentance, disobedience, as being something disagreeable and nauseous; and afterwards coming to understand what it really is, that it is contrary to goodness and sweetness, so that the mind may never even attempt to taste disobedience to God.

And in **Book4: Chapter XLI, paragraph three**, Irenaeus affirms, referring to Isaiah, chapter 1, "Thus, no doubt, since they had transgressed and sinned in the same manner, so did they receive the same reproof as did the Sodomites. But when they should be converted and come to repentance, and cease from evil, they should have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of immortality which is given by Him."

We see in Irenaeus' thinking that repentance had to do with turning from sin, and ceasing from evil. It has to do with having a "sense of sin" that "leads to repentance." Repentance is "for the remission of sins." It had to do with being "converted to Him, from whom they had been alienated because of sins and transgressions." It has to do with "undergoing a great change and reversal of" our "former mode of living, by which" we "have brought upon" ourselves "no slight amount of sickness, and many sins." It is "by means of repentance" that we are "saved." It is by "exercising repentance and returning to the only Creator, and God the Former of the universe," that we "may obtain salvation." It is by repentance that God makes "peace and friendship" with those who "turn to Him."

Now Jesus stated in the Gospel of John, chapter three, that unless we are born again we cannot see or enter the Kingdom of God. Irenaeus believed that this event occurred at baptism. The Scriptures teach us that repentance is required in order to be born again. Repentance is turning away from sin, and turning to God. Indeed, the Bible teaches us that it is in continuous repentance that we will be saved as we read in **Isaiah 30 (NASB):**15 For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength." But you were not willing.

In the New Testament we would call this type of repentance "walking in the light," or progressive sanctification. When we come to Christ, our spirit is made new, but our souls may have a lot of baggage from the past. We may have a lot of old ways of thinking, or unresolved feelings that need to be cleansed. Our conscience must have right standards by which to judge right and wrong. Though we are saved and born again the moment we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, our souls are not immediately cleansed. This happens when we are taught in the word as Jesus reveals in **John 15 (NASB):**3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

As we walk in the light of His word, we become aware of sin in our lives. As we then confess these sins, we are free of them and cleansed by the blood of Christ as we read in **1 John 1 (NASB):**6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

As we are taught in the word of God, and walk in the light of it every day, we enter into more and more truth of God's plan for our lives. And in this way we learn how to possess our vessel in sanctification and honor as Paul says in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):**3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and

honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

So although in our standing with God we are sons and daughters when we are born again, our fellowship with Him is dependent on our walking in the light of His word. As we are taught, and as we read and study His word, we gain more and more knowledge of Him. And as we do so, we learn the truth in His word, and the truth about our lives. He does not expect us to be perfect right away, but only to strive for perfection. That is, to be obedient to all that we know of His word. So even gross immorality can be forgiven and repented of, as in the case of the man in Corinth who had his father's wife. Paul, with the Church in Corinth, turned this man over to Satan until he repented. The result of such discipline was that the man did repent, and Paul entreated the Church at Corinth to receive him back into fellowship. The man's sin is recorded in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):**1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And his repentance is recorded in **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):**5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. 6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

The apostle John tells us that if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father as in **1 John 2 (NASB):**1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.

The thought here is that the blood of Jesus is always there for our cleansing of sin. John here is writing to his children in the Lord, for he says, "My little children." John is giving them, and us, the way to deal with our sin after we have had a bath. John says that "we" have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. John included himself in the place of "anyone" who sins. We are to walk in the light, confessing our sins, and progressively becoming more and more like our Lord. This is what is expressed in **Proverbs 4 (NASB):**18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

God has made provision for the child of God as the need arises to turn to Him in repentance, and confess our sins so that we might walk in continuous fellowship with our Lord. He is with us always.

Chapter 34: Gnosticism

Book 3, Chapter XI—Proofs in continuation, extracted from St. John's Gospel. The Gospels are four in number, neither more nor less. Mystic reasons for this.

In paragraph one, Irenaeus testifies, "John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a

long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that "knowledge" falsely so called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word;" Irenaeus continues as he records, "and not, as they allege," as follows:

- "that the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another;"
- "and that the Son of the Creator was, forsooth, one, but the Christ from above another, who also continued impassible, descending upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and flew back again into His Pleroma;"
- "and that Monogenes was the beginning, but Logos was the true son of Monogenes;"
- "and that this creation to which we belong was not made by the primary God, but by some power lying far below Him, and shut off from communion with the things invisible and ineffable."

In paragraph two, Irenaeus then lists the errors of the Gnostics:

- "But according to Marcion, and those like him, neither was the world made by Him; nor did He come to His own things, but to those of another."
- "And, according to certain of the Gnostics, this world was made by angels, and not by the Word of God."
- "But according to the followers of Valentinus, the world was not made by Him, but by the Demiurge."
- "For he (Soter) caused such similitudes to be made, after the pattern of things above, as they allege; but the Demiurge accomplished the work of creation."
- "For they say that he, the Lord and Creator of the plan of creation, by whom they hold that this world was made, was produced from the Mother;"

In paragraph three, Irenaeus lists more Gnostic beliefs. It is very tedious to study the Gnostic doctrines which do not even agree with each other, but which all oppose the Gospel. It is helpful to note Irenaeus' listing of their errors, point by point, as we read:

- "But according to these men, neither was the Word made flesh, nor Christ, nor the Saviour (Soter), who was produced from [the joint contributions of] all [the Æons]."
- "For they will have it, that the Word and Christ never came into this world;"
- "that the Saviour, too, never became incarnate, nor suffered, but that He descended like a dove upon the dispensational Jesus;"
- "and that, as soon as He had declared the unknown Father, He did again ascend into the Pleroma."
- "Some, however, make the assertion, that this dispensational Jesus did become incarnate, and suffered, whom they represent as having passed through Mary just as water through a tube;"
- "but others allege him to be the Son of the Demiurge, upon whom the dispensational Jesus descended;"
- "while others, again, say that Jesus was born from Joseph and Mary, and that the Christ from above descended upon him, being without flesh, and impassible;"
- "But according to the opinion of no one of the heretics was the Word of God made flesh;"
- "For if anyone carefully examines the systems of them all, he will find that the Word of God is brought in by all of them as not having become incarnate (sine carne) and impassible, as is also the Christ from above;"
- "Others consider Him to have been manifested as a transfigured man; but they maintain Him to have been neither born nor to have become incarnate;"
- "whilst others [hold] that He did not assume a human form at all, but that, as a dove, He did descend upon that Jesus who was born from Mary."

In paragraph seven, Irenaeus affirms, "Such, then, are the first principles of the Gospel: that there is one God, the Maker of this universe; He who was also announced by the prophets, and who by Moses set forth the dispensation of the law,—[principles] which proclaim the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ignore any other God or Father except Him." Irenaeus then testifies, "So firm is the ground upon which these Gospels rest, that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and, starting from these [documents], each one of them endeavours to establish his own peculiar doctrine." Ireaneus then records:

- "For the Ebionites, who use Matthew's only, are confuted out of this very same, making false suppositions with regard to the Lord."
- "But Marcion, mutilating that according to Luke, is proved to be a blasphemer of the only existing God, from those [passages] which he still retains."
- "Those, again, who separate Jesus from Christ, alleging that Christ remained impassible, but that it was Jesus who suffered, preferring the Gospel by Mark, if they read it with a love of truth, may have their errors rectified."
- "Those, moreover, who follow Valentinus, making copious use of that according to John, to illustrate their conjunctions, shall be proved to be totally in error by means of this very Gospel, as I have shown in the first book."

In paragraph eight, Irenaeus then describes a distinct focus of each Gospel as he continues:

- "For that according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," referring to John 1:1. "Also, "all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made," referring to John 1:3. "For this reason, too, is that Gospel full of all confidence, for such is His person."
- "But that according to Luke, taking up [His] priestly character, commenced with Zacharias the priest offering sacrifice to God," referring to Luke 1:5-25. "For now was made ready the fatted calf, about to be immolated for the finding again of the younger son," referring to Luke 15:11-32.
- "Matthew, again, relates His generation as a man, saying, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," referring to Matthew 1:1, "and also, "The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise," referring to Matthew 1:18. "This, then, is the Gospel of His humanity; for which reason it is, too, that [the character of] a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel."
- "Mark, on the other hand, commences with [a reference to] the prophetical spirit coming down from on high to men, saying, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet," referring freely to Mark 1:1-2, "—pointing to the winged aspect of the Gospel; and on this account he made a compendious and cursory narrative, for such is the prophetical character."

In paragraph nine, Irenaeus concludes, "These things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious; those, [I mean,] who represent the aspects of the Gospel as being either more in number than as aforesaid, or, on the other hand, fewer." Irenaeus continues as he summarizes:

- "The former class [do so], that they may seem to have discovered more than is of the truth; the latter, that they may set the dispensations of God aside."
- "For Marcion, rejecting the entire Gospel, yea rather, cutting himself off from the Gospel, boasts that he has part in the [blessings of] the Gospel."
- "The Montanists, that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John's Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit. Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church; acting like those (the Encratitæ) who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren. We must conclude, moreover, that these men (the Montanists) can not admit the Apostle Paul either. For, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks expressly of prophetical gifts, and recognises men and women prophesying in the Church. Sinning, therefore, in all these particulars, against the Spirit of God, they fall into the irremissible sin."
- "But those who are from Valentinus, being, on the other hand, altogether reckless, while they put forth their own compositions, boast that they possess more Gospels than there really are. Indeed, they have arrived at such a pitch of audacity, as to entitle their comparatively recent writing "the Gospel of Truth," though it agrees in nothing with the Gospels of the Apostles, so that they have really no

Gospel which is not full of blasphemy. For if what they have published is the Gospel of truth, and yet is totally unlike those which have been handed down to us from the apostles, any who please may learn, as is shown from the Scriptures themselves, that that which has been handed down from the apostles can no longer be reckoned the Gospel of truth."