

After The Resurrection

Mark Schindler

Given 29-Apr-17; Sermon #1376A

Here we are in the fourteenth day of the fifty-day count from the Wavesheaf offering that followed the Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread, which represented Jesus Christ, the first of the firstfruits, as we have been told over and over recently. Each year, as we count these days, we all spend a certain amount of time looking to God for insight into just what it is He wants us to learn through the annual fifty days and seven Sabbaths (as Ted [Bowling] just got through talking about). However, this year, as I prepared for the spring holy days, my focus turned a little bit to a different direction.

I am still considering the lessons that God commands as we number each day in the fifty-day count. But as we approach these days, this year my thoughts turned more to the other seemingly neglected count of days that takes place within the count to Pentecost: the forty days of Jesus Christ's ministerial work until His ascension. Brethren, God has certainly given us a purposeful responsibility to count and prayerfully consider the fifty days to Pentecost. But what else are we missing when we fail to consider what Jesus Christ was doing for forty days until He, our great and perfectly righteous High Priest, ascended to be seated next to His Father, having completed a very significant part of His work?

Remember that Jesus Christ specifically states, as recorded in John 5:17 and 8:29, that He and His Father have been continuously working from some unexpressed time in the past to accomplish Their purpose, and that He Himself always does those things that please the Father. Please keep this thought in your mind because it is a critical piece to this message to know that He is always working in perfection, to do those things that please His Father. As Martin [Collins] mentioned in his current sermon series on Jesus Christ's last words, there is that eye-opening scripture there in John 20:30-31, where John tells us straight out in the context of these forty days:

John 20:30-31 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name.

If we consider this amazing statement from John regarding Jesus Christ's forty days from His resurrection until His ascension, alongside his even more amazing statement that ends the book of John, where he writes of himself in the work of Jesus Christ over three and a half years, then how much more carefully should we be examining the limited but perfect record God has purposely given us to better appreciate the work of the Father and the Son in this one single Book?

John 21:24-25 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

Brethren, we do not have a complete written record of all that was said and done for three and a half years of intense training for that particular group [the disciples] who had been given to the Son by the Father. They were those few who had been set apart and sanctified through that truth, as Jesus Christ said in His prayer to His Father one night before He was crucified, in John 17:6-19. But we do have everything we need to be a unified Body with the Father, Son, and each other in the same manner as they were, through their testimony that they have passed on to us, just as Jesus Christ said in John 17:20-23.

However, brethren, we have something extra that even they did not have. Please turn with me to John 20. We will be reading from verses 24-29. This is eight days after His resurrection, and it immediately precedes John's comment about everything He did in their presence.

John 20:24-29 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The word here "blessed" can be translated "supremely blessed." This is a very special blessing God gives to all of us, in order to help us along the way as we move forward, believing on Him who we have never seen but believe from the words of all those eyewitnesses. So, brethren, today we are going to try to draw a little more insight into the post-resurrection work from their word, alongside the patterns of work God established in type.

However, we are only going to look at a very small but vital portion of that work that Jesus Christ was doing for righteousness' sake, from the time of His resurrection just before sunset on the Sabbath, completing exactly three days and three nights [in the grave], as He said, to the time just before He ascended as the first of the firstfruits to His Father, early on the first day of the week that followed the Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

But I want to make it absolutely clear before we go any farther into this, that there is going to be a good deal of speculation on my part, although I have tried to carefully base it on all the clues that God has given us through the truth of His Word. You may very well see something that I missed. But my hope is that it will motivate us all to dig more deeply and thoughtfully into God's Word to better appreciate the Great God we serve, who is absolutely perfect in purpose, planning, and execution, from before the foundation of

the earth. And we should never stop growing in our drive to deeply appreciate what we could never do ourselves.

So now, as I said, we are going to do a bit of speculating from this one Book of truth that we have here before us that we have been given specifically by God. Because in it, God is always giving us things that will increase our love and appreciation for the Father and the Son, if we keep digging while sticking to the trunk of the tree. Hopefully in the next few minutes we can add to our deep and abiding love and appreciation for Them.

I have to tell you upfront though, I have been thinking on this subject since last year, before Atonement, as I went through David Grabbe's paper and study, and the resounding witness of God's Word regarding Jesus Christ as both parts of the Atonement sacrifice. It really brought home a very important point of how much Jesus Christ meant in every aspect of His work.

Because of time constraints, I cannot really give you everything that brought me to this conclusion. [We will look at] just a few of the many scriptures that I have looked at in order to draw this conclusion, (along with a good deal of research on related pieces of information). I would rather not have given this [message] to you at this time. And I sincerely tried to move away from this topic to a different topic. But everything kept coming back to this, so maybe it is because God placed each of us into the Body as it pleases Him, as the firstfruits, to do our jobs with great attention to following His detailed instructions. So perhaps it is time we put aside any carelessness within the work we have been privileged to do, and focus more clearly on the perfect work of Jesus Christ in all things, to please our Father right along with Him. And to do it by studying into these things more diligently ourselves.

We need to appreciate and be encouraged by just how careful our Elder Brother is to fulfill all righteousness and always do what is pleasing to the Father in bringing us to a more perfect alignment with Them both. Again, this is only my speculation, but I hope it will encourage you to continue to examine more closely, every day, the incredible work the Father and Son are doing to perfection, in bringing us to unity with Them and each other. Also, I hope that you will carefully go through the four gospel accounts of what took

place between noon on Wednesday, when Christ was on the stake, through the following Sunday evening, alongside the other scriptures that we are going to add here today.

Even as a people who know the truth, you will probably be surprised at some of the fallacious assumptions we still hold on to because we live in a biased world that believes in a Friday crucifixion and a Sunday morning resurrection of a Spirit-risen Jesus Christ. I had planned to start off with an overview timeline of the names, places, and events involved here, as gathered from these scriptures. But as I put this sermon together, I realized I was not going to have enough time. So I am going to have to ask you to study and find them for yourself, starting with Jesus Christ's time on the stake through the first day following the resurrection.

Because we will not have the time that we need to cover here what I have gone through in my studies over the last many months, we will take an abbreviated overview at this time and look at a few significant events that we will need to go forward.

But first, please turn with me to a few verses, a few sets of scriptures very familiar to us. They are the cornerstone piece of this message today.

Philippians 2:3-11 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

When the Word became the Man Jesus Christ, He did not quit being God, but was in fact "God with us," as the Scripture plainly tells us. But He had purposely given up His rights and privileges as God, and His outward expression was now as a servant, subject to death. Brethren, I cannot tell you how He did it, but in giving up His outward glory as God, He also became subject to the same pain, suffering, and death as any man. This was no trick. He died.

He became a servant, subject to death. And He shared in our humanity so that He could take our sins on His body in order that we could be restored to an eternal relationship with His Father and Himself. Please hold onto this [thought] because it is absolutely crucial to the work He was doing between the resurrection and His presentation to His Father as the first of the firstfruits.

So now let us turn over to the book of Hebrews. And we will be going (hopefully) quickly through a number of scriptures, just to really back up what we are going to be talking about today a little bit more, as a foundation. We will start in Hebrews, very first chapter, the very first verse.

Hebrews 1:1-9 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire." But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of

righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions."

Hebrews 1:13-14 But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 2:9-11 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Hebrews 2:17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."

Hebrews 5:5-10 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek”; who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Hebrews 8:1-5 Now, this is the main point of these things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and the shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

Hebrews 9:11-15 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the

Mediator of the New Covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 10:1-7 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come— in the volume of the book it is written of Me— to do Your will, O God.'"

Hebrews 10:12-14 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Here we see, brethren, that we have both the perfect sacrifice of One who died for our sins and who took them on His own body right into the grave. And we also have the perfect High Priest. Everything that was before Him was a pattern that pointed to Him in all of His various offices and to the reality that could only be fulfilled in Him as He did everything.

Keep that in mind. He did everything that pleased and fulfilled the will of the Father.

So now I will leave it to you to go through all the gospel accounts for yourself and try to answer many of the questions that you will find open for study and meditation in those gospels. Like: how many earthquakes [occurred], one or two? How many angels [were] at the tomb; one, two, three? How many trips were made back and forth to the tomb, and by whom? How many hours did it take for Joseph and Nicodemus to get Pilate to

authorize them to take Jesus's body for burial (since he demanded confirmation and did not give them permission until the confirmation came)? And when it came, was it [given by] the same centurion that proclaimed, “Truly this was the Son of God”?

Why were there specifically mentioned one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes wrapped in the burial linens with Christ? And why was the burial headpiece mentioned separate from the other linens? Although I would like you to study these two particular questions more carefully yourself, I will propose to you my personal speculation today regarding them, as well as why the stone was rolled away, and why there were many others who had their tombs opened and were resurrected to a physical life for a witness in Jerusalem following Jesus's own resurrection. There are so many moving parts to it.

When you start to put the gospel accounts together, they all work beautifully to put together an incredible story of the perfect work of our Savior Jesus Christ. But right now, I want us to look at a very important piece of the puzzle as we consider the Wednesday noon hour, and Jesus now nailed to the stake, having been scourged and beaten so badly [that] He was no longer even recognizable as a human being. While He was now suffering through the taunts of men and demons alike (as we know from the four gospels, as well as the prophecies about him in Isaiah and the Psalms). And that some time earlier in the day, while taunted, He carried on that famous conversation with the thief nailed to the stake next to Him and asks His Father for forgiveness for all those who had led Him to His death.

There were many there watching it all. And in the distance, His family, acquaintances, and many who followed Him from Galilee, ministering to Him, including Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James and Joses; and Zebedee's wife, Salome. They were all there when the noon hour came. Darkness covered the whole land and for the next three hours, the horror of the situation drove many to beat their breasts and turn away from that place. . although those who stood at a distance remained as a witness of the most egregious injustice in human history.

Sometime in these three hours, after fulfilling every prophecy about Himself as He took all our sins on Himself and became unable to

be within the presence of the Holy Father anymore—His Companion who had coexisted with Him from eternity—He cried out in the pain of solitude, of knowing what the sins had done to Him, a thing that He had known from before the foundation of the earth: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" The sense of separation must have been overwhelming, even though He had looked to it as a reality from the time He set His mind to do this for us, from the foundation of the world.

His cry was so loud, but probably mumbled and misunderstood through the wounds that had shredded His face so that He could not be heard clearly when He yelled out "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" ("My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"). The cry was misunderstood. They said He was crying for Elijah. And sometime soon after that, He screamed again in pain as a Roman soldier drove a spear into His side, followed by the greatest act of pure faith and trust in history: as His life's blood poured out of His body, He gave this verbal commitment of His spirit to the safekeeping of His Father.

Please stop here for a moment in your minds to digest this, brethren: separation from the Father and now turning the very essence of His life over to His Father in faith, to be restored at the Other's discretion, totally turning everything that He was from eternity over to His Father in absolute trust. And then He breathed His last and was as dead as any man because He had given up that part of His expression of God's glory, eternal life, so that He could do all that it would take to free us from the bondage of sin. He turned His restoration to eternal life and the glory of God over completely to the discretion of His Father.

There has never been, nor ever will be, an act of trust like this, because He always did what was good, proper, and pleasing to the Father. How well do we measure up, as we go through this Pentecost count, to this standard of our trust in God and always doing His will, especially how we interact, according to His Word, with one another in love?

As I said, please go back and diligently go through these gospel accounts and you will find through all these moving parts, Jesus Christ is nowhere interacting with men (nor suddenly appearing, disappearing, passing through

walls and all those things a spirit being could do) *before* Mary saw Him, after John and Peter left the tomb and she thought Him to be the gardener. Everything else you read in the accounts of Him after the resurrection happened, was after this point. When she did realize who it was, He very specifically commanded her not to touch His body because He had not yet presented Himself to the Father, as you can read for yourself in John 20:3-17.

In the timeline given through the four gospels, all of His miraculous appearances and interactions with His disciples appeared after this. Also, we are given two more important clues germane to this message today in verses 6 and 7, one that is conspicuously present and one that is conspicuously absent (besides Jesus Christ Himself, of course, being absent from the tomb). When Peter and John came to the tomb, it says:

John 20:6-7 Then Simon Peter came, following him [following John], and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.

There are a couple of notable things here. The first is the one that is not there. When Joseph and Nicodemus placed Christ in the tomb, there was one hundred pounds of very costly myrrh and aloe for anointing. Where was it?

The second clue is the burial linens and how they were positioned. We will look at the second [clue] first because it will help to lead to our understanding of the first. When we think of a handkerchief, we automatically picture a single small piece of cloth. And that is possibly a good thing to do because it is the same word that was used for when Paul sent cloths from himself for anointing. But it is not the cloth that should be our concern here, but that it was where it says it was: folded together and placed by itself. There is an important clue here, brethren. *Bullinger's Companion Bible* writes about this “folded together” (or “wrapped together” in the King James), because it says this implies that the cloth had been folded around the head as a turban is folded and it lays in a form of a turban. The linen cloths also lay exactly as they were swathed around the body.

Bullinger then draws a conclusion that is mere speculation on his part—as an assumption based on what the world thinks—that the Lord passed out of [the

linen cloths], not needing as Lazarus to be loosed. Brethren, I believe this conclusion may be way off base, even though it is a possibility, because I think we all miss a function that Jesus Christ still had not completed in His earthly office as High Priest, to fulfill all righteousness. Is it possible that the Father had resurrected Jesus Christ, just as Lazarus and all those who came out of their graves that day to physical life, in order to carry out one more responsibility? Was there still one more thing He needed to do, for righteousness' sake, as a man in His role as High Priest before presenting Himself cleansed and purified of our sins before His former glory could be restored completely?

Brethren, I do not believe He could sit down at His Father's right hand until this very last task was accomplished. And it is the positioning of the burial linens that really is our clue. First of all, please turn with me to Exodus 28. This is a command from God.

Exodus 28:1-4 "Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest."

Now, we will be reading verses 36 through 38, but I will be reading it from The Message translation, because I think it seems to express these verses more clearly than the King James Version.

Exodus 28:36-38 (MSG) "Make a plate of gold of pure gold. Engrave on it as on a seal: 'Holy to God.' Tie it with a blue cord to the front of the turban. It is to rest there on Aaron's forehead. He'll

take on any guilt involved in the sacred offerings that the Israelites dedicate, no matter what they bring. It will always be on Aaron's forehead so that the offerings will be acceptable before God."

So here is the clue: the burial headcloth wrapped as a turban was an indication of His responsibility as High Priest. But the question is: what was left for Him to do in His physical role as High Priest, to be totally acceptable before God the Father after bearing our sins in His body, to fulfill all righteousness?

Please turn with me to Leviticus 16. Sometimes overlooked in this very relevant chapter of pattern and type is the very first verse, which is a very specific warning of something that is recorded six chapters earlier in the book of Leviticus: the deaths of Nadab and Abihu in chapter 10 for carelessness. Now let us start there in verse 1.

Leviticus 16:1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the Lord, and died.

And so now, since you are all very familiar with the rest of the chapter and the type of Christ as both parts of the same sacrifice (the two goats), let us look at His other role in that sacrifice as High Priest. Just what did the high priest do after he finished making the atonement through the blood of one goat and the placing of the sins on the other [goat] to bear away the sins?

Leviticus 16:23-24 "Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there. And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people."

Brethren, I propose to you that from the time of His resurrection at the end of the Sabbath, until the time Mary saw Him, moments before He presented Himself as the first of the firstfruits to the Father, He and the angels

ministering to Him were cleaning and preparing Himself within His body that had borne the filthiness and the filthy results of our sins in His stripes and His wounds.

Just as they had ministered to His needs after the forty days in the Judean wilderness at the beginning of His ministry, the angels were once again ministering to Him in the physical act that He needed to do in fulfilling all righteousness, before ascending to His Father and having the glory completely restored to Him, and the life They had shared together as spirit beings.

I would ask you to consider: where and how did this happen? A question that brings us back to the costly myrrh and aloe that was conspicuously absent when Peter and John arrived in the tomb. Myrrh is first mentioned in Exodus 30, verses 23 and, for lack of time, I do not want you to turn there. I will just read to you what God's instructions to Moses were.

Exodus 30:23-30 Moreover the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane, five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy. And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister to Me as priests."

An article I found by Don Hooser entitled "Perfumes and Oils in the Bible and History," said,

The predominant oil of the Bible is olive oil. Olive trees grow naturally in the Middle East. The word "oil" is derived from

“olive.”” Skipping down a little bit here, he said: "And sometimes other medically beneficial oils were mixed with olive oil. Olive oil was used to anoint the sick. . . was a symbol of the Holy Spirit, which God uses to miraculously heal. It also was strikingly appropriate to anoint with a substance that has healthful properties. Many aromatic ointments mentioned in the Bible with the olive oil with aromatic oils and resins added. In fact, the holy anointing oil used by the priests was mixture described in Exodus 30:23-25. It was olive oil, myrrh, cinnamon, “sweet smelling cane”. . . and cassia. Like the incense, any other use of this recipe than the God-ordained sacred uses was strictly forbidden. . .

Brethren, as my final piece of speculation here, where did this cleansing take place? Leviticus 16 tells us the high priest shall remove his tainted holy garments, leave them, and shall cleanse himself in a holy place. What place was more holy during Jesus Christ's ministry than the Mount of Olives, and specifically the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the mountain?

It was the place Jesus most often retreated to teach and pray and even stay when He came to Jerusalem. It was here in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the ridge of the Mount of Olives, that He frequently brought His disciples to teach them the Word that they should pass on to us so that we could believe without seeing. It was here that He offered up His most solemn prayer to His Father just days before.

And it is probably here where He came to be prepared to be presentable to His Father as the first of the firstfruits. And it was probably here, a forty-five minute walk from the Judean wilderness where the angels ministered to Him at the beginning of His earthly ministry. And now [ministered to Him] in the final act of His responsibilities as a man, Emmanuel.

As we carefully carry out this command and count these days to the Feast of the Firstfruits, let us do so with a great appreciation for everything the Father and Son have done and are doing to bring us into unity with Themselves. Let us carefully fulfill our responsibilities before Them with the same faith, hope, and love for one another that They most certainly showed, in every aspect of our relationships and trust.

Please turn with me to one more aspect of Jesus Christ in Psalm 45. This is what we are waiting for, brethren.

Psalm 45:6-8 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. All your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad.

Psalm 45:17 I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever.

Of this same One on whom we wait, the book of Hebrews states:

Hebrews 10:12-14 But this Man, after He had offered one [complete] sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Brethren, are we as careful with our commanded count to Pentecost? Let us deeply appreciate our incredible future as the apostle Peter wrote:

I Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Have a wonderful Sabbath, brethren, and a productive remainder of the count to Pentecost.