

## The Scepter, Duty, And The Days Of Unleavened Bread

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At the beginning of this sermon I will be quoting extensively in my introduction from a 2013 *CGG Weekly* two part essay by Martin Collins entitled “The Scepter of the Kingdom of God,” and I would suggest that everyone go to the church’s website and reread these two essays.

I am using them here as a vitally important foundational piece of this sermon that I hope you will reflect on later in this message, especially in these unsettling times. God is now and has always been in absolute control over His Creation, in plan and purpose from beginning to end down to the smallest detail.

Martin writes:

From early times, a staff or scepter has indicated secular or religious authority. Matthew 27:29 records that a reed was placed in Christ's hand as a mock scepter of kingly authority. When Christ returns to earth, He will take the scepter of the Kingdom of God as a symbol of righteousness, power, and authority. What is the history behind this scepter?

Brethren, before going any further with Martin’s comments, I would like to interject something that we need to keep in mind, because it will be a critical point later in the sermon.

**John 20:11-17** But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw

Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"

Later on we will see that this is a very important point in this sermon. Why did Mary consider Him to be the gardener? Was it because He was actually holding his scepter of a stalk of the firstfruits in His hand as He prepared to present Himself before the Father, prepared to continue to rule specifically at that time in the lives of the firstfruits who were to learn to be servant leaders with Him?

We will look at this a little bit later. But now, continuing with Martin's essay:

The history begins with a two-fold promise to Abraham. The spiritual and royal promise of the one Seed—the Messiah—and of salvation through Him, and the promise of kingship, the Bible calls *the scepter*. But the material and national promises relating to many nations—national wealth, prosperity, power, and possession of the Holy Land—the Bible calls the "birthright."

God made these two promises—the birthright and the scepter—unconditional to Abraham, and re-promised to Isaac and Jacob. After Jacob, these two promises became separated. The scepter promise of the kingly line culminating in Christ and of the grace through Him was handed on to Jacob's son, Judah, father of the Jews. Moses records Jacob's prophecy: "The scepter [margin: symbol of kingship] shall not depart from Judah, nor lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people" (Genesis 49:10). "Shiloh" prophetically refers to the Messiah, as Prince of Peace, or as the Seed of Abraham.

Martin continues a bit further down in the essay:

Once God chose David and his house, the scepter was handed down the Jewish kingly line, as Genesis 49:10 had foreseen. I Chronicles 29:23 records, "Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father," and so has every king of the Judaic royal lineage since that time.

Because of Solomon's sins, especially idolatry, God took the nation of Israel, composed of the ten northern tribes, from his son, Rehoboam, and gave it to a servant, Jeroboam (I Kings 11:31-37). These ten tribes were called by the ancient title of "Israel." The one tribe of Judah (with additions from Benjamin and Levi) remained under Rehoboam and was called, "Judah," or "House of Judah." Rehoboam ruled over the new and much smaller Kingdom of Judah, not the Kingdom of Israel.

God kept His promise to David by not abolishing the scepter promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He left a son of this promise sitting on the throne over only one tribe, and at the same time, He punished Solomon by taking away the nation of Israel.

For the first time, the birthright and scepter promises were divided between two nations: Israel, headed by Ephraim and Manasseh, had the birthright, while Judah held the scepter. For many generations Israel and Judah remained as separate nations in adjoining territories, with their own separate kings. Because of their sins, the House of Israel, along with the birthright, was driven into Assyrian captivity between 721-718 BC.

The House of Judah was taken captive to Babylonian exile in three stages between 604 BC and 585 BC, the last when King Zedekiah reigned: "Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes in Riblah; the king of Babylon also killed all the nobles of Judah. Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with bronze fetters, to carry him off to Babylon" (Jeremiah 39: 6-7), where he died in prison. No male heirs to the throne of Judah survived to inherit the throne. However, Jeremiah records that heirs

of Zedekiah did survive: Johanan took all the remnant of Judah, including the king's daughters, Jeremiah, and Baruch into Egypt. They eventually escaped with Jeremiah (Jeremiah 43:5-7).

Martin then goes on to explain the prophetic breach that took place in the line of David through the births of the twin sons Pharez and Zerah, which prophetically would be rectified generations down the road through the marriage of a descendant of Pharez to a descendant of Zerah, which took place shortly after Jerusalem fell in 585 BC.

Following this, through putting together prophecy and historical Irish tradition Martin writes in Part 2 of, "The Scepter of the Kingdom of God."

The prophet Jeremiah, fleeing Jerusalem to Egypt, was entrusted with King Zedekiah's daughters. Their story reveals how the breach between the two sons of Judah, Pharez and Zerah, was healed. God removed the crown of David from the ruling line of Pharez and placed it on the head of a descendant of Zerah.

According to tradition, in 569 BC, an elderly white-haired patriarch, sometimes referred to as a "saint," came to Ireland, which had been colonized centuries before both by Israelites from the tribe of Dan and by Jews of the line of Zerah. With the old patriarch was an Eastern king's daughter with a Hebrew name, Tea Tephi (or Tamar Tephi). The old man was Jeremiah, and the princess was a daughter of King Zedekiah of Judah.

Martin goes on to write about her husband from the line of Zerah who was in their group, whose father was the King of Ireland.

Following this is fulfillment of a prophecy in Ezekiel 21:25-27, the throne upon which David sat was overturned three times.

Again Martin wrote:

This dynasty continued, unbroken, down through all the kings of Ireland. It was overturned and transplanted in Scotland in C. AD 487 when a prince of Ireland's royal line was crowned King Fergus I. In

AD 1603, it was overturned again and transplanted to England when Scotland's James VI was crowned James I of England, a line that continues today. These overturns fulfilled the prophecy in Ezekiel 21:25-27.

This continuing British monarchy employs two scepters in its regalia. The scepter with the cross, known as the Royal Scepter, has the largest cut diamond in the world, weighing 530 carats. Symbolizing the monarch's power as the ruler of his people [the Sovereign's Scepter with Cross is a token of his or her temporal power as head of state]. It is considered the Ensign of Kingly Power and Justice.

The second scepter, the Rod with the Dove, is a slender rod of gold with 199 diamonds, 58 rubies, ten emeralds, and four sapphires. It symbolizes the king's paternal function as guardian and guide. It is emblematic of his or her spiritual role. From the earliest times, it has been the Rod of Equity and Mercy. The dove is said to be symbolic of divine inspiration.

During the coronation service, the archbishop delivers the Royal Scepter into the king's right hand, and then he puts the Rod with the Dove into the king's left hand. Then he says: "God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed, direct and assist you in the administration and exercise of all those powers which he hath given you. Be so [merciful](#) that you be not too remiss; so execute justice that you forget not mercy. Punish the wicked, protect and cherish the just, and lead your people in the way wherein they should go."

When Christ returns to the earth to rule, He will take over an existing throne (Luke 1:32). Jesus is both the Root and the Offspring of David (Revelation 22:16). As the Root, the throne is His by right as the divine King of Israel. Secondly, as David's lawful, fleshly offspring, Jesus can also claim the throne by His right of inheritance, continuing David's dynasty forever.

The prophet Jeremiah further affirms that Christ is coming to sit on an existing throne. He was imprisoned in Jerusalem when he wrote Jeremiah 33, a prophecy of events at the return of Christ. He writes:

"Behold the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. . . . For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of Israel'" (Jeremiah 33:14-15, 17).

When God inspired His prophet to write these words, David's throne was being rooted out of Judah. Yet, God had already arranged for his dynasty to rule in other lands until Christ should come and claim it for Himself.

I went through this lengthy introduction to my sermon I have entitled, "The Scepter, Duty, and the Days of Unleavened Bread," because I sincerely believe in this world of bellicosely bloviating leaders, God is maintaining David's throne in preparation for Jesus Christ's return using someone who can be a good example for us within God's House.

Even though apparently not called at this time into God's church, this leader still recognizes the need for sacrificial duty before God by the grace of God, as God protects Jesus Christ's throne and at the same time gives His elect firstfruits another example for us to follow if we will take note.

While almost all those around her have been putting aside their duties to use their privileged stations in life to please themselves, I do not think it is a coincidence that at this time in history Elizabeth II remains on the throne of David after 67 years as the longest serving female head of state in human history, while carefully considering her own duty to God in the people she serves.

Very much like King David himself, she is far from perfect, and some of those imperfections have also manifested themselves in how she has raised her own children. Her oldest son, who is next in line for the throne (which God seems to be keeping him away from it) has many of the same reprehensible qualities as his uncle King Edward. Edward, who lived a life of privilege, wanted the privilege, but not the responsibility and duty that went with it. Rather he considered his own lusts, desires, and self-satisfaction of greater importance.

His abdication from the throne rather than service to his people was only surpassed by his documented nefarious betrayal of his countrymen in cozying up to Hitler and the German high command before the British shipped him off to the British Bahamas as governor from 1940-45.

Documents the royal family kept from the British people for decades had among them his final communications with the Nazis before his departure to the Bahamas, in which it was stated Edward, then Duke of York, encouraged relentless bombing attacks on the United Kingdom in a bid to force the British government to begin peace negotiations.

I have found it interesting that this man's name was actually David until he assumed the name of Edward when he came to the throne. It is also of interest that his abdication came before an actual coronation took place where the new regent is solemnly anointed in appointment to his duties before God.

Elizabeth, on the other hand, has put aside her own wants and desires to follow her father's example, and his direction to her of a responsibility before God to serve her people that outweigh everything else. Though a leader with seemingly limited power and authority, she has quietly exercised more true leadership than all of the politicians that have come and gone throughout her 67-year reign, just as her father had done when the heavy crown of duty was forced upon him with his older brother's abdication.

With this long introduction I am trying to remind us that God, who declares the end from the beginning, is very carefully working His plan to its end in a way that should give us great hope and determination going forward. So, we

need to see the lessons of sacrificial duty; that we need to be a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ as we have been called to Him by the Father as pictured in these Days of Unleavened Bread.

We will see in Elizabeth II both an example of sacrifice in duty in the appointed office she has the privilege to hold, as well as the hand of God that carefully placed a physical guardian on the throne of David, which throne will be in place at Christ's return.

Just as Elizabeth over the years has learned to put sacrificial duty before her desires, we now have the opportunity to start putting into practice our sacrificial duty to follow the cloud wherever it leads, as John [Ritenbaugh] said on the first Day of Unleavened Bread. Wherever it leads we need to put aside our personal lusts and desires to continue in faithful service to one another, as unto God, no matter how difficult the path seems to be.

We are going to start with what I feel may be one of the most difficult scriptures of sacrificial duty within the unleavened Body of Christ. Even though each of us has been blessed by God's holy desires, good counsel, and the ability to do just and merciful works within the Body, we are still battling self-centered carnal nature that does not want us to go that way. We still battle the old man that wants to drive us from ditch to ditch, rather than straight ahead, focused on Jesus Christ!

Please turn with me to I Corinthians, where we will be looking at chapters 5 and 6. As we do, just keep the thought of the sacrificial duty that we committed to when we were baptized into the Body of Christ. We were buried together with Jesus Christ to live a totally new way of life, as symbolically attested to in these Days of Unleavened Bread. The old man is dead but keeps trying to pop back out of the grave.

**I Corinthians 5:1-13** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name



of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore put away from yourselves the evil person.

Now before going any further let us look a little bit into verse 5 and delivering someone within the household of God to “Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

The word translated as destruction in the NKJV is #3639, *olethros* (ol'-eth-ros); from another word meaning ruin. *Strong's* writes that it indicates death, or punishment. *Vine's Expository Dictionary* adds a little clarity to this, as it tells us this word translated as "ruin; destruction," is used in I Corinthians 5: 5 of the effect upon the physical condition of an erring believer for the purpose of his spiritual profit.

With that bit of insight from *Vine's* in mind I want to reread I Corinthians 5: 1-5 from the *Lockman Foundation Amplified Bible* because it really

expresses the scope of this blatantly vile sin, and what humble submission to their duty before God and love for their brother demanded of them and the real effect of their action:

**I Corinthians 5:1-5** (AMP) It is actually reported (factually) that there is sexual immorality among you, impurity of a sort that is condemned and does not occur even among the heathen; for a man has [his own] father's wife [Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20]. And you are proud and arrogant! And you ought rather to mourn (bow in sorrow and in shame) until the person who has done this [shameful] thing is removed from your fellowship and your midst. As for my attitude, though I am absent [from you] in body, I am present in spirit, and I have already decided and passed judgment, as if actually present. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, on the man who has committed such a deed, when you and my own spirit are met together with the power of our Lord Jesus. You are to deliver this man over to Satan for physical discipline [to destroy carnal lusts which prompted him to incest] that [his] spirit may [yet] be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Brethren, this was not a sin that was happening in a corner, nor the occasional stumbling we all do. Rather, it had morphed into self-satisfying sin that even the immoral outside the household of God considered reprehensible. It is very important to this lesson of leavening infecting the Body that Paul makes a point of clearly drawing our attention to the difference between God's judgment outside the household of God and the judgement that should be taking place in love for the brethren within the Body of Christ.

I would like us to consider I Corinthians 5:6 through the end of the chapter again, but this time I would like you to listen how it has been paraphrased in the *J.B. Phillips Translation*. Starting where we left off in the Amplified Bible, please listen to I Corinthians 5:6-13 from the *Phillips*:

Your pride in yourselves is lamentably out of place. Don't you know how a little yeast can permeate the whole lump? Clear out every bit of old yeast that you may be new unleavened bread! We Christians have had a Passover lamb sacrificed for us—none other

than Christ himself! So, let us keep the feast with no trace of yeast of the old life, nor the yeast of vice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of unadulterated truth!

In my previous letter I said, “Don't mix with the immoral.” I didn't mean, of course, that you were to have no contact at all with the immoral of this world, nor with any cheats or thieves or idolaters—for that would mean going out of the world altogether! But in this letter, I tell you not to associate with any professing Christian who is known to be an impure man, or a swindler, and idolater, a man with foul tongue, a drunkard or a thief. My instruction is: Don't even eat with such a man. Those outside the church it is not my business to judge. But surely it is your business to judge those who are inside the church—God alone can judge those who are outside. It is your plain duty to expel this wicked man from your fellowship!

There are a few very important takeaways from this section. Consider here that Paul first reminds them that their own pride is lamentable sin that is actually a good part of the leavening that is just as contributable to the expansive growth of sin, as the heinous and obvious sin the man was committing in their midst.

Then he makes a very emphatic point of the difference in judgment going on outside the household of God, with the judgment that members of the Body of Christ must be doing in leaning to apply God's law in love for their brothers in Christ within the house!

He then lets them know that their responsibility extends to correctly making the kind of tough love judgment that is their duty toward one that is obviously and continually turning back to the habits of a life that will lead him to trample on the Passover sacrifice of Jesus Christ! But they were behaving with pride and arrogance instead of humility and meekness. They were in fact too full of themselves to see the tough love approach that humbly submitting to the Word of God in sacrificial duty demanded of them, in order to keep a brother in the household of God.

It is at this point I would like to take a slight detour into something that was touched on in the Passover service we had in the central time zone this year.

Each one of us has the sacrificial duty to do whatever it takes to help each other stay within the household of God. As we have seen, Paul made a clear distinction between judgment that was taking place in the world (that is none of our business now), and the judgment that is taking place within the household of God.

The church at Corinth was a mess. I Corinthians 5 points out their biggest problem that was stunting their growth in continuing in the sanctification process toward holiness. They would rather let the leaven of one man's sin infect the Body of Christ, than sacrifice and do their duty in sacrificial love for God and their brother.

Brethren, it is hard to do what they should have done. It may seem strange, but pride and arrogance often rears its ugly head in tolerance! This world's tolerance is most often just a prideful exercise of enmity against the laws of God to live your own magnanimous way!

Their failure to perform their sacrificial duty was just as destructive to the purity of the Body of Christ! They too were guilty of letting the dead carnal man make their decisions for them rather than the new mind of Christ that must be in them. They all had privileged positions, as do we, to let sacrificial duty take precedence over the vain and foolish pride of the carnal man, who should be dead!

They were failing to live up to their responsibility to keep a brother in the household of God, where he had been placed. We need to consider how well are we each working to help our brothers stay in the household of God. Could we be causing any to stumble so severely that they will never come back, because we would not humbly submit to God's Word to help them out?

We will be looking at something that a number of you have already heard a few days ago at Passover in this area of the country, but I think it bears repeating at this point for all of us to consider during these days of Unleavened Bread.

**Exodus 12:21-24** Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a

bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever.”

We of course have read these scriptures a number of times. They are a clear message of what our responsibility is once we have been placed within the household of God: We are to stay within it in service to the Body.

But I would like all of us to consider what we have just read in I Corinthians 5 just how important it is that we dearly hold on to our brethren in the Body of Christ to help each other stay in the house.

In the “Don’t Go Out of the House” sermon John Ritenbaugh gave in 1998 [Tape #335B] he said:

There are Jewish scholars who insist that originally the Passover lamb was slain right in the door, not out in the field somewhere. It was slain right in the door. To back up what they say, there is ancient art that depicts lambs having their jugular vein cut right in the door of a house. Then its blood was not caught in a basin, like you might think that you put a basin under there and catch the blood. No. The Jewish scholars say it was not done that way, but rather the blood was allowed to run out of the lamb's neck right onto the threshold of the door where it puddled. Then the hyssop was taken, dipped into the blood that had puddled in the threshold of the door, and it was then splashed onto the doorposts and to the lintel. It is very interesting that the Hebrew word for basin and threshold is exactly the same. They are one and the same word.

I want you to keep this in mind, this strikingly vivid picture of the blood puddled in the doorway, and then being splashed upon the lintel and doorposts to protect the people within that house.

**Hebrews 10:11-14** And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 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.

**Hebrews 10:19-31** Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, 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. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Brethren, with consideration of what the apostle Paul wrote there in I Corinthians 5 regarding judgment inside and outside of the Body of Christ—inside or outside of the household of God—do we really think we should not do everything we can for one another in faithful submission to God's Word

in order to keep one another in the house, and not stomp out the door with the blood of Christ under foot? It is a fearful thing to consider allowing our beloved brothers or sisters to fall into a final judgment of God because we were too proud and self-centered to humble ourselves in the sacrificial duty of our calling.

With this in mind, I want read a letter that Queen Elizabeth's grandmother, Queen Mary, sent to her upon the death of Elizabeth's Father, King George. It is good lesson for us who are in the privileged position God has given us through the new life in Jesus Christ for our mutual duties within our privileged positions in love for each other, considering our own work with Jesus Christ.

Queen Mary wrote:

I know your pain in the loss of your father and my son is as painful as mine! But put sentiment aside! Duty calls. The grief for your father extends far and wide. Your people will need your strength and leadership. I have seen three great monarchies brought down by their failure to separate personal indulgences from duty. You must not allow yourself to make similar mistakes while you mourn your father. You must mourn someone else: Elizabeth Mountbatten, for she has now been replaced by another person: Elizabeth Regina.

The two Elizabeths will frequently be in conflict with one another. The fact is the crown must always win.

Turn to Colossians 3.

**Colossians 3:1-14** If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is

coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

The Corinthians were in such a bad state, that by the time that Paul got through admonishing them in I Corinthians 5, he had to come back with another letter in II Corinthians and admonished them to bring their brother back into the group, because he had repented of his sins, and they were so hard-hearted and proud that they could not do it. They had failed to follow their duty as opposed to the Philippians who were a more mature church. The Corinthians were a mess. They did not understand the most basic thing as love for their brother. That is what Paul is trying to get across to them.

Just as Elizabeth Mountbatten was no more, for she had for all intents and purposes of service in self-sacrificial duty before God, been replaced by another—Elizabeth the Queen—we too have put on a new man through a death and resurrection with Christ, as the elect of God for service in self-sacrificial duty. We are putting on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another, forgiving one another, as Christ forgave each one of us.

I am not trying to put down the Corinthian church. They had a lot of things pressing upon them. And so do we. But we certainly do not want to be like them in the manner they did things in pride and foolishness.



It takes self-sacrifice to exercise the godly love for one another that will help us stay in the Body together, that the leavened old man be put out, and the unleavened man remain, growing to the perfection that is in Jesus Christ.

Please turn with me now to another very familiar scripture that very clearly sets apart the elect of God at this time from the world outside the house.

**I Peter 4:1-8** Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

**I Peter 4:12-17** Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Please turn with me back again to that scripture I mentioned at the beginning as I read from Martin's essay on "The Scepter and the Kingdom of God."

**John 20:11-17** But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"

Please turn to Hebrews 1. As you are turning there, and before we read that passage, I want to tell you that Psalm 60, as well as Psalm 108 both refer to Judah as God's scepter.

**Hebrews 1:8-14** 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." And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." 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?

Jesus Christ was resurrected by His Father late this very Sabbath afternoon 1,989 years ago. And 1,989 years ago tomorrow morning He appeared before His Father's throne bearing His scepter of righteousness, the scepter of the first of the firstfruits of the new creation who will hold each other together in the house in sacrificial duty to one another putting aside the old man. He held the scepter of the firstfruits.

Please turn to the book of Esther.

**Esther 4:11** "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days."

**Esther 5:1-3** Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter. And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!"

We have been called before the very throne of God, and into the household of the King, Jesus Christ. And He is holding out His scepter to the firstfruits of His righteousness as we boldly come before Him. He will give us everything we need to complete our duty to help one another to prepare for His return to stay in the household of God for eternity.

So, we must put aside our foolish pride, and love one another according to the Word of God, doing exactly as He has said, doing our duty in spite of ourselves, putting away the old man, and living the unleavened lives He expects from us always.