

The Third Filter

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Jesus invited three of his disciples to join him inside the home of Jairus, where he brought the man's 12 year old daughter back to life from the dead. Jesus had already been criticized for healing on the Sabbath, perhaps even by Jairus who was a leader in the Capernaum synagogue. He had been criticized for forgiving the sins of the paralytic man let down into probably Peter's home, through the roof. The church leaders sent from Jerusalem to Capernaum to check out this new prophet from Nazareth had criticized how he permitted his disciples to harvest grain to eat on a Sabbath morning. Now he brings this child back from the dead for her parents but then he does something very confusing. He tells these witnesses of this incredible miracle... don't tell anyone. Mark's account tells us: *And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.*

Isn't that a strange approach to effective preaching? Wouldn't the publishing of his capacity to return a child from the dead validate his legitimacy and possibly reduce the criticizing? Why would Jesus **invite** three of his disciples to witness this incredible miracle and then require them not to share what he invited them to witness?

This policy seems counter-intuitive. The immediate family of Jesus, his half brothers, expected just the opposite behavior. We read in John how they baited him about attending the feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem.

John 7:2-5 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. ³ His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. ⁴ For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. ⁵ For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Doesn't their reasoning seem logical? If a man seeks to be known openly why would he do amazing things in secret? Consider how Jesus fed the 5,000.. Thousands of men ...and women and children, that had followed him into a desolate place. He taught them about his Father's truths and principles, what is repeatedly defined as the gospel of the Kingdom of God. They became tired and hungry. So he feeds them -all- from five small loaves of bread and a couple fish, with far more left over than he started with. What would that attendance have been for this preaching effort if they had advertized in advance that not only would a highly entertaining miracle be performed at this preaching event but everyone would get free food. I would imagine the attendance would have been a lot greater than only 5,000 men. Isn't that what **we** would have done? But that isn't what Jesus did. He didn't preach the gospel of the Kingdom the

way everyone expected he should. The very next day after the food miracle some of these men, these members of the enlightened community that were already in a covenant relationship with God... hunt him down in Capernaum, not understanding how he got there since they saw his disciples leaving for Capernaum without him in the boat in which he had arrived. They bait him for more free food and another miracle, challenging him to be greater than Moses who fed the Ecclesia in the wilderness with manna 6 days a week. Jesus tells them they're pursuing the wrong food, that they will have to eat his flesh and drink his blood if they want eternal life. Naturally they are appalled at such a thought. They didn't understand his intentionally cryptic comments. Eating human flesh and drinking blood? Blood consumption of any sort whatsoever had been forbidden since Noah exited the ark and ... cannibalism. Jesus could have easily explained what he meant to these members of the enlightened community - the Ecclesia of that generation, people like us. We are also the enlightened community in a formal covenant relationship with Christ's Father. But Jesus never explains his highly confusing statements. This intentionally confusing communication pattern even drove his disciples away... We read in John 6:66 *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* Rather than explain the sense in which Jesus meant about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, Jesus let these Brethren in the Ecclesia of that generation... just walk away. What an odd way to preach the truth within the body of the enlightened community, within the Ecclesia.

But, that's exclusively where he had been directed to preach... within the enlightened community, within the Ecclesia, to those who were already in a covenant relationship with his Father... to people just like us. The Jewish people were the Christadelphians of that generation. But Jesus discouraged reporting the very incidents that would validate his message to that Judean Ecclesia. Jesus even commanded his disciples, when he sent them out to preach, not to go to the Gentiles... but only to the Israelites... only to the people who were already familiar with Yahweh and the promises to the Patriarchs... only to the Ecclesia... not to unenlightened pagan worshippers but to the enlightened community.

There is an answer to why Jesus wouldn't promote himself on the basis of his miraculous powers and why he spoke cryptically, requiring a lot deeper thought than most of these children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were willing to invest. There is a third filter in the development of the saints. There is more to a permanent relationship with the Creator of the universe than simply enlightenment and a formal covenant relationship ... such as circumcision or baptism. Those are the first two filters, or development stages of the saints... enlightenment and a covenant relationship. Enlightenment is a divine filter that separates out specific people to a required participation in Christ's judgment. The unenlightened will not participate in that judgment. They perish forever when they die, experiencing both the 1st and 2nd death when they expire. The enlight-

ened only die temporarily when the body expires, as we will have to be raised to face the son of God to determine if we will participate forever in the Creator's plan for creation or not. The second filter is that covenant relationship. In the previous dispensation of the progressive divine plan, that covenant relationship ritual was primarily done 8 days from birth through the act of circumcision and only on the male gender. In our dispensation of the divine plan that covenant relationship is accomplished through baptism... the 2nd divine filter. But that isn't enough. There is an additional refining or filtering process within the enlightened community. This is the third divinely appointed filter... beyond separating the enlightened from the unenlightened and then separating out those who want to pursue a formal and committed relationship with the Creator... beyond those two filters - 'that' is the third separation stage.... the third filter... the refinement stage that will not be fully accomplished until the judgment when the sheep are separated from the goats at Christ's judgment.

This three stage filtering pattern is endlessly demonstrated in the subtle shadows of our Creator's expressions all through scripture, and even in the features of creation, as that is simply another avenue of our Creator's testimony. The Bible is God's written testimony. Creation is God's spoken testimony, as that is exactly how that all came to be. God verbally commanded everything into existence or into position, with the single exception of mankind... as we were crafted. Both of these avenues of divine testimony - the Bible & creation - agree perfectly at every layer of examination... from the vastness of the construction of the universe right down to atomic structure.

Our goal is to be chosen to become the immortal priests of the restored Kingdom of God. Therefore the procedure for becoming a mortal priest in the first Kingdom of God should demonstrate or project a pattern for how to become an immortal priest in the restored Kingdom of God. Just as the only people who qualified as priests in that first Kingdom were the sons of the High Priest so the only ones who will qualify as immortal priests in the restored Kingdom will have to be the children of the immortal High Priest, Jesus Christ... being born again through him into his Father's image and likeness. Therefore that qualification procedure for becoming a priest in that First Kingdom Age should be of very specific interest to each of us on a personal level.

The unique ordination procedure for inducting that mortal priesthood of the 1st Kingdom Age required a three stage blood application for each priest... dabbing blood from the ram of ordination, a peace offering, onto three parts of their body... progressively. 1st - the tip of the right ear, used for hearing and representing the 1st filtering stage... enlightenment... hearing the word of life- which is what blood represents, but not necessarily choosing it. The ear represents a passive action.

The 2nd ordination stage was to place that blood on the right thumb, representing the 2nd filtering stage - grasping or choosing that word of life... like baptism. Our opposing thumb is used for grasping... representing what we choose. It is highly appropriate that a marriage ring is placed on a finger of our hand. We have chosen a bride or a husband for life. A man asks for a woman's 'hand' in marriage, that she might choose him. But that second blood application isn't the last step. It isn't the last divine filter, just as baptism, our stage of choosing the word of life is not our last filter for divine acceptability.

Then the blood was placed on the large right toe of the priest applicant. Our large toes are the rudders of our bodies, allowing us to direct our walk. If we lose a large toe we will have to shift our weight to try to walk straight. It is much more difficult. This is the third filter... our pursuit of the word of life... our walk in our faith. The sons of Aaron would not have qualified as mortal priests without that third blood application. Those who are baptized into the truth will not qualify for immortal priesthood without the performance of that third necessary issue, that 3rd stage in the filtering process for divine acceptability... demonstrating our enlightenment and our choice by a divine direction and focus in our life, pursuing that knowledge of the glory of our Creator that will soon begin to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Another example of these three filtering stages - as the repetition of divine patterns is an emphasis tool another example of these 3 filtering stages that are necessary for an eternally continuing participation in our Creator's plan would be the design of the Tabernacle in that 1st Kingdom. That Tabernacle, the first of eventually four temples, is a shadow projection of the full development of Christ and the saints. We want to be that immortal temple, that divine sanctuary where our God will live within us, as Jesus promises his disciples at the last supper... declaring there are many mansions or abiding places in his Father's house and that he goes to prepare a place for them but he will return and when he does he will take his disciples unto himself... indicating how those chosen at the judgment will join him in nature, becoming one of those abiding places of God... becoming a component of the divine sanctuary, the antitypical temple.

Just as we have 3 filtering stages that we have to progress through to be chosen by Christ, so there were 3 divinely appointed doorways that acted as filtering agents in that Tabernacle design... the 1st was the entrance into the courtyard with its 3 components: the bronze altar, the bronze laver and the Tabernacle structure itself. The courtyard parallels the enlightenment stage, the 1st filter in approaching the Creator of heaven and earth. The entire enlightened community could enter this courtyard.

The second doorway was the entrance into the Holy Place in the Tabernacle where the priests had daily responsibilities in relation to the 3 articles in that 2nd stage... the

golden lampstand, the golden table of shewbread and the golden altar of incense. The entire enlightened community did not have access to this 2nd stage, just the priests. And if the priests did not first wash in the laver before entering that 2nd doorway, God promised they would die. This is the 2nd stage, the 2nd filter - baptism, cleansing ourselves, choosing the way of God's priesthood once we are enlightened.

The third stage was the passage through the veil into the Most Holy Chamber, where the glory of God rested between the cherubim on the ark of the Covenant. Although there was only one article in that Most Holy Chamber it had received three progressive deposits... the incorruptible manna, the stones of the covenant with those 10 commandments and the High Priest's rod of resurrection... three holiness stages emphasized with 3 components in each stage. Only the High Priest was allowed into that 3rd holiness stage. Our 3rd stage in our hopeful approach to our God - the qualification to pass through that veil that was ripped from heaven to earth immediately upon the death of our Messiah.... is the performance of His will, to understand, embrace and pursue God's plan for creation, which includes men and women inheriting His image and likeness. It is this 3rd stage, this 3rd filtering procedure that is so extremely significant in our goal to be chosen as the immortal priests of the restored Kingdom of God. This is a very difficult stage.

Historically many within the enlightened community have not performed this third stage very well. The introduction of that first Kingdom Age certainly demonstrated that understanding with all but 2 of the more than 600,000 Ecclesial Brethren who left Egypt actually entering the Promised Land across the Jordan River... only 2 men. The same was true in the generation bridging the end of that 1st Kingdom Age and the beginning of the Ecclesial Age when over one million of the enlightened community that were in covenant relationship with Yahweh were either killed or enslaved by the Romans. They had completed the first two stages... knowing Yahweh, knowing His laws and living in His Kingdom. They had entered into a covenant relationship through circumcision, but they failed when it came to the 3rd filter... the application of that enlightenment in their lives. They were so unfamiliar with the divine principles that most of them rejected the son of God, their own Messiah.

One wonders how that could have been. That generation, that sister generation of ours, should have been prepared. Like ourselves they knew the Messiah was about to appear, due to the 70 weeks prophecy in Daniel and the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy about John the Baptist... just like we know the Messiah will be coming back during our generation, due to the resurrection of the nation of Israel... the national firstborn son of God... as Moses was instructed to tell Pharaoh. How was it that they could successfully pass through the first two necessary filters but not that 3rd divine filter of properly pursuing and executing those divine truths and principles? The answer has a great

deal to do with how Jesus presented himself to that enlightened community that were members of that temporary Kingdom of God.

Jesus presented himself and his teachings employing his Father's educational pattern by using a very distinct filtering effect. The preaching of Jesus to the Ecclesia was not based on a desire for quantity. That filtering procedure was all about developing quality... not quantity. Jesus demanded them to 'think' and not just react instinctively. His preaching procedure constructed a mental obstacle course between himself and those he taught. This was the **third** filter. It was intentionally difficult to understand what Jesus was communicating. It wasn't easy and wasn't supposed to be easy.

If it was always easy to understand exactly what God wanted then our Brothers Korah, Dathan and Abiram and most of their families would not have been divinely judged in that earthquake executed with surgical precision. If it wasn't difficult to understand what God wanted, then those 14,500 Ecclesial members may not have died in the plague the next day when they accused Moses of murdering those wonderful and highly respected members of the Christadelphian Ecclesia just because they refused to accept the idea of a priesthood restricted to only Aaron's family, the man who had cast the idolatrous golden calf. If it was not so difficult to understand what God wants then perhaps the Sanhedrin wouldn't have thought they were saving the Christadelphian Ecclesia from a Roman persecution by conspiring to kill Jesus, because he had brought Lazarus back to life after being dead for 4 days. We aren't finished with understanding our Creator just because we are enlightened to the degree we qualify to choose to enter into a covenant relationship with the Creator of the universe. There is a third filter, the 'refining' stage.

These three divinely appointed filtering stages for the determination of those who will bear the image and likeness of the Creator for eternity are subtly imbedded in countless shadows all throughout our Heavenly Father's communications. There were the 3 evening and the 3 morning rituals performed daily by the priests... 1) replenishing the lampstand - obviously representing enlightenment; 2) burning the incense which Psalms and Revelations both define as representing prayer... which would identify the stage beyond enlightenment, choosing to submit ourselves humbly to God in prayer... and 3) the third evening & morning ritual was the daily burnt offering, which God tells us through Hosea 6 is fulfilled in the pursuit of the knowledge of God. Just as there were 3 night and day rituals for the priesthood, so Jesus defines his death as lasting 3 days and 3 nights, in exactly the same pattern of his crucifixion, which lasted a very fast 6 hours, with light during the first 3 hours and darkness during the last 3 hours. We see the same 3 filters in the divine procedure for pursuing forgiveness in the laws of that 1st Kingdom of God. The blood of the bullock for the sin offering of both the High Priest and the nation had 3 progressive stations where that blood had to be applied for

a total of 12 applications, representing -of course- the community of the enlightened. The blood was first spattered 7 times on the veil, which Hebrews 10 tells us represents the flesh of Christ. John prophesies that the denial of the flesh of Christ would be the signature doctrine of the antichrist system. This is the first filtering stage, enlightenment. We have to understand the divine principles and truths bound up in that flesh of Christ that was crucified and we recognize in both baptism and partaking of the broken memorial bread, representing his body - his flesh.

Secondly in that sin offering ritual procedure the blood had to be smeared onto the 4 horns of the incense altar, again representing the prayers of the saints... that 2nd filter of choosing to submit ourselves to God and also pursuing a repentance that has to come with enlightenment.

However the 3rd blood station in this sin offering ritual was at the bronze altar in the courtyard. This was the 12th application of blood that was poured out at the base of that Christ altar. That was not simply spattered or smeared. That remaining volume of blood was poured out completely at the foot of the altar. This was the ritual for forgiveness of sins for the High Priest and for the nation... projecting those same 3 filters: 1) enlightenment 2) the choosing of God's righteousness by submitting ourselves to Him in prayer and 3) the focused and dedicated pursuit of God's right-ness in everything we do, say and think.

The divine shadows of these 3 filters go on and on and on all through scripture and creation... such as the 3 distinct maturing trimesters in the birth of a child. We want to be born again. We have 3 trimesters to our development as well... 1) enlightenment, 2) choosing our Creator over ourselves and mankind, and then our 3rd trimester in pursuing the knowledge of the right-ness of God along with demonstrating that divine righteousness in every facet of our life... so that we might be born again ... into the divine nature and inherit the name of our Creator.

Despite what a number of our enlightened community currently try to tell us, we are not yet chosen. No one is chosen for enlightenment. We are the ones who do the choosing in that 2nd stage. Our being chosen comes at Christ's judgment... when we hopefully pass beyond that 3rd filter. We are told very clearly in 1 Timothy 2:3-4 *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* Since we are told that God would prefer all men to be saved, if we insist that He actually selectively chooses out men and women to be enlightened & saved at this time then we are declaring God to be a hypocrite... claiming he supposedly wants everyone but really only chooses a very few-us. We are the ones who have to choose Him at this point. He won't do the choosing until the judgment, when our 3rd filtering stage is finished.

Those of us who have chosen God, been baptized into the family name of the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit... we are now in that 3rd filtering stage, that refinement stage based on developing quality and not quantity... this refinement stage has historically been a major obstacle to the enlightened community.

Our point of recalibration is right here... the bread and the wine... & our Bibles. This is where Jesus Christ is. Jesus is still here after memorial service is over. We then open our Bibles and try to listen to Jesus and his Father and try to understand those intentionally challenging expressions that are a feature of this third filtering process that is focused on quality and not quantity... during Sunday School... and during the week at midweek class. I don't know how it is in your ecclesia, but in many Ecclesias it is so disappointing to see so many walk away from Jesus after memorial service has ended, just like the disciples who refused to make the effort to understand why they had to eat his flesh and drink his blood. They just walked away. *Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*

Sunday School & midweek Bible class & the daily readings are perfect applications of the lesson of the daily burnt offering, that third evening & morning ritual for which God said through Hosea that He wanted the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

We need to beware that third filter. It has been a significant tripping point for the enlightened community for thousands of years. We are the last generation of the Ecclesial Age. We don't know when our judge will return to demand our presence, when we will have to give account for every idle word and every decision we have ever made. We should be improving, growing all the time. That is part of the creational testimony of the Creator... if everything around us is not growing... then it is dead or dying. We have to bear fruit. That 3rd filter is all about developing spiritual quality. Do we share our Creator's vision for creation, to fill the earth with the knowledge of His Glory?