The Weakness of the Flesh

(Go To Meeting)

Albert Jones—December 18, 2020

I've been thinking about this for a while, and realizing that we are enter into that time when we start thinking about the spring Holy Day. Even though the months are cold and dark, we look for ward to the Holy Days season.

We do that with study and deep inward reflection through the winter months. That's what I've been doing, and this subject has been heavy on my mind. That is the state that we're in, this fleshly being that God created us as, and just what we are. What is the purpose for which He created us? How to get from here to that great and beautiful plan that He has for us as we think about it, and all strive for it?

We're making that journey in this fleshly body that God has given us, so let's learn a little bit about God's creation here, and how He made us and what we are, both without and with Him, and what it's going to take for us to be successful to get into the Kingdom of God, and the partnership that God has with us to make that happen.

Genesis 1:26: And God... [both the Father and Jesus Christ together] ...said, 'Let <u>Us</u> make man in Our image, after <u>Our</u> likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth.' And God created man in His *own* image..." (vs 26-27).

This is after God did a lot of creating over that period of time with the animals, birds and fish; reforming and reshaping the earth so that it could receive life. Of course, we also know from the Scriptures that the entirety of the heavens, as we know them, were created by God, as well. *All for a purpose!*

Verse 27: "And God created man in His *own* image in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female."

Genesis 2:7: "Then the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

So, we have this created being made of a substance formed from the dust. Then God took that same substance and made them male and female.

Verse 20: "And Adam gave names to all the livestock, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field, but there was not found a helper

compatible for Adam. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall over Adam, and he slept. And He took one of his ribs, and *afterward* closed up the flesh underneath. Then the LORD God made the rib (which He had taken out of the man) into a woman, and He brought her to the man" (vs 20-22).

The point here that I'm making is that we are cut from the same material. So, if God made man from the dust of the earth, he then took that material and formed from it a woman to be a part of him.

Verse 23: "And Adam said, 'This *is* now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. *She* shall be called Woman because *she* was taken out of Man.' For this reason shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (vs 23-24).

Now you have male and female, and there is a difference between the way God created man, and the way God created woman, and the purpose for which He did, despite what the world says or thinks in the current times in which we live!

We know that all things were created and came into being by the Word of God.

John 1:1—lays the foundation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one thing that was created came into being without Him" (vs 1-3).

There was the Word, and the Word was together with God working together on the plan and intention.

Verse 4: "In Him [the Word] was life, and the Life was the Light of men."

So, of all God's created beings and creatures, man is very unique in that relationship with God!

God said, regarding man, that He was making man in His image, in the image of God! That has great impact in terms of what God is doing. So, man was created for a purpose uniquely different from any other created thing. All other things were put under the feet of man.

In the end, if we are to fulfill our entire purpose, even the angels will be subjected to the judgment of those born into God's Family. David had a perspective on this. He thought about this.

Psalm 8:1: "O LORD our Lord, how

excellent is Your name in all the earth! You have set Your glory above the heavens! Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have ordained strength because of Your adversaries, to silence the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, "what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him?" (vs 1-4).

What are we in terms of God's purpose for us? *There's so much in these created beings!* Then we see that we do have limitations.

Verse 5: "For You have made him a little lower than God and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the birds of heaven, the fish of the sea, and all that pass through the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!" (vs 5-9).

Psalm 144:1: "Blessed is the LORD my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. He is my loving kindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield and He in Whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me. O LORD, what is man that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him? Man is like a breath... [the reality of our existence] ... his days are like a shadow that passes away" (vs 1-4).

These are some of the limitations that we possess. Yes, we are limited!

Genesis 2:7: "Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

When you think about just the raw material that we were make from, we're just a hunk of clay! We became living, sanctioned beings! What are we as living, fleshly beings? We say quite often that we re always striving to overcome our fleshly, carnal nature. Yes, we are flesh and there are some aspects of flesh that just automatically puts us in a weak state.

It just shows that we are less than complete without God's final ingredient. Here you have the being created and has the ability to breathe. But there are two additional ingredients that God gave that being as he was formed and breathing into him the breath of life:

- 1. spirit in man
- 2. Ĥoly Spirit

These ingredients are from God, our Creator! They are from that Holy perfect righteous Being Who made us in His image for a purpose!

Let's think a moment about what we are. What are we truly *without* God?

Isaiah 45:9: "Woe to him who fights with the One Who formed him, a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth!.... [pieces of clay among pieces of clay is what we are] ...Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' Or your work, 'He has no hands'? Woe to him who says to his father, 'What are you begetting?' Or to the woman, 'What are you laboring over?' Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and the One who formed him, 'Ask Me of things that are to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands. I have made the earth and created man upon it; I with My hands have stretched out the heavens; and all their host have I commanded'" (vs 9-12). What is the purpose?

Isaiah 64:7: "And *there is* no one who calls upon Your name, who stirs up himself to take hold of You, for You have hidden Your face from us, and have consumed us away because of our iniquities. But now, O LORD, <u>You are our Father</u>; we are the clay, and <u>You are our potter</u>; and we all are the work of Your hand" (vs 7-8).

God is doing something specifically grand here!

Jeremiah 18:4: "And the vessel that he made of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter..."

I was thinking about this, and I don't want the vessel that God is creating in me to be set before it's ready. I'm thankful that He is able to pull it off the spindle, pound it down and reshape into something that He can use.

"...so he made it again into another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*. Then the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'O house of Israel, can I not do with you *even* as this potter?' says the LORD. 'Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hands, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy *it*; if that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them" (vs 4-8).

So, there's a relationship here that God can mold and shape, and bring His vessel to a point of change. This is a part of the way that He works in our lives. Molding and shaping us into the end product that He needs to have in His Kingdom.

Romans 9:20: "Yes, indeed, O man, who are you to answer against God? Shall the thing that is formed say to the one who formed *it*, 'Why did you make me this way?' Or doesn't the potter have authority over the clay to make from the same lump of clay one vessel unto honor, and another vessel unto dishonor? And who dares to question His purpose if God, willing to show His wrath and to make known His power, chose in much long-suffering to put up with the vessels of wrath, which were created for destruction; in order that He might make known the riches of His glory unto the vessels of mercy, which He prepared before for glory, those of us whom He also called, not from among the Jews only, but also from among the Gentiles?" (vs 20-24).

God's plan includes <u>all</u> of His creation! We see that God has made man as dust, and we live as houses of clay/

Job 4:19: "How much less *in* those who live in houses of clay, whose foundation *is* in the dust, who are crushed before the moth?

That's a pretty succinct summation of what we are. But we are not meant to be fragile like that alone!

Genesis 3:19: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until <u>you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.</u>"

1-Corinthians 15:47—explains in great perfection this principle: "The first man is of the earth—made of dust. The second Man is the Lord from heaven.:

We see that there's a transition that's going to occur between what we were made and what we are to become!

Verse 48: "As is the one made of dust, so also are all those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly *One*, so also are all those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *One*" (vs 48-49).

So, there is something out in front that God is moving us toward. This is His work that He is doing in us. We are participants *willingly!* It's our choice to be a part of what God is doing in our lives! We have chosen to follow Him; to commit ourselves to Him! We believe in Him; we have faith in God!

Our lives are demonstrating this every day! Just because we believe, does that perfect us? *No!* Not by itself; it takes another ingredient!

Yes, man is flesh, and flesh can be destroyed; it is subject to death. It carries within it the law of sin and death! Brethren, there is more to it

than just that! There is more to it than just that part in terms of what we see and maybe even what we hear.

The majority of mankind today is unaware of God's purpose for them; His purpose for creating man as flesh.

Philippians 3:1—Paul writes: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. Indeed, for me to write the same things to you is not troublesome, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, who serve God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in the flesh; though I might also have reason to trust in the flesh. If any other thinks he has *cause to* trust in *the* flesh, I *have* much more... [Paul gives his credentials]: ...Circumcised on the eighth day; of the race of Israel, from the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; with respect to law, a Pharisee; with respect to zeal, persecuting the Church; with respect to righteousness that is in law, blameless." $(vs_1-6).$

Verse 7: "Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ."

There is something greater here than just existing in this fleshly body, breathing air and having this ability to walk the earth. No matter what our state, whatever state we find ourselves in. Yes, God has created us in His image and made us male and female. Why has He made us like this? God is seeking something here and He speaks to it:

Malachi 2:13: "And this is a second thing you have done, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, weeping and groaning, so that He does not regard the offering and no longer receives it with delight from your hand. Yet, you say, 'Why?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously—yet, she is your companion and your covenant wife. And did He not make you one? Yet, the vestige of the Spirit is in him. And why one? That He might seek a Godly seed...." (vs 13-15).

There is something perfected in the union that man has with the wife similar to the union that Christ has with the Church.

"...Therefore, guard your spirit, and do not act treacherously *against* the wife of your youth. The LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'I hate divorce—and the covering of violence with one's garment,' says the LORD of hosts. <u>'Therefore, guard your spirit, and do not act treacherously'</u>" (vs 15-16).

There is something special in that union

once it has occurred. The ingredients of spirit and Holy Spirit is made possible. The first one was given at creation—*spirit in man,* which gave mankind the ability to:

- reason
- comprehend
- to have consciousness
- to have a relationship with God

There is no other physical creature created that can have that relationship. As much as we attribute a lot of attributes to our pets, they were created differently from mankind. There's no Scripture in the Bible that ever says that anything in the animal kingdom has the ability to inherit eternal life in God's Family, a member of God's Family. We humans are unique to that!

1-Corinthians 7:13: "And *if* a woman has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to dwell with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband; otherwise, your children would be unclean, **but now they are Holy**" (vs 13-14)—which is what God is seeking!

This state that we are in as flesh is, indeed, temporary! Without the spirit in man combined with the Spirit of God, the full potential of man will never be realized. Man by himself hasn't the ability to live this perfect life. Even if man had that ability, we have to remember that the thing that earned us death—when we inherited the law of sin and death within us—occurred in the Garden of Eden!

There is something else we have to look to, to save us from that.

Psalm 73:21: For thus my heart was grieved and <u>I was pricked in my reins</u>.... [the spirit of man] ...So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. Nevertheless, I am always with You; You have held me by my right hand. You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (vs 21-24).

Recognizing our utter helplessness without God, for the infinite possibility with Him!

Verse 25: "Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You I desire none upon earth."

There is no one to rely on more dependently than God. With God as our partner, our strength, our Father and our elder Brother functioning as our High Priest, our Advocate, our Propitiation for sin and every atoning Sacrifice for us.

Verse 26: "My flesh and my heart fail... [flesh will always fail you] ...but God is the Rock of my heart and my portion forever. For lo, those who

are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all who go a whoring from You. And me, <u>it is good for me to draw near to God</u>... [in all things] ...I have made the LORD God my refuge, that I may declare all Your works" (vs 26-28).

This is not through just speaking about the greatness of God, this is to be exemplified in what God has created in us:

- the Light that He has created in us
- the perfection
- the Godliness

that is being formed within us by God, not by our own acts!

Without the spirit in man combined with the Spirit of God—the Light of God shining forth His wisdom; obedience to His Word, Laws, statutes, judgments and precepts; His instruction and His way—we are inevitably going to go astray!

Let's see what happened to mankind on the other side of the Flood, who found themselves in this state:

Genesis 6:3: "And the LORD said, 'My Spirit... [the Spirit of God] ...shall not always strive with man in his going astray, for he is but flesh, and yet, his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." In other words, mankind is limited! At that time, at best, 120 years.

Verse 5: "And the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." That has to be a miserable state!

Verse 7: "And the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the crawling thing, and the fowl of the air; for I repent that I have made them."

Verse 8: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

Verse 12: "And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me... [He had reached that point] ... for the earth is filled with violence through them. And, behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (vs 12-13). Then God goes on to instruct Noah to make an ark.

"... The end of all flesh has come before Me..." This is what happened pre-Flood, and we are headlong diving off the tallest cliff right back into this state of corruption today! In our society you can see it!

- up is down
- wrong is right
- right is wrong

Mankind is swiftly moving away from God! God will act! He has prophesied that it would be in this condition. We need some help in this human state that we are in. Where will that help come from?

Let's get into the part where we all have been given the privilege of having insight into. We're not just called to escape death, we're called as a part of God's grand design and plan!

Who can save us? This state of being was described by Paul!

Romans 7:14: For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, having been sold *as a slave* under sin. Because what I am working out myself, I do not know. For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do. But if I am doing what I do not desire to do, I agree with the Law that *it is* good" (vs 14-16).

The Law defined that for me and allowed me to see it and know that it was wrong.

That's why the Law is so great and perfect!

Verse 17: "So then, I am no longer working it out myself; rather, it is sin that is dwelling within me; because I fully understand that there is not dwelling within me—that is, within my fleshly being—any good. For the desire to do good is present within me; but how to work out that which is good, I do not find. For the good that I desire to do, I am not doing; but the evil that I do not desire to do, this I am doing. But if I do what I do not desire to do, I am no longer working it out myself, but sin that is dwelling within me" (vs 17-20)—the law of sin and death, which is in each and every one of us!

Verse 21: "Consequently, I find this law *in my members*, that when I desire to do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law within my own members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin that is within my own members" (vs 21-23).

Paul just describes the state of the flesh that we're in!

Verse 24: O what a wretched man I am! Who shall save me from the body of this death? I thank God for His salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.... [that's the answer] ...Because of this, on the one hand, I myself serve the Law of God with my mind; but on the other hand, with the flesh, I serve the law of sin" (vs 24-25).

So, there's this law, and Christ and the Father has the solution. Here we are made fleshly beings, created and made in the image of God. Christ—the One Who was the Word—made us; all things were made through Him. So, in order for us to be rescued from the state that we're in, it requires a payment. Christ and the Father have worked that out.

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth."

John is really pointing out that the answer to all that we need is here.

John 17:19: "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified in *Your* Truth. I do not pray for these only, but also **for those who shall believe in Me through their word...** [that's us; we've read the Word of God and we believe in faith] ...that they all may be one, even **as You, Father,** are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, in order that the world may believe that You did send Me" (vs 19-21).

Jesus Christ truly is the answer! The fleshly things do not earn proper standing with God, no matter how perfect they are.

Romans 7:1: "Are you ignorant, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know law) that the Law rules over a man for as long a time as he may live?"

It talks about the marriage law; v 2: "For the woman who is married is bound by law to the husband as long as he is living; but if the husband should die, she is released from the law that bound her to the husband. So then, if she should marry another man as long as the husband is living, she shall be called an adulteress; but if the husband should die she is free from the law that bound her to the husband, so that she is no longer an adulteress if she is married to another man. In the same way, my brethren, you also were made dead to the marriage law of the Old Covenant by the Body of Christ in order for you to be married to another, Who was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God. For as long as we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were through the law, were working within our own members to bring forth fruit unto death" (vs 2-5).

Verse 6: "But now we have been released from the law, because we have died to that in which we were held so that we might serve in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What then shall we say? Is the Law sin? MAY IT NEVER BE! But I had not known sin except through the Law..." (vs 6-7).

That's the purpose of the Law, to define sin! If you want to know what sin is, understand and know the Law!

"...Furthermore, I would not have been conscious of lust, except *that* the Law said, 'You shall not covet'" (v 7).

The Law did its job and now I know that coveting is sin, because the Law says that *you shall not covet!* God ordained a perfect righteous Law that defines what is right and wrong.

Verse 8: "But sin, having grasped an opportunity by the commandment, worked out within me every *kind of* lust because apart from Law, sin *was* dead. For I was once alive without law; but after the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (vs 8-9).

This is symbolically when the Spirit allows us to understand and the Law describes what sin is, we repent of it. Then we die through the symbolic death of baptism.

Verse 14: "For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, having been sold *as a slave* under sin; because what I am working out myself, I do not know. For what I do not desire to do, this I do; moreover, what I hate, this *is what* I do" (vs 14-15).

Who will deliver us from this body? It takes another body; it takes a perfect sacrifice! Jesus Christ and God the Father have already worked it out.

Contrasting the fleshy body that we're in, which has earned it's end of bondage to sin and death, we are ransomed by a Savior, Who was given to ransom the world. As we see the hope and the salivation for us as fleshly beings having now been begotten through the Spirit by God.

John 6:48: "I AM the Bread of Life. Your fathers ate manna in the desert, but they died. This is the Bread, which comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. I AM the living Bread, which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this Bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is even My flesh..." (vs 48-51).

Not just any flesh; but a body prepared for the purpose of being a perfect sacrifice for mankind. His own creation.

"... which I will give for the life of the world" (v 51).

He was given as perfect payment for our sins by the Father.

We know that in the Old Covenant that sacrificial animals represented a shadow:

Hebrews 10:5: "For this reason, when He comes into the world, He says, 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but You have prepared a body for Me. You did not delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. Then said I, "Lo, I come (as it is written of Me in the Scroll of the Book) to do Your will, O God." In the saying above, He said, 'Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin (which are offered according to the priestly law) You did not desire nor delight in.' Then He said, 'Lo, I come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first *covenant* in order that \overline{He} may establish the second *covenant*... [the New Covenant is built on the body—the foundation—of Christ] ...by Whose will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for **all**" (vs 5-10).

I talked earlier about His current office as High Priest to help us in every way that we need help. A ready presence at the Throne of God at His right hand to advocate on our part when we send up a prayer to God. We give it in Christ's name. We address our Father, but we know that we're imperfect. Our prayers would not get up off the floor, let alone up to heaven, if it wasn't for the blood of Christ. So, we pray in the name of Christ, which gives us access to the Father.

Psalm 49:1: "Hear this, all you people; give ear, all inhabitants of the world: both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the thoughts of my heart shall be of understanding. I will incline my ear to a parable; I will open my dark saying upon the lyre. Why should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my supplanters surrounds me? Those who trust in their wealth and in their many riches boast themselves. No man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (vs 6-7).

Only Christ's perfect sacrifice could do that; only Christ's fleshly body could do that!

Verse 8: "For the redemption of their soul... [the fleshly body] ...is costly... [requiring a price] ...and no payment is ever enough. That he should live forever and never see corruption, for he sees wise men die; likewise the fool and the brutish person perish together, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is that their houses shall go on forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names" (vs 8-11)—like Disney World!

Verse 12: "Nevertheless, man, though high in honor, does not remain; he is like the beasts that perish. This is the way of the foolish, and of their

followers who delight in their sayings. Selah. Like sheep they are appointed to the grave; death shall be their shepherd and the upright shall have the rule over them in the morning; and their form shall decay in the grave far from their home. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He will receive me. Selah. Be not afraid when one becomes rich, when the wealth of his house increases; for when he dies he shall take nothing with him; his wealth shall not descend after him. Though during his life he blessed his soul; yea, men will praise you when you do well to yourself. He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. A man in honor, but without understanding, is like the beasts; they shall perish" (vs 12-20).

We see that man alone is not enough, with the additional ingredients that God brings:

- the spirit to give us consciousness
- the Spirit of God to give us the potential to be born spirit beings by the perfect sacrifice that Christ gave

We have much to be thankful for! When God created us He had a purpose for us. We are among the first to receive understanding of this purpose and plan. God instructs in His way:

- He's given us the Holy Days to keep us on track
- He's given us each other so we can encourage one another and keep bringing these things to remembrance

Let's do that! As we continue to study, think, reflect and meditate we rejoice in this knowledge of what God is doing in our lives. *Let's continue to*:

- be committed to Him
- pray to ask Him to help us overcome
- repent
- understand how weak we are with Him
- hope and trust in Him and Him alone

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 1:26-27
- 2) Genesis 2:7, 20-24
- 3) John 1:1-4
- 4) Psalm 8:1-9
- 5) Psalm 144:1-4
- 6) Genesis 2:7
- 7) Isaiah 45:9-12
- 8) Isaiah 64:7-8
- 9) Jeremiah 18:4-8
- 10) Romans 9:20-24
- 11) Job 4:19
- 12) Genesis 3:19

- 13) 1 Corinthians 15:17-49
- 14) Philippians 3:1-7
- 15) Malachi 2:13-16
- 16) 1 Corinthians 7:13-14
- 17) Psalm 73:21-28
- 18) Genesis 6:3, 5, 7-8, 12
- 19) Romans 7:14-25
- 20) John 1:14
- 21) John 17:19-21
- 22) Romans 7:1-9, 14-15
- 23) John 6:48-51
- 24) Hebrews 10:5-10
- 25) Psalm 49:1-20

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Transcribed: 6/19/22

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