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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

LOUIS T. TALBOT

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by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER ONE

“AN EARTHLY SANCTUARY” WITH A HEAVENLY MEANING

WHEN God told Moses to build the tabernacle in the wilderness, according to the pattern which He showed him in the mount, He said:

“Speak unto the children of Israel . . . And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:2, 8).

When the inspired apostle explained the spiritual significance of this, God's dwelling place among His people, Israel, He said to the Hebrew Christians:

“We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Hebrews 8:1, 2).

These words from the New Testament not only give us the Holy Spirit's commentary on the meaning of the tabernacle in the wilderness; but they are the key that unlocks a vast treasure of spiritual truth regarding the “earthly sanctuary” which Moses built, in order that God might dwell among His people.

If we would understand the New Testament teaching concerning this Jewish tabernacle, which was “a shadow of good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1), we should compare the Exodus record with the Epistle to the Hebrews, especially chapters eight and nine, which deal with the tabernacle in particular, though primarily with the ministry of Christ, our Great High Priest, in “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”

This comparison of the Old Testament with the New will unfold to us “The Glories of Christ As Foreshadowed in the Jewish Tabernacle.” Yea, it will reveal to us the wonders of the prophetic Scriptures, wherein the Holy Spirit “testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (I Peter 1:11).

In connection with the typical significance of the Jewish tabernacle, we have one of the many clear proofs that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; whereas the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus of the New. And the Triune God gave to Israel the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the offerings, in order that sinful man might recognize the promised Saviour, and understand the significance of His mission and death.

When our Lord was among men, He was repeatedly bidding those who heard His teaching to study the Old Testament Scriptures. To the unbelieving Jews He said,

“Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me . . . Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote for me”

(John 5:39, 46).

By “the scriptures” Christ meant the Old Testament; for the New Testament was not written until after He died, arose from the dead, and went back to heaven. And when He said, “Moses wrote of me,” He included Exodus; for Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

To the two disciples on the way to Emmaus the risen Lord also said that the prophets had foretold “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself’ (Luke 24:27; cf. 24:26).

Again, to the ten disciples, still later in the same evening, He said,

“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the

prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

That the tabernacle was typical of Christ and His redemptive work on the cross is clear from many statements in the New Testament, some of which we shall consider in these studies. All the ministry of the priests in this “earthly sanctuary,” yea, even the sanctuary itself, served as a series of object lessons concerning salvation, sinful man's access to a holy God, and his worship of the Redeemer of sinners. It is as though God had painted a portrait of Christ some fifteen hundred years before He was to be born into the world as the Child of Bethlehem, in order that when He did tabernacle among men as the only begotten Son of God, all the world might recognize Him as the promised Saviour.

Years ago, when I first left Australia to come to America, my mother gave me photographs of my aunts and uncles in England, whom I was to visit en route. I had never seen them; for I was born in Australia, and had never been to England to visit them.

On board the boat I studied these photographs very carefully; I wanted to be sure to recognize my relatives at the pier. And sure enough, I did know them, because their likenesses were stamped upon my mind.

Had the Jews of our Lord's day confined their studies to the Old Testament, free from the traditions of men, they would have recognized their Messiah in a moment. If all men of this Christian era would only study the New Testament in the light of the Old, they would look with wonder and awe upon the portrait of Christ in the Old Testament; for it is a true like ness of the suffering, risen, interceding, and reigning Lord Jesus. And such a picture we are to behold in the study of the Jewish tabernacle, which we begin today. There is no portion of the Scriptures that will better establish a young believer in the faith and show him his position in Christ than that of the Jewish tabernacle. Every part of this “sanctuary” has a finger pointing to Christ and a tongue to tell forth His glory.

EXODUS — THE BOOK OF REDEMPTION

Exodus, the book in which the description of the tabernacle is found, logically follows Genesis, and precedes the three remaining books of Moses which come afterwards. Genesis tells the story of man's failure. Opening with the sublime expression, “In the beginning God . . .” it closes with the symbolic words, “. . . in a coffin in Egypt.”

From a perfect creation to sin and death, yet with hope through the promised Saviour — this is the story of Genesis.

- Exodus is the book of Redemption.

- Leviticus tells how sinful man may worship a holy God.

- Numbers is the record of God's gracious guidance, in spite of human failure and murmuring.

- Deuteronomy is a rehearsal of God's way with His redeemed, yet stumbling people.

This, in brief, is the setting of the book which gives us the description, not only of the pattern of the tabernacle that God gave to Moses on the mount, but also of the building of that sanctuary, in which He dwelt among His people. The entire book of Exodus covers forty chapters, thirteen of which have to do entirely with the tabernacle and the priests who were to minister therein.

Almost all of the latter half of the book is given over to a description of this tent of meeting between God and His redeemed children. But before mention is made of the tabernacle, the story of redemption is written in language that cannot be mistaken.

Joseph had died; the good Pharaoh had died; and Israel was in bitter bondage. The opening chapter of this wonderful book tells the story of the slavery into which the “Pharaoh which knew not Joseph” had bound God's people.

Israel's bondage to Egypt's wicked king is a picture of the sinner's bondage to Satan and sin.

Israel had no tabernacle in which to worship God, no deliverer to lead her out from under the task master's cruel lash, no Shekinah Glory to assure her that God was her Leader and Guide.

Before the sinner can know any thing of God's gracious guidance, he must know Him as a Deliverer, a Redeemer, and a Saviour.

The children of Israel were given a deliverer from the bondage of Egypt in the person of Moses; sinners are offered the only Saviour from bondage to Satan in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The story of the birth of Moses, his training for service, and his call from God to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage is told in the early chapters of Exodus. Then follows the record of God's righteous judgment upon those who turned an unheeding ear and a rebellious heart toward God, the only Deliverer and Redeemer. The ten plagues upon the Egyptians, only the first three of which came upon Israel, were judgments meted out to a stiff-necked king, who, together with his people, defied the living Lord. Likewise, all who refuse to accept God's salvation in Christ Jesus must go into judgment, into everlasting torment, and eternal separation from God. Only by faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ can the sinner be saved, redeemed from bondage to Satan and sin.

The last of the ten plagues upon Egypt was associated with the first Passover in Israel. And the paschal lamb was one of the most perfect types of Jesus, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

We cannot go into this beautiful lesson just here; but the sprinkled blood on the lintels and door posts, suggestive of the cross of Jesus; the eating of the lamb roast with fire; the safety of those sheltered behind the sprinkled blood — these are but a few of the lessons given to us in this first Passover kept in Egypt.

Did not the Lord Himself say unto Moses, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Exodus 12:13)? And did not the inspired apostle say, many centuries later, “Even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (I Corinthians 5:7)?

It was not by accident or mere chance that the Lord Jesus was crucified on the feast of the Passover, as all four of the evangelists plainly tell us. It was not by chance that He kept the last Passover, the last supper, with His disciples just before He went to the cross. He came to die at His own appointed time — the

Passover Lamb!

Redemption? What book in all the Word of God tells a more heart-searching story of God's redemption in Christ Jesus than does this second book of Moses?

Exodus is a continued story of God's redemption; for immediately after that first Passover, Israel was delivered from the hosts of the Egyptians as she passed through the Red Sea on dry ground. The enemy pursued from behind; in front of her were the waters that spoke of death through drowning. On each side the mountains and the wilderness closed in around fleeing Israel. But God was the Guide. In the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night He led His people, standing between her and the enemy all night, causing the Red Sea to stand up like a wall on both sides, delivering His otherwise helpless, yet redeemed nation. It is another beautiful picture of God's redemption for all who will put their trust in His beloved Son.

From the Red Sea on, the story is one of wilderness wandering for forty years; and in Exodus we read of how God fed His people with the manna and gave them drink from the smitten rock.

Christ said that the bread from heaven was but a type of Him who came down from the Father, the Bread of Life for a heart hungry world. (See John 6:27-63.) And Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, saying that the smitten rock was a type of Christ — “That Rock was Christ” (I Corinthians 10:4). He was “smitten of God, and afflicted” (Isaiah 53:4), that the thirsty soul might drink the Living Water that gives everlasting life.

In order to show His redeemed people how helpless they were in their own strength, how necessary it was for the sinless Son of God to keep His holy law, God gave to Israel the Ten Commandments and the detailed explanation of their meaning — in the book of Exodus.

Israel presumptuously said that she would obey God's law; but how little did she know her own frailty; for not long afterwards she had broken that holy law and was dancing naked around a golden calf! Idolatry, linked with heathen evils! “By the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). And a people redeemed by faith in the shed blood of Calvary's Lamb who was to come, learned that they could never, never measure up to God's perfect standard of holiness; that they needed a Saviour who could and would keep that law for them as none other could ever

do.

That is the story of Exodus up to the part which tells of the tabernacle, in which God was to dwell among His redeemed people.

Beginning with chapter twenty-five, we have the description of the pattern of this sanctuary, which God gave to Moses upon Mount Sinai, together with His instructions concerning the priests who were to minister in the tabernacle, and how they were to be clothed and consecrated for their sacred office.

Then we read the story of the broken law; Moses' confession of Israel's sin; his intercession for his people; and God's giving to him a second time the Ten Commandments written upon two tables of stone with “the finger of God.” The last six chapters of the book tell of the building of the tabernacle “according to the pattern” given by the Lord to Moses. And Exodus closes with the tabernacle finished, the Shekinah Glory filling the tabernacle and overshadowing it in the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night.

God was dwelling in the midst of His redeemed people! It is the story of redemption, and a picture of salvation in Christ Jesus, who dwells “in the midst” of His blood-bought children. Christ Himself is the Passover Lamb. His cross is the altar. He is the Priest.

THE TABERNACLE — A SHADOW OF THE CROSS

Before we begin the detailed study of the tabernacle, let us take a bird’s eye view of this sanctuary in the midst of encamped Israel. The very pieces of furniture were arranged in the form of a cross: and each article of furniture spoke of Christ, the Lord. The tents of three tribes of Israel were pitched on each side, the tabernacle literally “in the midst.”

The second chapter of the book of Numbers tells the location of each tribe. Judah was on the east, directly in front of the gate of the court; for Christ was to come from the tribe of Judah, and the gate speaks to us of Him who is “the way” to God. On the east also were the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun; on the south, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; on the west, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin; and on the north, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali.

Between the tents of the twelve tribes and the tabernacle, there were the tents of Moses and Aaron and the priests on the east; those of the three families of the Levites on the other three sides. The third chapter of Numbers gives us the location of the Levites.

We remember that Levi, one of the sons of Jacob, had three sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. These three became the fathers of the three families of Levites, each of which had certain duties to perform in connection with the service in the tabernacle. The Gershonites lived on the west of this sanctuary; the Kohathites, on the south; the Merarites, on the north. They were to minister before God on behalf of His people.

Only the priests could go into the Holy Place; only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year. But the Levites helped in taking down the tabernacle for the march, in erecting it again when God meant for His people to rest, and in carrying the parts that went toward making this beautiful and costly “tent of the congregation.”

The court of the tabernacle was made of fine white linen, fastened on pillars of brass, set up in the sand in sockets of brass. There was only one entrance to this court, only one way of access to God. As we said a moment ago, the gate speaks to us of Christ, the only Way to God and heaven.

Directly in front of the gate was the brazen altar of burnt offering, where the animal sacrifices were offered up to God. And directly west of that was the brazen laver, where the priests had to wash their hands and feet before they could enter into the Holy Place to minister before God. The altar of burnt offering is another picture of Christ, the Lamb of God; the laver, of Christ, our Cleanser from the daily defilement of sin.

The tabernacle itself consisted of two rooms: the Holy Place, twice as long as it was wide; and the Holy of Holies. a perfect cube. The veil separated the two rooms.

In the Holy Place there were three pieces of furniture: the golden altar of incense, just in front of the veil, and directly in line with the altar of burnt offering and the laver in the outer court; the golden candlestick on the south; and the golden covered table of shewbread on the north, just opposite the candlestick. Before the golden altar the priests stood, offering incense, even as

they prayed for their people.

The golden candlestick was kept burning with the only light the Holy Place had. And on the table of shewbread there were twelve loaves, one for each tribe. It seems hardly necessary to explain that these three beautiful pieces of furniture speak to us of Christ, our Intercessor and Priest; Christ, the Light of the World; and Christ, the Bread of Life.

Within the Holy of Holies there was the golden covered ark of the covenant, over which was the mercy seat, and in which were the Ten Commandments — later the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded were placed in the ark. Above the mercy seat, between the golden cherubim, stood the Shekinah Glory, the Lord Himself; and on and before the mercy seat was the sprinkled blood. This Ark of the Covenant was directly in line with the golden altar, only the veil separating them. And thus the shadow of the cross was made in the God-given arrangement of these six pieces of furniture, each of which spoke eloquently of the coming Redeemer.

The veil, too, was a wonderful type of our Lord; for although it separated the sinner from God's presence, when Christ died on the cross, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from top to bottom, by the Lord Himself, even as “his flesh” was bruised and broken for sinful man, opening the “way into the holiest of all” by His own shed blood. (See Hebrews 9.7, 8; 10:1922.)

We said a moment ago that we wanted to get a bird’s eye view of the tabernacle, with God's people encamped around it. No one but God could actually do this; for over the tabernacle were four coverings, forming the only “roof” this tent of meeting had, hiding from the gaze of men the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. We shall not describe these coverings now; but they, too, foreshadowed in a remarkable way the Person and work of our Lord.

In our later studies we shall consider the boards and bars and sockets that formed the completed structure; the curtains and the coverings; the pieces of furniture — all a detailed and marvelous picture of Christ.

Today we have attempted only to present in outline some idea of what the tabernacle was like. It would be well if each reader would read very carefully all of the book of Exodus, especially the portion beginning with chapter twenty-five, the first of the God-given description of the pattern which was shown to

Moses on the mount. We can not hope to get the most from a later study of these details unless we first have clearly in mind the general plan. Hence this brief outline view.

As we read these chapters, we shall note that God began with the beautiful Ark of the Covenant, and described the tabernacle from within toward the court without; whereas the sinner looked toward the tabernacle from the gate to the brazen altar. Of course, only his representative, the priest, could enter the Holy Place; and only the high priest could go on into the presence of God in the Most Holy Place once a year.

In these studies we shall begin at the gate and the altar, leading on to the presence of the Lord God. The sinner must meet God first at the altar of sacrifice before he may talk to Him in prayer and enter into His very throne room, by faith in the shed blood of His well-beloved Son! Our God came down from heaven to a manger and a cross; we may draw near to Him as we meet Him first at the foot of that cross; and only then may we go on with Him into heaven itself.

THE FREEWILL OFFERINGS FOR THE TABERNACLE

It was a very costly tabernacle, yet a tent still. God's people lived in tents; and in a beautiful tent He dwelt among them. It was a very, very costly sacrifice the Lord Jesus made when He left heaven's glory to “tabernacle” among men (John 1:14).

It cost Him His own precious blood. But His people whom He came to redeem lived in “earthly tabernacles” of the flesh. Therefore, in order to save sinners, He did not become an angel; He became a Man, “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14; cf. Hebrews 2:1418).

And where did Israel obtain the thousands of dollars for the erection of the tabernacle? From their hard-earned wages when they left Egypt on that wonderful night. Exodus tells the story: Israel had worked long as slaves, in bitter bondage; therefore, God told His people to ask from the Egyptians their wages, jewels of silver and gold and all the precious things which He knew they would need, which He knew they had earned. God did not tell His people to take what He knew they could not pay back; He did tell them to ask for what they had earned. (See Exodus 11:2; 12:35, 36. The word “lent” in verse 36 is literally

“gave”).

The people were told by the Lord, through Moses, to bring only such things as they wanted to present “willingly” unto Him, “an offering” from “the heart” (Exodus 25:2). And the wonderful result was that they brought so much that he had to tell them not to bring any more. “So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much” (Exodus 36:6, 7).

Need we comment upon this lesson in giving unto the Lord? If God's people today would bring “willingly” an offering from the heart, according to the way in which He has prospered them, then the pleas from the pagan world would not go unheeded; the cries of the missionary heart for more labourers in the harvest field would be heard and answered. May God help us to give as Israel did of old!

No stranger was to have a part in these gifts for the building of the tabernacle. Nor does God want the money of unsaved men to be used in winning “living stones” for “the temple of the Holy Ghost,” which is His church.

THE WORKMEN

God called two chosen men to oversee the building of the tabernacle.

Every house has to have an architect, a contractor, someone to plan and to carry out that plan. God put in charge of the house that He Himself had planned Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah; and Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan.

Concerning Bezaleel He said, in Exodus 31:16:

“I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.”

The helpers of Bezaleel were Aholiab and all the “wise hearted.” God gave them wisdom for the

work, even as in every age His work can be done only by those who are given “the wisdom that is from above” (James 1:5; 3:17).

GOD IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE

In the beginning of this lesson we read from the inspired record that God's purpose in asking Moses to build the tabernacle was that He might dwell among His people whom He redeemed. It has always been God's desire to have fellowship with His creatures.

In the Garden of Eden He talked with Adam, taking to our first parent the animals of His creation, to see what Adam would call them. “And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof”

Thus God set His seal of approval upon what man did, while man rejoiced in the works of God's hands. But sin entered to mar that beautiful fellowship! And ever since the fall of man, God has been seeking the sinner desiring to restore that broken fellowship and communion. Man was put at a distance from God through sin; yet God's heart of love remained the same.

He walked with Enoch for more than three hundred years. He bade Noah enter the ark, saying, not “Go,” but “Come.” God was with Noah in that ark. During the patriarchal age God talked with His chosen ones; appeared unto them; held sweet communion with them; ever pointing them on to the Saviour who was to come. And now, in the wilderness, He wanted to dwell in a tent, in the fiery, cloudy pillar, holding communion with His people on the basis of the shed blood of the sacrifice which foreshadowed the blood of Christ.

Still later, when Israel possessed the land of Canaan and lived in houses, God told Solomon to build Him a house, the beautiful temple in Jerusalem. Again, He filled it with His glory, departing from it only when the sins of His people separated them from their God.

The centuries passed. Then one day God came down to “tabernacle” among men, “Immanuel, God with us,” “God manifest in the flesh.” He walked and talked with men. A few loved Him and received His love. Many more scorned Him, mocked Him, spat upon Him, crucified Him, thrust Him out of the world at the point of a spear. And then He sent His Holy Spirit into the hearts of those who would receive Him, even the Third Person of the Trinity, who abides with His church forever.

And that brings us to this blessed truth: not only does the tabernacle in the

wilderness speak to us of the Lord Jesus; it does, first and primarily; but it also speaks to us of the living temple which is His church, “the habitation of God through the Spirit,” the body and the bride of our Lord Jesus Christ. Each blood-bought child of God, from Pentecost to the Rapture, is a “living stone” in that building for eternity. And “where two or three are gathered together” in His name, there He dwells with them “in the midst” (Matthew 18:20). He seeks the fellowship of His redeemed.

In the millennium He will dwell in the midst of His earthly people, Israel, with His heavenly bride reigning with Him in glory. Then in the eternal state His great desire for fellowship with

His own will be fully realized.

God will dwell in the midst of His people, indeed; and He will be “all and in all.” His rest will then be absolute, eternal, and glorious. There will be no more sin and sorrow. There will be no more curse. God Himself shall wipe away all tears. Of this future day of rejoicing the beloved disciple wrote, saying,

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Revelation 21:3).

As we enter upon this wonderful study of the Jewish tabernacle, “a shadow of good things to come,” this earthly sanctuary with a heavenly meaning, may the Holy Spirit prepare our hearts to receive the deeply spiritual message of this portion of the sacred Scriptures. Then only shall we see “The Glories of Christ as Foreshadowed in the Jewish Tabernacle.”

And now, as we bring this first lesson to a close, may we let Him remind us from His infallible Word that in Christ “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9); and that our bodies are “the temple of the Holy Ghost” (I Corinthians 6:19).

It is a solemn thought, a heart-searching thought — that we have been “bought with a price,” even the precious blood of the Son of God! As we see, from our study of the Jewish tabernacle, how God was preparing His people for the

manifestation of Him who was to “tabernacle” among men; then as we see how He was also picturing the union of Christ and His church, surely we shall praise Him with ever-increasing adoration for such grace!

My unsaved friend, you cannot see the beauties of Him, of whom the tabernacle speaks, unless you meet Him at His cross. Only the believer-priests may enter into His presence! But He invites you to meet Him at Calvary, be saved, born again, by faith in His atoning blood. Then you, too, immediately become a member of that temple, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. You will not be interested in this series of studies unless you love our Lord Jesus. But once you love Him, you will let the Holy Spirit take the things of Christ, and show them unto you.

May God add His blessing to our study of this portion of His wonderful Word!

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Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER TWO THE HIGH PRIEST AND HIS SONS

Christ Our Great High Priest and His Believer-Priests Exodus 28:1-29:46; Leviticus 8:19:24

HAVING seen, in our opening lesson, a bird’s eye view of the Jewish tabernacle, let us take a glimpse at the high priest and his sons; for we can understand the significance of the sanctuary and its furnishings only as we know something of the priesthood, chosen by the Lord, to minister before Him on behalf of His redeemed people. And nowhere do “The Glories of Christ As Seen in the Jewish Tabernacle” shine with more radiance than in His Great High Priestly work, foreshadowed in the high priest of Israel.

Aaron, the first high priest, was a remarkable type of Christ, our Great High Priest. And Aaron's sons foreshadowed the believer-priests who compose the church of the Lord Jesus. To show that this eternal truth is not mere fancy or speculation, but that it is plainly taught in the inspired Scriptures, is the purpose of our lesson today.

Many clear teachings of the Word of God leave us in no doubt concerning these things; we shall have to do chiefly with two chapters in Exodus, two in Leviticus, and the heart of the Epistle to the Hebrews. (See Exodus 28:1-29:46; Leviticus 8:19:24; Hebrews 5:1-10:22).

Perhaps some have wondered why the Holy Spirit in Exodus interrupts the description of the God-given pattern of the tabernacle with chapters twenty-eight and twenty-nine, which tell of the priesthood.

It has been suggested that it was as though God had come out from His throne room to meet sinful man at the brazen altar, and to lead His redeemed back with Him into His very throne room. He could do this only by the Person and work of His beloved Son and our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, foreshadowed in the Leviticus priesthood that was established with Aaron and his sons.

Only because of the ministry of Christ, our Mediator, our Advocate with the Father, can we hold communion with our holy God. That would seem to be the reason why the Holy Spirit pauses just at Exodus 28, 29 to set forth in shadow

and in type the glories of Him who was to come to minister in the heavenly sanctuary, “which the Lord built, and not man.”

And that is why we pause just at this point in our study to let the Holy Spirit teach us something of the priestly work of Christ that we may better understand the fullness of His love and grace, prefigured in the earthly sanctuary which God told Moses to build for His dwelling place among His chosen people, Israel.

In these two chapters before us, and in Leviticus 8, 9, we see minute details concerning the dress of the priests, their consecration to the sacred office, their food, and their ministry. To assist them in the service of the tabernacle, God gave to Aaron the Levites, whom he, in turn, gave back to God as an offering unto the Lord.

We shall have more to say about these later in this lesson; but first let us compare the person and work of Aaron with that of Christ, as presented to us by the Spirit of God in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Without this New Testament commentary on the Law of Moses, we should be in the dark about many rich and precious lessons concerning the person and ministry of Jesus, our Great High Priest, before the “throne of grace.”

CHRIST FULFILLED THE QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF A PRIEST IN ISRAEL

Hebrews 5:14 gives us both the qualifications and the functions of a Levitical priest:

(1) he had to be a man, “taken from among men” — not an angel, for example, but a man;

(2) he had to be “called of God, as was Aaron ”

These, in brief, were his qualifications.

His duties were threefold:

(1) he had to “offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins”;

(2) he had to “have compassion on the ignorant” and the erring, remembering

that he himself was “compassed with infirmity”;

(3) as we read throughout the Jewish Law, he had to pray for the people before the golden altar of incense.

Hebrews 5:510 explains in no uncertain terms that the Lord Jesus fulfilled the qualifications of the high priest: for He was a Man, “taken from among men”; and He “glorified not himself to be made an high priest,” but was “called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.”

His humanity is graphically portrayed in verses 7 and 8, where we read of His agony in Gethsemane's Garden, when, “in the days of his flesh,” He “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears”; when as the Son, “obedient unto death,” He “learned obedience by the things which he suffered ”

What a picture of the suffering Saviour! It brings before our mind's eye the “cup of suffering” which caused Him to “sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” So intense was His agony at the thought of becoming the Sin Bearer for a guilty world that “there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.” (See Luke 22:43, 44). His sinless soul shrank from becoming a curse for us! Yes, our Lord Jesus was a Man, “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). God cannot die; and in order to die for our sins, He had to become a Man — He did not become an angel (Hebrews 2:16); He was “taken from among men.”

As the Man, Christ Jesus, He was “called of God . . . a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” We shall come back to this wonderful truth a bit later; but just here let us note in passing that in these words the Holy Spirit was quoting a prophecy written by David a thousand years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, and recorded in Psalm 110:4. “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18).

That our Lord Jesus fulfilled the duties of the high priest in Israel — and is yet fulfilling them — is the message of the very heart of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Over and over again we read that He offered Himself “once for all,” as the perfect Sacrifice for sin; that He “ever liveth to make intercession for them” who “come unto God by him”; and

that He is seated “on the right hand of the Majesty on high” to deal gently,

patiently, with His blood-bought children. What a picture! What a Priest! And the whole body of New Testament teaching supports and verifies these eternal truths!

Not only so, but New Testament teaching bears out the truth that Aaron's sons were typical of Christians, in this church age, believer-priests in the household of faith. Of this, too, we shall have more to say later in this lesson.

Before we return to the Exodus description of the high priest and his sons, their dress, consecration, and ministry, let us pause longer just here to consider two fundamental and often neglected truths concerning the High Priestly Person and work of Christ.

- In His Person, or Being, He was “called of God,” “a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

- In His ministry in “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man,” He is a Priest after the pattern of Aaron.

Melchisedec foreshadowed the eternal deity and glory of Jesus, our King-Priest; Aaron's service in the earthly sanctuary foreshadowed His ministry for His redeemed children.

CHRIST IS “BETTER THAN” AARON IN HIS PERSON “A PRIEST FOR EVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC”

This twofold truth concerning the Person and work of Christ, our Great High Priest, is set forth in the profound, majestic Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Christian Jews, to whom this letter was addressed, were being cruelly persecuted for their testimony, and were, therefore, in danger of returning to Judaism. The temple was still standing (Hebrews 10:11); unbelieving Jews were still observing the ritual of the Mosaic Law. The Hebrew Christians, who had separated themselves from the Christ-rejecting nation, needed instruction, warning, and encouragement.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit wrote this epistle to prove to them that Christianity was far “better than” Judaism, as seen in its Founder, Christ. Having shown conclusively that Christ is “better than” the prophets, angels, Moses, and Joshua, then He went on to prove, in the heart of the epistle, that Christ is “better than”

Aaron, Israel's first high priest — the best that Judaism had to offer.

And in all this profound treatise the Holy Spirit set forth, in words that glow and burn their way into our hearts, the beautiful message that Jesus, the Son of God, of whom the prophets wrote, whom the angels worship, in whom Moses and Joshua trusted for their salvation, of whom Aaron was but a type — that this eternal One is our ever-living, ever-loving Great High Priest and coming King.

As a Prophet, He had given to a sinning world His Father's message of divine and eternal and vicarious love.

As a Priest, He had died for His creatures' sins, and had entered into the holiest of all, even heaven itself, there to minister on behalf of His blood-bought, redeemed children.

Now Aaron was Israel's first high priest, and he was rightly held in honor and esteem by his people, Israel. But long before Aaron was born, another king-priest had met Aaron's ancestor, Abraham; for Levi was the great-grandfather of Aaron; Abraham was the great-grandfather of Levi. This king-priest who met Abraham, and who was greater than this father of the Hebrew nation, was none other than Melchisedec.

Only three portions of the Word of God tell us of Melchisedec: Genesis 14:17-20; Psalm 110:4; and the Epistle to the Hebrews (5:5-7:28). (Note the difference in the Hebrew and the Greek spelling of the name).

Melchisedec was “king of Salem” and “priest of the most high God ”

“Salem” was the ancient name for “Jerusalem,” and means “peace” — “Jerusalem” means “City of peace'” By interpretation, therefore, Melchisedec's name means “King of righteousness’’ and “King of peace'” And in these beautiful and significant names he becomes a type of the Lord Jesus, “King of righteousness,” indeed; and “Prince of Peace.”

Moreover, the Scriptures tell us nothing about the genealogy of Melchisedec, who “met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him” after the patriarch had delivered his nephew, Lot, from captivity.

Some Bible teachers hold that he was, indeed, a manifestation of God Himself to Abraham; but after careful study, we believe that he was a man, a king-priest,

whose family descent was deliberately withheld by the Holy Spirit, in order that he might become a type of our King-Priest, even the Son of God, who is, in very truth, “without . . . beginning of days, nor end of life” (Hebrews 7:3). And the Epistle to the Hebrews reiterates the heart of the matter that thus he becomes a type of the eternity of Christ's priesthood; for He is “a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

Aaron died; his sons died; their ministry lasted for only a brief time; then others succeeded them in the priestly office. But because there is no record of Melchisedec's parentage or birth or death, he is typical of Jesus, our Great High Priest, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2), who has neither beginning nor ending.

That Christ, our Great High Priest, is greater than Aaron, Israel's first high priest, is the central theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and the argument is very plain: Melchisedec was greater than Aaron, not only for the reasons already named; but also because he was greater than Aaron's forefather, Abraham. He was greater than Abraham because he blessed Abraham, and received tithes from the patriarch.

“And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better” (Hebrews 7:7); and one who

receives tithes is greater than the one who gives them.

Again, Aaron came through the tribe of Levi, and was only a priest; Christ, from the kingly tribe of Judah, is both Priest and King. (See Hebrews 7:14).

Aaron and his sons were made priests without an oath. But to the Son of God the Father “sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Hebrews 7:21).

We have already observed that Aaron and his sons died, whereas Christ ever liveth. We quote Hebrews 7:2325 just here for the Holy Spirit's own words about this truth:

“And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for

them."

Aaron, because he was a sinner, had to offer daily sacrifices, "first for his own sins, and then for the people's" (Hebrews 7:27); but Christ, who was without sin, suffered for a sin-cursed world. He Himself was ever "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26).

Having compared the Aaronic priesthood with the eternal, unchangeable priesthood of the Lord Jesus, in Hebrews 5:17:28; that is, having shown that Christ in His divine being, is far "better than" the very best that Judaism had to offer; the Holy Spirit concludes this part of the Epistle to the Hebrews by saying, in 8:1:

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum [chief point]: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

Then He continues the comparison between the Levitical priesthood and that of Christ by showing the difference in the ministry of the two. Not only is our Great High Priest, in Himself, in His righteous and matchless person, far greater than any earthly priest could ever be; but in His service He is the only perfect Priest. The comparison that follows, in Hebrews 8:2-10:22 fairly glows with the radiance that beams from the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and from His risen majesty and glory!

A few selected passages from these chapters, as we scan the pages, will show us something of the wonder and beauty of our Heavenly Priest, and thus prepare our hearts for a fuller appreciation of His ministry for us even now before "the throne of grace," in "the true tabernacle" on high.

CHRIST IS "BETTER THAN" AARON IN HIS MINISTRY

Without any attempt to outline this portion of the Epistle to the Hebrews, let us glance down the pages to note some of the striking points of contrast between the ministry of Aaron and that of Christ.

- Aaron served the Lord in an earthly sanctuary, made of perishable materials; whereas our Great High Priest ministers in "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man," eternal in the heavens.

- The Levitical priests served “unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.” “But now hath he [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Hebrews 8:6).

- The first covenant, that is, the Law of Moses, was not faultless; and it was written on tables of stone. But the new covenant in Christ Jesus is faultless; and it is written in the hearts of men who love Him.

Under the old covenant of the Law there was a continual remembrance of sins, kept constantly before God's people by the centuries old sacrifices which pointed on to Jesus, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). But under the new covenant, ushered in by Christ's death on the cross, God promised to remember our sins and iniquities no more forever. And now that the new covenant has been made, the old has fulfilled its purpose, and has vanished away. (See Hebrews 8:713). The new covenant is eternal!

In Hebrews 9:1-10 the Holy Spirit describes the “earthly sanctuary,” on which we tried to get a bird’s eye view in our last lesson, and which we hope to study more fully in the lessons before us. With all the many details of Exodus the Hebrew Christians were very familiar. They needed only to be reminded here in this Epistle of the two rooms of that sanctuary, with their furniture, even the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies; with the veil that separated the two, and closed “the way into the holiest of all” (v. 8).

These things, God tells us plainly, were only “a figure for the time then present” (v. 9). In other words, they were figures, or shadows, or types of “good things to come” in our Lord Jesus. In His death on Calvary He opened the way into the Holy of Holies, even heaven itself— forever opened the only way to heaven and eternal life and His glorious Presence!

Hebrews 9:11 continues the contrast further, showing that Christ ministers in a more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands; that He offered, not the blood of goats and calves, but His own precious blood; that His sacrifice was far more efficacious than even the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, the best that Judaism could offer; His sacrifice obtained eternal redemption for us.

The animal sacrifices sanctified “to the purifying of the flesh”; His blood cleanses the guilty conscience. “And with out shedding of blood is no remission”

of sin. (See Hebrews 9:11, 22).

- As a priest, Christ “hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”

- As a priest, He has entered into the Holy Place not made with hands, “now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

- As our coming King, He “shall appear the second time” not to die, but to usher in everlasting righteousness! (See Hebrews 9:2428).

My friend, do you “love his appearing”?

Do you know Him as your Saviour? Accept Him as your Great High Priest; or you will meet Him as your Judge and righteous King, who must judge sin because He is holy.

The Day of Atonement was in the mind of the writer to the Hebrews when he spoke of “a remembrance again made of sins every year” (10:3). That was the greatest day in the year to a godly Hebrew. The very best that man could do to show his faith in the promised Redeemer, was done on that day. It was a time of mourning for sin, a day of putting away sin for the whole nation. But God did not want the sacrifices and offerings of a people whose hearts were far from Him. They had sinned and had “come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). A spotless Lamb was required; therefore, the Son said to the Father: “A body hast thou prepared for me”

- a human body that might be offered as the sinless Substitute for sinning man. “Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God” (Hebrews 10:57).

The unbelieving priests of the family of Aaron still continued to stand, “daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices,” which could never take away sins — even after Christ, the Passover Lamb, had offered Himself “once for all”!

At the brazen altar in the temple court the godless Jews of apostolic days still shed the blood of goats and calves and lambs and turtle doves and young pigeons. This they did, in their blindness and sin, until the Roman Caesar, Titus, in 70 A. D. destroyed their temple and scattered their nation. But not one drop of blood should have been shed for sin after the Lamb of God had offered Himself without spot to God! All that followed Calvary was but a hollow mockery, an

empty ritual, which Christ rejecting Jews continued but for a time.

The Levitical priests were never through with their ministry; there was no chair in the tabernacle; they could never sit down, and rest in a finished work.

“But this man [Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12).

When He cried on Calvary, saying, “It is finished,” He triumphantly proclaimed a finished redemption. We can add nothing to the finished work of Christ. Our poor, paltry works cannot save us; they cannot help save us. Only the finished work of Christ, our Substitute, can avail to wash away our sins.

Only once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, did the high priest dare enter into the Holy of Holies, where God dwelt in the pillar of cloud and fire. No other priest dared enter there, lest he die. And Aaron dared not enter without blood, which he sprinkled on and before the mercy seat.

In all this “the Holy Ghost” signified that “the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing” (Hebrews 9:8). But when Christ died, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain.” “The way into the holiest” was forever opened! We go directly into God's presence now through prayer; one day faith shall become sight!

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . .” (Hebrews 10:1922).

Do you see, my Christian friend, why we must let the Holy Spirit teach us the deep and wonderful message of the Epistle to the Hebrews, if we would understand why God interrupted the description of the pattern for the Jewish tabernacle, in order to give His instructions concerning the Levitical priesthood?

The priesthood was a vital part of the Law of Moses. And the Law was “a shadow of good things to come” in Christ Jesus (Hebrews 10:1). Aaron and his sons typified Christ and His church, believer-priests. Yet Christ is far “better than” Aaron in His person; He is “a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” He is far “better than” Aaron and all his descendants in His ministry; for He ministers in a better tabernacle, as the Mediator of a better

covenant, established upon better promises than the Law of Moses could ever offer.

His is an enduring, unchangeable priesthood.

He offered a better sacrifice, with a better hope of a better resurrection. As our eternal Priest, His blood avails for all eternity. His prayers for us avail before His Father's throne. He deals gently with the ignorant and erring. How gently He deals with His own! And thank God! His work of redemption is forever done!

- No more does He have to suffer the bitterness and cruelty of the cross.

- No more does He have to endure the scoffing, the scourging, the mockings of the wicked men who nailed Him to the tree!

Once He wore a crown of thorns. But now He lives, forever “crowned with glory and honour,” one day to appear in glory “crowned with many crowns.” How can we help but love Him?

Let us repeat for emphasis, that not one soul who reads this message may miss the meaning:

- As our Priest, Christ shed His blood for our sins.

- As our Priest, He ever lives to make intercession for us at the throne of grace.

When we sin, He is our Advocate with the Father, our Lawyer, our Mediator. He takes our part against Satan's accusations. He has never lost a case in the court of heaven! Nor will He — ever!

- As our Priest, He deals gently with us. He “knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Psalm 103:14). He disciplines and chastens and trains us for service, bringing us to the place of confession of sin, forgiving, loving, and patiently leading us on toward His Presence and Home!

Satan desired to have Peter, that he might sift him as wheat; but the Lord said to Peter, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:31, 32).

If we would know what kind of prayer He is offering to the Father on our behalf, we need only turn to the seventeenth chapter of John, there to read some of the

most sacred, soul-inspiring words that ever fell from the lips of the Son of God. It is His high priestly prayer, not only for Peter and James and John; not only for those who knew and loved Him when He was on earth; but for “them also who” should “believe” on Him “through their word” (John 17:20).

That includes us; it includes every child of God of all the Christian era.

AARON AND HIS SONS — A TYPE OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

Surely we have had overwhelming proof from Hebrews that Aaron, in his ministry, was a type of Christ, our Great High Priest. Now his sons represented Christ's church, believer-priests: Their names were closely associated with Aaron's; even so we bear the name of Christ, for we are called “Christians.”

They had the same calling; no one other than a son of Aaron or his descendants could dare enter into the priesthood. Likewise, our Lord says unto us, “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (John 20:21). Christ entrusts His gospel message only to those who love Him.

Aaron and his sons were provided with the same pure linen coat; we are given the robe of Christ's righteousness, which fits us for His presence (Only Aaron wore the robes of glory and beauty, even as our blessed Lord shall shine forth throughout eternity as the light of heaven, the “altogether lovely” One!)

Aaron and his sons were anointed with the same blood, when they were consecrated to their priestly office. We are cleansed by Christ's own precious blood — cleansed that we may serve Him, and others for His name's sake.

He needed no cleansing, for He was without sin. When He said, “. . . for their sakes I sanctify myself’ (John 17:19), He referred to His being consecrated, set apart, to His priestly work of redemption. As the sinless One, He could need no cleansing from sin!

Aaron and his sons were anointed with the same holy oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It is significant that Aaron was anointed with oil before the bloody sacrifices were offered; his sons, afterwards; for our Lord Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism, before He went to the cross; His disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and in the house of

Cornelius, after His death and resurrection.

Moreover, Aaron was given a greater unction of the holy oil than were his sons; it was poured on his head, and it ran down upon his beard, even to the skirts of his garments. Our Lord Jesus had the fulness of the Holy Spirit as no sinner saved by grace could ever have. The Father gave not the Spirit “by measure unto him” (John 3:34).

Again, this holy oil was not to be put upon stranger. Even so, the Christ-rejecting sinner cannot understand the things of the Spirit; they are “foolishness unto him.” (See I Corinthians 2:14).

The hands of Aaron and his sons were filled with the same offering. They were filled for the Lord. They ate the same food.

Jesus, the Man, lived by faith, and so must we live by faith. The priests fed upon the bread of consecration. Our Lord had “meat to eat” that men knew not of; He came to do the will of His Father in heaven. And He sends us forth into the whitened harvest field to do His will, offering to heart-hungry millions the Bread of Life! (See John 4:3238).

These are some of the analogies we may well draw from Aaron and his sons, as a type of Christ and his church.

Indeed, the Holy Spirit has given us some clear statements of Scripture to show us that, as believer-priests, we are to tell the story of Christ's one sacrifice forever, to pray one for another, to be “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people,” showing forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Ours is “the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).

As we think of our privileges and blessings as Christians, our hearts sing the doxology of John, who, on the Isle of Patmos, said,

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:5, 6).

THE GARMENTS OF THE PRIESTS

Before we enter upon a detailed study of the beautiful garments of the high priest, which speak to us of the glory and beauty of our Lord, let us note that Aaron and his sons were all given a linen coat, evidently with sleeves, which reached down to the feet.

The fine linen, of which this coat was made, speaks to us of Christ's righteousness. He was, in Himself, altogether righteous. And by faith in Him, we have received the gift of His righteousness, which alone enables us to stand before Him unashamed and unafraid.

The sons of Aaron wore turbans, called “bonnets . . . for glory and for beauty.” These were made of the same fine linen, wrapped around the head.

Besides these garments, the priests were given girdles and linen breeches (See Exodus 28:39-43).

The girdle was wound twice around the body, over the linen coat, and tied in front, the ends hanging down to the feet. Over these garments Aaron wore the beautiful garments which typify, in a remarkable way, the glory and beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

AARON'S GARMENTS FOR GLORY AND BEAUTY A TYPE OF CHRIST — “ALTOGETHER LOVELY”

There were five garments, very costly and very beautiful, which were worn only by the high priest. These were the breastplate; the ephod; the blue robe; the mitre, with its golden crown; and the girdle of the ephod.

Since Aaron was a sinner needing a Saviour, he did not possess, within himself, the glory and beauty required of one who was a type of Christ; therefore, these costly, beautiful garments had to be put upon him by Moses. Not so with our blessed Lord. He is, in Himself, all glorious, “the fairest among ten thousand,” the One “altogether lovely.”

As we consider each of these beautiful garments which God told Moses to put upon Aaron, we shall see in them symbols of the glorious Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest.

1. The Embroidered Linen Coat.

We have seen that Aaron, as well as his sons, wore a fine linen coat, the symbol of the righteousness which Christ is in Himself, and which He imparts to His believing children.

Exodus 28:4 tells us that Aaron's coat was “broidered.”

The whole Word of God tells us in a thousand ways that the Lord Jesus was altogether righteous. Before He was born of the Virgin Mary, the angel of the Lord told Joseph that Jesus was “conceived . . . of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 1:20).

Indeed, the Angel Gabriel had appeared to Mary, saying:

“The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the 'Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of

God” (Luke 1:35).

When He was baptized by John, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, even as the Father's voice spoke from heaven those words which bore witness to Jesus' sinlessness, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

And again the Father uttered the same words, upon the mount of transfiguration. (See Matthew 17:5).

Men, angels, and demons bore witness to Christ's holy life. Angels at His birth and after His resurrection declared that He was ever the Son of God, Christ Jesus the Lord. Demons cried out, hailing Him as “the Holy One of God.” And rulers, officers, the centurion, the thief on the cross, apostles, and many who loved Him bore testimony to His absolute holiness.

Our Lord Himself said that He always did those things that pleased His Father in heaven. He declared over and over again that He was eternal God, one with the Father, sent down from heaven, the great “I AM.” It would be blasphemy to say that He did not speak the truth! His miracles evidenced the fact that He was God; for none other than the eternal God could have done His mighty works. None other than the all-wise God could have spoken His words of “grace and truth.”

We who love Him know that He always was and always will be the sinless, mighty, eternal God

— pure and righteous in His very Being. And of this holiness the embroidered linen robe of Aaron spoke. We dare not say that Aaron, in his ministry, was not a type of Christ — not after reading the Epistle to the Hebrews! Then why should Aaron's garments not suggest the glories of the Greater than Aaron, our living High Priest?

2. The Girdle.

The “girdle of needlework” was a symbol of service and a symbol of strength for service. (See Luke 17:8; Isaiah 22:21). It was put upon Aaron; Christ was, in Himself, the Strong One who came, “not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”

(Mark 10:45).

Seven hundred years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, Isaiah had foretold the coming into the world of the faithful servant of the Lord (Isaiah 42:1).

Then “when the fulness of the time was come,” He was born into the world, “born of a woman,” born to do His Father's will. Although, from all eternity, He had been “in the form of God,” yet He “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:6-8).

In the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed that His Father's will be done, fulfilling yet another marvelous prophecy which we have read earlier in this lesson, found in Psalm 40:68 and quoted in Hebrews 10:5-8. Then He died in obedience to His Father's will, bearing the penalty of sin for His guilty creatures.

Before He died, did He not “gird himself” and wash His disciples' feet, teaching them that “the servant is not greater than his Lord”?

- Did He not, in this act, also leave us an example, that we should serve one another for His sake, confessing our wrongs, forgiving and restoring one another? (See John 13:2-17).

- Did He not teach us in this beautiful lesson the need for the daily, constant cleansing from the defilement of sin by the “washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26)?

- Is He not even now the girded One, serving us without ceasing before the “throne of grace,” forgiving, interceding, presenting our prayers to the Father? Yea; He “ever liveth to make intercession” for His own (Hebrews 7:25).

3. The Blue Robe of the Ephod.

The description of the beautiful blue robe of the ephod is found in Exodus 28:3135. It was called “the robe of the ephod” because it was worn just under the ephod, and was held in place by the same girdle, called “the curious [i.e., 'skillfully made'] girdle of the ephod” (Exodus 28:8).

This robe was made of one piece, with a “hole in the top thereof,” through which the head was passed, and with “a binding of woven work round about the hole of it . . . that it be not rent.” It was “all of blue,” the heavenly color, which reminds us of the heavenly character of our Lord.

The robe is a symbol of Christ's position, office, and character, as our perfect Great High Priest; and it speaks to us of His “robe of righteousness” — His by right of His own divine Being; imparted to all who accept by faith His free gift of righteousness, through His shed blood.

The Prophet Isaiah and the Apostle Paul wrote of this blessed truth when they said:

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Isaiah 61:10).

“The righteousness of God . . . is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe . . .” (Romans 3:22).

This gift of God's righteousness, as a garment, is unto all. “Whosoever will” may accept it, and be clothed, made fit for heaven and God's holy Presence for all the endless ages. But this gift is “upon all them that believe,” and upon them alone.

God does not force us to accept His free gift of salvation. We must appropriate it by faith.

It is as though a coat were on display in a shop window; it is “unto all.” But that coat is “upon” only the man who takes it and wears it. Our Lord Himself has paid the price of the robe which He offers “unto all.” It is for us only to receive it, as the gift of His grace. Could anything be more wonderful? More simple? Even a little child may understand.

The beautiful blue robe of the ephod, which Aaron wore, was ornamented with golden bells and pomegranates, the latter embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet.

Let us read the God-given description as found in Exodus 28:33-35:

“And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe around about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.”

- The golden bells speak to us of the perfect speech, the wonderful words, of our Lord;

- The pomegranates, of the fruitfulness of His ministry on our behalf.

The Jews of Jesus' day tried in vain “to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him” (Luke 11:54). But the people “all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth” (Luke 4:22). And even the officers whom the Jews sent to take Him were compelled to admit, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46).

The children of Israel could not see Aaron as he ministered for them in the Holy Place, trimming the lamps of the golden candlestick, offering incense as he prayed for them, feeding upon the shewbread; but as they stood before the brazen altar, they could hear the tinkle of the golden bells; then they knew that their high priest was serving them. They could not hear this reassuring sound without, in the camp; possibly they could hear it but faintly, if at all, outside the court. But at the brazen altar they could hear, and know that their priest was ever

ministering to their spiritual needs.

My Christian friend, we cannot see with our physical eyes the Lord Jesus in the Most Holy Place, even heaven itself; but we hear His gracious Word, and we know that He is ministering for us before “the throne of grace.”

We cannot hear His Word unless we stand at the brazen altar, as it were, at the foot of His cross; but there we see His perfect sacrifice, His own shed blood, poured out for our sins. At the cross we learn that He made a full atonement for our sins, arose from the dead, and “ever liveth to make intercession” for us. And the sweet incense of His prayers avails!

- The golden bells tell us that He has made a full atonement for sin. They tell us of the fragrance of prayer and praise.

- The pomegranates, embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet, speak to us of the fruitfulness of Christ's ministry for us.

Here, as in everything connected with the Jewish tabernacle:

- The blue speaks to us of our Lord's deity, for blue is the heavenly color;

- The purple, of His royalty;

- The scarlet, of His sacrifice.

He was the One sent down from heaven to die for the lost; then to be exalted far above all principalities and powers; one day to be honored by men, angels, and demons as King of kings, and Lord of lords!

As Aaron walked, the pomegranates were about his feet. As our Lord walked among men, He went everywhere doing good, healing the sick, casting out demons, forgiving sins, binding up the wounded and the broken hearted. As deeds prove the sincerity of words so do the pomegranates gave proof that His Words were verified by His gracious deeds. How lovely was His walk! How filled with the fruits of love!

Israel rejoiced in Aaron, her high priest, knowing that he was ministering for her, and would bless her. Do we rejoice in Jesus, our Great High Priest, in the golden bells of His gracious words, and in the fruitfulness of His love? We do love Him,

if we are saved. But are we more occupied with His gifts than with His own loveliness and beauty and holiness?

- For our heart-hunger He gives us the Bread of Life.

- For our thirsty souls He offers the Living Water.

- For our weary, sin-sick lives He gives rest of heart and forgiveness of all our sins.

He now appears “in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24).

The aged John saw Him in His resurrection glory, dressed as our Great High Priest, “clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle” (Revelation 1:13).

John saw Him “in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,” or lampstands, which symbolized His church. He is the Man Christ Jesus, representing His blood-bought bride before the Father in the Most Holy Place. John saw Him glorified. We see Him now by faith. And one day we shall look upon Him, whose nail prints bear witness to His priestly work that shall abide for all eternity.

4. The Ephod.

The breastplate was securely fastened to the ephod, and should be considered with this garment, which was “for glory and for beauty.”

The two were never to be separated. They were made of the same materials. First the ephod is described in Exodus 28: 6-14; then the breastplate is described in minute detail, including the instructions for securing it to the ephod.

The ephod was an outer garment, a long, sleeveless tunic, reaching below the waist, possibly a little below the knees. It was formed of a front and a back, fastened by two precious onyx stones on the shoulders. It was made of gold and of fine white linen, embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet, “with cunning work.”

It was held in place by the “curious girdle”; that is, the “skilfully made girdle,” fashioned of the same beautiful materials as those which went into the making of

the ephod. The breastplate, also of the same gold, fine linen, and blue, purple, and scarlet, ornamented with twelve precious stones, was fastened to the ephod by golden chains. No wonder this twofold garment, the ephod and the breastplate, with the girdle, was “for glory and for beauty”! And how eloquently did it speak forth the glories and the beauties of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Once again, the blue, purple, and scarlet remind us of our Lord's heavenly character, His royalty, and His sacrifice. We hardly need dwell longer on this point just here, all-important though it is; for we have already discussed this truth more than once. But let us note particularly that gold also went into the making of the ephod, the breastplate, and the girdle of the ephod. Exodus 39:3 explains how the gold was literally woven into the cloth:

“And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work.”

From this it is clear that the gold was actually woven into the cloth, yet as a separate thread. As the light fell upon this beautiful material, the gold must have glistened in all its glory; the fine white linen, embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet having another glory all its own!

And what a picture of our Lord Jesus in His eternal deity and in His spotless humanity!

- The blue tells us that the eternal God came down from heaven itself;

- The purple, that He is King of kings;

- The scarlet, that He died, shed His precious blood, for His sinning creatures.

- The fine white linen tells to all that this God-Man was holy, absolutely and forever holy!

The gold and the beautifully embroidered linen formed the one ephod, the one breastplate, the one girdle — all composing this garment “for glory and for beauty”; yet the gold and the linen were separate and distinct. Even so our Lord's

two natures — deity and humanity — are both beautiful as only they can ever be, and both are seen in His “altogether lovely” Being.

- He was born a helpless Baby; yet He flung the planets into space.

- He lay in a manger; yet “the cattle on a thousand hills” are His own.

- He was tempted, tested, and tried; yet He could not sin because He was God.

- He worked in a carpenter's shop, and lived among humble folk; yet He could turn the water into wine, and feed the multitudes by His mighty power.

- **He “grew in stature and in favour with God and man”; yet He is “the Ancient of Days,” “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”**

- He lay in the bottom of the boat, asleep on a pillow; yet He arose to still the tempest.

- He was the “Man of sorrows,” weeping with others, shedding tears of agony in the Garden of Gethsemane; yet He turned heartaches into rejoicings when He raised the dead, and gave them back to their loved ones.

- He died, and was buried — a lifeless corpse; yet He arose in triumph by the power of His own Holy Spirit!

Prophets for four thousand years before He was born had foretold His coming to be “Immanuel, God with us.” Yes; the gold and the fine linen were separate and distinct; yet they were woven into the one piece! “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (II Corinthians 5:19).

- The gold could not be separated from the linen without ruining the cloth;

- The linen could not be separated from the gold without twisting the fine wires — ruining both.

- Nor can we separate our Lord's two natures.

If He was not God, then the Bible is untrue, and Christ bore false witness to His

deity — blasphemous thought! Skeptics may seek to rob Him of His deity, but only to their own shame and eternal doom; they cannot alter the truth of God. If Jesus was not God, then His miracles were a stupendous fraud — another blasphemous thought! If He was not God, then His death was less noble than that of the courageous martyrs of all the centuries — yet another blasphemous thought! Jesus of Nazareth was "God . . . manifest in the flesh" (I Timothy 3:16).

The two precious onyx stones upon the shoulders of the ephod were engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel: six names on each shoulder, "according to their birth" (Exodus 28:10). The names engraved upon the breastplate, which Aaron wore upon his heart, were "according to the twelve tribes," as they were encamped around the tabernacle, and as they journeyed on the march. The shoulder is the place of strength; the heart, the seat of affections. Aaron literally carried his people upon his shoulders and bore them upon his heart, ministering for them as their representative before the Lord God.

This is a beautiful picture of how the Lord Jesus carries us and all our burdens, as it were, upon His omnipotent shoulders; and of how He loves us with an everlasting love. (See Isaiah 40:11; 63:9; Psalm 55:22; I Peter 5:7). If we could but take Him at His Word, "casting all" our "care upon him," knowing that He careth for us!

5. The Breastplate.

The breastplate, which was the crowning glory to the ephod, was "foursquare . . . being doubled," a span in length and a span in breadth. Some think it was a kind of bag or pouch, into which were placed the "Urim and the Thummim" (Exodus 28:30). Others hold that the "Urim and the Thummim" are a "collective name for the stones of the breastplate." Of this we shall have more to say a bit later. In any case, this costly breastplate was securely fastened to the shoulder pieces of the ephod by golden chains, and to the ephod also just "above the curious girdle of the ephod," by a lace of blue passed through rings of gold, "that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod."

Can you imagine, my friend, the costly price and the brilliant radiance of this most costly of all the garments "for glory and for beauty"? Each precious stone was large enough for the name of a tribe to be engraved upon it — four rows of stones, with three jewels in each row! They were the sardius, the topaz, and the carbuncle in the first row; an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond in the second

row; a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst in the third row; a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper in the fourth row. All these were set in gold. Nothing else in all the tabernacle was so costly. These were Aaron's treasures!

God tells us that we are His “jewels” (Malachi 3:17). We are very precious to Him, so precious that He paid a very costly price for our redemption, the price of the blood of His beloved Son!

Every beam of light that fell upon Aaron fell also upon the names of his people; and the Father's smile upon His beloved Son, the heavenly Bridegroom, falls also upon His bride; for we have been “accepted in the beloved.” He sees us identified with Christ, crucified with Him, risen with Him, and seated with Him in heavenly places! (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:14; Ephesians 1:3).

The onyx stones upon Aaron's shoulders were alike; but the costly stones upon his heart differed one from another in their glory. We have seen that the names worn upon the shoulders were engraved “according to their birth”; those upon the heart, “according to the twelve tribes.” Even so all the redeemed of God are His by virtue of the new birth in Christ Jesus; but all are not learning in equal measure the fulness of His love.

Some, like John, lean upon His breast; others, like Peter before the crucifixion, follow Him “afar off.” May God help us to walk in close and sweet fellowship with Him, that we may know ever increasingly something of His heart of love. And, whether we do or not, it is reassuring to know that we are His, “bought with a price,” the most costly of all jewels known to man. We are all upon His shoulders, and we are all upon His heart! His mighty strength and His fathomless love are forever ours!

The names, “Urim and Thummim,” mean “lights and perfections'” Whether they were “a collective name for the stones of the breastplate,” or whether they were added to the breast plate, they represent the lights and perfections of the Lord Jesus, the Great High Priest, of whom Aaron was but a type. By these God made known His will to His priest in the days of old. There are comparatively few references to the Urim and the Thummim in the Word of God (See Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; I Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63).

A paragraph quoted from the “Christian Workers' Commentary,” by the late

Reverend James M. Gray, D.D., is suggestive of the significance of these “lights and perfections,” whatever outward form they may have taken in Aaron's breast plate:

“They represent the light and the right that are in the high priest for the enlightenment and reconciliation of those who come unto God by him. He exercises the functions of teaching and sacrificing in their behalf, as the type of the Great High Priest.”

In this connection we need to remember that the high priest in Israel not only represented his people before a holy God; but he also gave to them oracular answers from God. By these God spoke to His people.

It seems hardly necessary to add just here that, in Christ, God has spoken “once for all” to a sinning world (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Why not? He is our Great High Priest!

Israel lost this precious treasure because of her sins. Let us be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit if we want to know the will of God for our daily lives. No; He will never leave us, if we are truly born again; but our sins will separate us . . . from that perfect fellowship which God wants to hold with His own, making plain to them His “good, and acceptable, and perfect will” (Romans 12:2).

6. The Mitre and the “Holy Crown.”

The word, “mitre,” comes from a Hebrew word meaning “to wrap,” or “to roll around.” The high priest's headdress was a kind of turban wrapped around the head. It was made of white linen, the emblem of purity. Upon the “forefront of the mitre . . . upon Aaron's forehead” was “the holy crown,” “a plate of pure gold” upon “a lace of blue.”

Engraved upon this plate of gold were the words, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” (See Exodus 28:36-38; 29:6; Leviticus 8:9).

This golden crown bore witness that Aaron was the representative of God, even as the ephod and the breastplate showed that he was the representative of Israel. It hardly need be added here that it prefigured the kingly glory of Him whose name is Holy! The Lord Jesus is the righteous King, as well as the faithful Priest! And as this beautiful headdress was worn by Aaron, even so our Lord will come one day, crowned with “many crowns” (Revelation 19:12).

Aaron's robes were “for glory and for beauty.” They must have been wonderfully beautiful!

Yet they could never, never compare with the beauty of our Lord, whom we shall see one day in all His uncreated glory. That alone will make heaven heaven! But, wonder of wonders, we shall share His glory; as believer-priests, His bride, we shall reign with Him and be like Him for all the unending ages! “What a wonderful Saviour!”

- THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS
- CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE
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THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS

In our lesson today we have tried to show that Aaron, as the high priest in Israel, represented the Lord Jesus Christ; and that Aaron and his sons represented Christ and His church.

Nowhere is the union of our Great High Priest and His believer-priests more clearly set forth than in the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office. They were brought to the door of the tabernacle, God's dwelling place among His people; and there they were separated, set apart, for their sacred duties.

Likewise, our Lord, the separated One, has chosen us in Him to a spiritual priesthood that is glorious. Before He went to the cross, He said to His eleven disciples who loved Him, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit . . . I have chosen you out of the world” (John 15:16, 19).

First of all, Moses washed Aaron and his sons with water; and water in the Scriptures is a symbol of the Word of God.

Their being washed together speaks to us of the union of Christ and the church in sanctification

— separation unto God.

Christ Himself said to His Father, in His Great High Priestly prayer for His own:

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:17-19).

Again, the Holy Spirit, writing to the Hebrew Christians concerning the risen Lord, said in Hebrews 2:11,

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [i. e., God]: for which cause he

is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

Now it is beyond controversy that our Lord knew no sin, and that His own sanctification implied His being set apart, consecrated to His Great High Priestly work, which began with His death. And it is equally beyond controversy that we, believer-priests, ever need to remember that “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:25, 26).

We were washed “once for all” by the blood of His cross for cleansing from the penalty of sin; but we need daily, hourly, washing by the Word of God for deliverance from the defilement of sin in our pilgrim walk. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” the Psalmist asked many centuries ago; and the Holy Spirit's answer came back, “By taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9). And again we are reminded of Christ's prayer, which we have just quoted, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

After Moses had washed Aaron and his sons at the door of the tabernacle, Aaron was first clothed in the costly garments “for glory and for beauty,” which spoke eloquently of the glories of Christ.

As we have already seen, Aaron's sons were also clothed in white linen garments, foreshadowing the “robe of righteousness” which Christ imparts to His redeemed. Aaron, clothed in his beautiful garments, was the first to be anointed with the holy oil — before the blood of the sacrifices was shed. This, we have observed, suggests the truth that Christ was baptized by the Holy Spirit before He shed His blood on Calvary.

Then the sacrifices were offered; the blood was sprinkled; and Aaron and his sons were sanctified together — by the blood of the sacrifice and by the anointing oil.

Even so we who love the Lord have been crucified and buried with Him. God sees us risen with Him, ascended with Him, identified with Him now and for all eternity.

Moses put the blood of the sacrifice on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. Then he did the same for Aaron's sons.

The lesson is plain:

- The consecrated ear is open to hear the Word of God;

- The consecrated hand is ready to serve the Lord;

- The consecrated foot is guided by His Spirit into “paths of righteousness for His name's sake.”

Our Lord's ear was ever open to hear and obey His Father's voice. His hands were ceaselessly busy, ministering to the sick, the poor, and weary. His feet always walked in the paths of holiness and righteous ness.

May we let Him have our willing ears and hands and feet to do His will! We shall, only as we let His cleansing blood and the power of His indwelling Spirit take us and use us for His own glory.

This anointing oil, a symbol of the Spirit of God, was holy.

- It was claimed by the Lord (Exodus 30:31).

- It was used to consecrate Aaron and his sons, and to sanctify the sacred vessels of the tabernacle.

- It was not to be poured upon man's flesh (Exodus 30:32); for “the flesh” cannot be used by the Holy Spirit to glorify God.

“The flesh”, i.e., our old, sinful nature, must be crucified, and the Holy Spirit must be given the control of our lives, if we would know victory over sin and fruitfulness in His service.

Again, the holy, anointing oil was not to be put upon a stranger, or compounded for any other use (Exodus 30:32, 33).

Even so “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know of them, because they are spiritually discerned”

(I Corinthians 2:14).

Nor can any false creed, denying the Person and work of the Triune God, produce “the fruit of the Spirit.” “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost . . . Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (I Corinthians 12:3; Romans 8:9).

A very beautiful lesson is found in Aaron's feasting with his sons in the Holy Place of the tabernacle for seven days after their consecration to the priesthood.

They were not to leave the Holy Place; but, together, they were to rest and feast upon the food of the priests, even the sacrifice. One day the church, believer-priests, will be translated, caught up to be forever with the Lord. Our Great High Priest will take us into the Most Holy Place, even heaven itself, there to rest with Him and to feast our souls upon Him who is the Bread of Life. At least seven more years will pass after that (while the Antichrist rules on earth) before our Lord returns in glory with His church, to be revealed as the righteous King over all the world.

On the eighth day Aaron and his sons went out of the Holy Place, and the Lord appeared “unto all the people” (Leviticus 9:14, 23, 24). “And Moses and Aaron . . . blessed the people.”

What a picture of that yet future day when our Great High Priest will come out of the Most Holy Place, to appear in glory to all the world!

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory”

(Colossians 3:4).

The door of heaven will open; the King-Priest will descend; and with Him His believer-priests will come to reign with Him over a purified earth. Then this war-weary, sin-sick world will know the fulness of blessing. Then swords shall be beaten into plowshares, and spears into pruning-hooks. “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4).

Of that coming day God has said:

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of die Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

THE LEVITES A GIFT TO AARON — DEDICATED TO GOD

The study of the priesthood in the Jewish tabernacle would be incomplete without some consideration of the Levites and their ministry in this early sanctuary: for they were given to Aaron for service; and Aaron, in turn, gave them back to God as an offering unto the Lord. (See Numbers 8:19, 21).

This foreshadowed a significant and beautiful truth: we, as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, His servants in the world, are the Father's “love gift” to our Lord; and He, in turn, consecrates us and our service to His Father. His intercessory prayer makes this very plain:

“I pray for them . . . which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them . . . I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John 17:9, 10, 15).

As the name, “Levites,” signifies, these servants of the Lord came from the tribe of Levi; so also did Aaron and his sons. The Genesis record tells us that Levi was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. His three sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, from whom the three families of the Levites took their names — Gershonites, Kohathites, and Merarites.

According to the God-given instructions, the Levites pitched their tents on three sides of the tabernacle, between the tents of the other tribes and the sanctuary itself. The tents of Moses, Aaron, and the families of the priests were on the east; there the door of the court was placed.

The Gershonites were on the west; the Kohathites, on the south; the Merarites, on the north. (See Numbers 3:23, 29, 35). Thus the priests and the Levites were nearest to the tabernacle, to minister there for all the people.

When the Shekinah Glory, in the pillar of cloud and fire, moved on before Israel,

during the forty years of wandering, it was the duty of the Levites to take down the tabernacle and see that it was safely carried on the journey. When the Shekinah Glory rested, God was telling His people to rest; and the Levites pitched “the tent of the congregation” in the midst of the camp.

- The Gershonites had charge of the coverings and curtains, the hangings and cords.

- The Merarites took care of the sockets and pillars, the boards and bars.

- The Kohathites were given the sacred vessels and pieces of furniture for their service.

All this ministry was done under the supervision of Aaron, in singleness of purpose. Likewise, all the ministry in and through the church should be carried out under the direction and guidance of Jesus, our Great High Priest, and with but one purpose in view, the honor and glory of Him who died for us!

By nature Levi was unspeakably cruel, as the record of his and Simeon's wicked crime, recorded in Genesis 34:1-31, gives evidence; but by the grace of God he and his descendants were called to the most sacred offices, as priests and Levites.

In this ministry they took the place of the firstborn in Israel, who belonged to God (Numbers 3:12, 13; 8:18). If man had written the Genesis record, doubtless he would have omitted the story of the black sin of Levi and Simeon; but God tells the whole truth. He shows “the exceeding sinfulness of sin,” and our need of a Saviour; “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). We, too, were once “dead in trespasses and sins . . . children of disobedience . . . having no hope, and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:1, 2, 12).

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13). We have been called to serve the Lord as “an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22). Such is the wonder of His grace!

The Levites were washed in the presence of the whole congregation, a picture of our “washing of regeneration” “once for all.” Then they shaved their flesh and washed their clothes, symbolic of their separation from the godless, even as

believers in Jesus are to “come out from among” unbelievers, and to be a separate people (I Corinthians 6:14-18).

When Joshua, under the guidance of God, divided the land of promise among the twelve tribes, no inheritance was given to the tribe of Levi; for the Lord Himself was their portion, and they partook of His offerings (Deuteronomy 18:1, 2).

They were given forty-eight cities, scattered throughout the land, six of which were the cities of refuge. Scattered thus in Israel, their duties and privileges were to minister to the spiritual needs of God's people. The Lord God saw to it that they lacked no good thing (Numbers 35:1-8).

The time came when the Jewish tabernacle was done away. David was old, and he appointed Solomon king over Israel. The story is recorded in the twenty-third chapter of I Chronicles:

“And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites” (v. 2).

All three families of the Levites were there to hear their aged king, the “man after God's own heart,” tell them of their new duties. The wilderness wanderings had long been over. Solomon was to build a beautiful temple to replace the tabernacle. No longer would the Levites need to care for the tabernacle, in which Israel had worshipped for many years.

“For David said, The Lord God of Israel hath given rest unto his people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever: and also unto the Levites; they shall no more carry the tabernacle, nor vessels of it for the service thereof’ (vs. 25, 26).

The new duties of the Levites are outlined in the closing verses of the chapter. They were to “wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord.”

It is a picture of that glorious rest which awaits the people of God in the New Jerusalem. When the pilgrimage of the wanderings of this life are past, the servants of God shall serve Him in the glory.

The aged John tells us something of the wonders of that coming day:

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God

is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:3, 4).

THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD ONLY "A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME"

After all that we have read from the Epistle to the Hebrews in this lesson today, it seems hardly necessary to add that, when "the veil of the temple was rent in twain," the Levitical priesthood was done away — forever set aside by God Himself.

It had fulfilled its purpose; the Great High Priest had offered one perfect Sacrifice forever; there was no further need for the prophetic shadows and types which foretold His coming!

Yet because many are deceived by a false system which establishes a man-made priesthood in the name of Christianity, even today, we add this word of exhortation and instruction. Any manmade priesthood in existence since Calvary is contrary to the express teaching of the Word of God. Moreover, it is inconsistent to allow men to be priests who do not belong to the family of Aaron; and the Jews, as a nation, have been set aside in this church age!

According to the false system which allows human priests, any man, from any family, is eligible to the office. And such as these overlook our Lord's plain command, "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9).

Dear Christian friend, let no man deceive you. Christ is our Priest. And if we trust His atoning work on Calvary, we are His believer-priests, called to serve Him with the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise and fruitfulness in His soul winning.

Today we have sought to look upon His glory as foreshadowed in the work of Aaron and his sons. We have tried to see something of His ministry on our behalf as the perfect Sacrifice, the perfect Intercessor, the perfect Mediator between God and man. As we think upon these wonderful things; and as we realize something of our own exalted position and privileges in Him, as His

believer-priests; our hearts echo the song that came from the heart of Charles Wesley many years ago:

“Depth of mercy, can there be Mercy still reserved for me?

Can my God His wrath forbear?

Me, the chief of sinners, spare?

“I have long withstood His grace,

Long provoked Him to His face,

Would not hearken to His calls,

Grieved Him by a thousand falls.

“There for me the Saviour stands,

Shows His wounds and spreads His hands;

God is love: I know, I feel;

Jesus lives and loves me still!”

~ end of chapter 2 ~ http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/

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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER THREE

THE COURT AND THE GATE

Christ — The Way to a Holy God Exodus 27:918; 38:920

SURROUNDING the tabernacle was a rectangular-shaped court, open to the heavens, with only one entrance, which was the gate on the east. The court was one hundred cubits long, and fifty cubits wide, and was made of “fine twined linen” hung upon upright pillars of brass, which were fastened in sockets of brass (Exodus 27:10). The hooks and fillets at the top of the pillars were made of silver; and from these hooks the white linen “hangings” were fastened. There were fifty-six of these pillars: twenty on the south, twenty on the north, ten on the west, and three on each side of the gate on the east. The pillars and hangings stood more than eight feet high; taller than a man. Thus there was no way, by which to enter the court, except through the gate; for the brass, the white linen, and the silver stood between the outsider and those who were within.

The gate was a beautiful hanging of “blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen,

wrought with needlework” (Exodus 27:16). It was hung by silver hooks upon four pillars, which were fastened in sockets of brass. “The overlaying of’ the “chapiters” of the pillars was of “silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver” (Exodus 38:17).

The description of the pattern for the court and the gate is found in Exodus 27:9-18; that of the finished work, in 38:9-20.

Let us read these two passages very carefully, in order to fix in our minds the details presented. Every item is significant, or else the Holy Spirit would not have included it in the sacred record. And the picture before us points on to Christ Jesus, our Lord.

It is very evident that the gate was a type of Christ, the only Way to God. And we shall see in this study today that the white linen hanging of the court portrayed the righteous demands of a holy God, who Himself bore the penalty of sin, even Christ, our Righteousness.

- Brass speaks to us of judgment;

- Silver, of redemption.

He judged our sins at His cross, redeeming us with His own precious blood.

The lesson before us, therefore, is filled with rich and beautiful truth concerning our salvation in Christ Jesus, the Lord. As we bear in mind that God Himself dwelt in the Holy of Holies, in the Shekinah Glory; that the only access to His presence was through the only gate; and that the very pieces of furniture leading from that gate to the pillar of cloud and fire were laid out in the form of a cross — then we begin to see something of what God was teaching His people through this beautiful object lesson of the tabernacle in the wilderness.

May we let the Holy Spirit show us today some of these precious truths concerning our Saviour and His great salvation.

THE COURT

1. The “Fine Twined Linen” Hangings — A Type of Christ, Our Righteousness.

The white linen hangings of the court speak to us of a twofold aspect of God's holiness:

(1) That righteousness which He requires of all who stand in His presence;

(2) that righteousness which He Himself is in His sinless Person.

Our holy God cannot bear the presence of sin; but in matchless love He provides a righteousness for every sinner who will receive it as a free gift of His grace.

Sometimes we hear men say, out of foolish, darkened hearts, such words as these, “A God of love will not send a man to hell.” It is true that our God is the God of love; and it is also true that He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). Moreover, it is true that sinful man sends himself to hell if he refuses the only way of salvation.

Heaven would not be heaven if sin could enter there. Nor could the sinner endure the blaze of glory that shines in that city of God! The Bible tells us plainly that, when Jesus comes back to earth, to purify the world of sin, the wicked will cry out in agony of soul, saying unto “the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Revelation 6:1517).

Our holy God must require righteousness of all who live in His presence.

In the opening chapters of Paul's Epistle to the Romans we see the whole world, Jew and Gentile, standing on trial, as it were, before the court of heaven; and the verdict is, “Guilty.” “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God . . . There is none righteous, no, not one”

(Romans 3:10, 23).

In the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan God's people were encamped around the beautiful tabernacle.

Inside, in the Holy of Holies, He stood, veritably “in the midst.” But barring all access to His holy presence, except through the one gate, hung a white curtain of “fine twined linen.” It was too high for one to pass over; there were no loopholes, no other openings. The penalty was death to all who might seek to enter by some other way than that of God's provision, through the gate.

Christ is the Gate, the Way into “the holiest of all.” “There is none other name under heaven given among men, where by we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The self-righteous may try to get to heaven by their own “good works,” so-called, by their own moral lives or benevolent deeds.

But God's Word cannot be broken, and He has told us in a thousand ways, “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin”

(Romans 3:20).

For a man to get to heaven by the deeds of the law, by his own good works, he would have to keep every jot and tittle of that holy standard of our holy God; and that is impossible; for “all have sinned.”

Christ Jesus is the only One who ever did or ever could keep that law perfectly. He did it because He was God. His sinless life met every requirement. And He kept His holy law for all who will accept the free gift He offers, “without money and without price.”

“Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of

all” (James 2:10).

He has broken God's law; he is not guiltless. A man need not commit every crime in the calendar, in order to be placed behind prison bars. Let him break one law of the land, and he deserves punishment.

But sinful man has broken all of God's law; even man's own self-righteousness, his own good works, are compared by the Lord to “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6).

The wonder of it is that, once the self-righteous sinner sees by faith a glimpse of Calvary's Cross, he no longer tries to make himself fit for the presence of a holy God.

- He asks the Lord Jesus to create in him a clean heart.

- He abhors himself, as Job did.

- He sees himself as “the chief of sinners,” as did Paul.

- He cries out with Isaiah, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isaiah 6:5).

- He acknowledges that all his own efforts and all his own “righteousnesses are as filthy rags” in the sight of the God of holiness and love.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 3:5, 6).

Not even Satan himself can justly accuse God of unrighteousness, of injustice, in setting His standard of holiness, His requirements of sinners, on so high a plane; for God Himself is the sinner's righteousness. He Himself paid the penalty for sin; and by His holy life He vindicated His holy law. For verily He was without sin!

He was born of the Holy Spirit, of the Virgin Mary. Because He was God, as well as Man, He could not sin. He let Satan tempt Him, not to see if He could withstand temptation, but to prove to angels, men, and demons that He could not sin. He went about doing good, teaching the profound Word of God, proving by

His miracles that He was God. Even in His trial and death they found no fault in Him. His body “saw no corruption,” but was raised in power and great glory. And He lives forevermore — Jesus Christ, our Righteousness!

The Father looks upon all who have put their faith in His cleansing blood as justified from the penalty of a broken law. He imputes Christ's righteousness to the believer's account. That is grace; but it is more; it is grace bestowed with justice. His holy law has been vindicated and magnified, even while the sinner has been justified and pardoned.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Corinthians 5:21).

The “fine twined linen” that formed the court of the tabernacle spoke eloquently of all that God is in His sinless, spotless Person; and of all that He requires of the sinner who would enter into His holy presence unafraid and unashamed. His love provided a gate. In front of that gate was the altar, where the sacrifice was slain. Beyond that altar He stood in His glorious presence, ready to save, ready to hear! Christ is the Gate; Christ is the Altar; Christ is the Priest. And by the blood of His Cross He has opened up the “way into the holiest of all” — forever!

The white linen hanging that surrounded the court of the tabernacle also served as a constant reminder to the sinning Israelite that God's dwelling place is holy. Sin separates the sinner from God. But the Lord provided a gate and an altar; therefore, He was often reminding His people to live apart from the heathen, godless world. The key words of Leviticus are, “Ye shall be holy; for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2).

The Jewish tabernacle is a type of the church, as well as a foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus “in the midst” of His redeemed. We, too, are exhorted by the Holy Spirit to a life of separation from the godless, Christ-rejecting world. Peter quotes the words of Leviticus, saying, “It is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (I Peter 1:16). And Paul reminds us that our bodies are “the temple of the Holy Ghost” (I Corinthians 6:19). Let us keep God's temple clean, by His power and grace — clean from all that would defile it and bring dishonor to His name.

2. The Pillars and Sockets of Brass — A Figure of Christ, Our Sin Bearer.

The altar of burnt offering, where the blood was shed and the sacrifice was made unto God, was covered with brass. The laver, where the priests washed their

hands and feet before entering the holy place, was made of solid brass.

At the altar sin was judged; at the laver daily defilement was cleansed. And both altar and laver were of brass. Thus it becomes very clear that brass speaks to us of judgment. And in the court we see also a picture of sin judged by Christ, our Sin Bearer; for the brass pillars that upheld the linen hangings were erected in sockets of brass.

On the desert sand the sockets were placed; and in the sockets, the pillars. The white linen hangings, which remind us of our righteousness in Christ, rested upon that which typified sin judged at the cross. Apart from Calvary, there could be no righteousness for us! In the desert sands of the wilderness, which is this godless world, the gift of God's righteousness to us is sure and eternal because it rests upon His finished work of redemption.

Christ came into the world to die for sinners, even as He said to Nicodemus.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15).

When the Lord Jesus spoke these words to Nicodemus, He did not need to explain that the serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness was made of brass. Nicodemus knew that story, for he was a ruler of the Jews, well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures. He was familiar with the record found in Numbers 21:59.

Israel had sinned, had despised the bread from heaven, which typified Christ, the Bread of Life.

Therefore, the Lord had sent fiery serpents among them, and many died. When they confessed their sin, and when Moses prayed for them, the Lord told Moses to make a serpent of brass and to set it upon a pole. Whosoever looked at it would live — not whosoever did any kind of work or righteous deed, but whosoever looked!

The serpent speaks to us of the curse of sin; brass, of judgment. When our Lord was crucified, He became a curse for us; “for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”

(Galatians 3:13).

As the Israelite who looked at the brazen serpent lived, even so all who look to Jesus “lifted up” on the accursed tree shall have everlasting life. Not those who seek to obtain salvation by the deeds of the law, but those who look by faith shall live. At the cross the penalty of our sin was judged once for all.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

3. The Hooks and Chapiters of Silver — Symbolic of Christ, Our Redeemer.

The white linen hangings that formed the court were hung upon the pillars by hooks of silver; and the chapiters of the pillars were ornamented with silver. This silver was a part of the redemption money given by the children of Israel.

When the census was taken for the soldiers in Israel, and those “twenty years old and upward” were numbered, each one had to “give a ransom for his soul unto the Lord . . . half a shekel” of silver as “an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement” for his soul (Exodus 30:1116). This money was to be used “for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation,” as “a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord.”

Before an Israelite could be a soldier for God's people, he had to present unto the Lord “a ransom for his soul.” Before we can become soldiers of the cross, we must be redeemed by the blood of the Son of God.

The Israelite looked up to the beautiful tops of the pillars and saw the atonement money. We look up, “unto Jesus,” and by faith we see the nail-scarred hands and feet and the wounded side. And we thank Him for paying so costly a price as a ransom for our souls!

That this redemption money was only a type, is evident from Peter's reference to it many centuries later; for through him the Holy Spirit interpreted its significance, saying, “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Peter 1:18, 19).

Thus the atonement money in Israel was a picture of our redemption through Christ Jesus, our Lord. God made it very clear to Moses that this silver was to be

used in the service of the tabernacle, even as we read again in Exodus 38:25-28.

As we shall see from a later study, the boards of the tabernacle itself rested in sockets of silver made from this redemption money. Exodus 38:28 tells us that Moses took from it a “thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels” and “made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them.”

It must have been an impressive sight — to behold the pillars of brass in sockets of brass, the white linen hangings fastened by hooks of silver, and the ornamental silver chapiters above — all glistening in the sunlight! But how much more impressive is the sight of the God of glory, the spotless Lamb of Calvary, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree — Christ, our Righteousness, our Sin Bearer, our Redeemer!

THE GATE

1. The Beautiful Hanging.

There was no color in the hanging that formed the court; but the gate was made of “blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework.”

The fine white linen was woven with the beautiful colors, all of which speaks to us of the Lord Jesus, who is Himself the Way to God. The hanging over the gate was of the same material as that which made the door of the tabernacle, the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, and the covering that went over the tabernacle and was seen from the inside.

There were four of these coverings, which formed the roof of the tent; but the one which the priests could see as they looked up was the fine linen curtain with the blue, purple, and scarlet, woven with the fine twined linen.

All of these — the hangings that made the gate, the door, the veil, and the curtain above the tabernacle — foreshadowed the Person and work of Christ. Moreover, the gate, the door, and the veil had this in common, that they opened the way into the presence of God.

- The gate gave entrance to the brazen altar and the laver, where sin was dealt with at the foot of the cross, as it were.

- The door led the priests into the place of communion and fellowship with God through prayer and a ministry which pointed on to Christ, the Light of the World and the Bread of Life.

- The veil opened the way into the Holy of Holies, which was a type of heaven itself, God's eternal dwelling place.

In all of these hangings and in the curtain above:

- The fine twined linen speaks to us of Christ's perfect humanity;

- The blue, of His deity;

- The scarlet, of His sacrifice;

- The purple, of His Kingly authority.

- Blue is the color that reminds us of heaven; it is the color of the sky; and our Lord came down from heaven to dwell among men, in order that He might become our Saviour.

Because He was “God manifest in the flesh,” “Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us,” the virgin-born Son of God, He was able to be our sinless Substitute on the cross and our risen Lord Jesus. But God can not die: therefore, He became a Man, in order that He might “taste death” for the sinner.

In the scarlet color we see the symbol of His sacrifice; for does it not remind us of His shed blood? He could purchase us with His atoning blood only because He was Man, as well as God.

Now purple is a mixture of blue and red; and the purple in the fine twined linen that made the gate, the door, the veil, and the curtain of the tabernacle speaks to us of our Lord's deity manifest in the flesh; for truly He was the God-Man. Purple is the symbol of royalty; and one of His beautiful names is that of King of kings and Lord of lords.

The fine twined linen in these hangings reminds us of His sinless, holy life.

There was not a coarse thread, not a flaw, in His whole person. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens”

(Hebrews 7:26).

- Little children were drawn to Him.

- His enemies had to bring in false witnesses to accuse Him.

- Pilate had to admit that he found “no fault” in Him.

- The centurion at the cross testified, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God” (Matthew 27:54).

Every step of His earthly life, from Bethlehem's manger to the cruel cross, verified the words which His Father in heaven spoke on two occasions, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

2. The Four Pillars.

The beautiful hanging that formed the gate was upheld by four pillars set up in sockets of brass, and was fastened to the pillars with hooks of silver.

Again, we are reminded of the lessons we learned from the pillars and sockets that upheld the white linen curtain which formed the court; for here also the brass speaks of judgment of sin at the cross; the silver, of redemption in Christ Jesus.

The fact that there were four, and only four, pillars which upheld the gate reminds us of the four Gospel records of the life of Christ on earth, His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John gave us the story of Him who said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

My friend, have you ever wondered why there are four Gospels? Why not just one?

They tell the same story of our crucified and risen Lord. It is a wonderful fourfold portrait of Christ that the Holy Spirit has given us in the four records of the evangelists; and, while all tell the same story, yet each has a particular purpose in mind, presenting Christ in a way that fits that purpose.

We cannot dwell long here upon this comparison of the four Gospels, but a brief

glimpse at each should help us to understand better how to study these much loved books.

Matthew wrote particularly for the Jews, presenting Christ as their King.

He quoted more freely from the Old Testament than any of the other three, because he was proving that Jesus was Israel's promised Messiah. Matthew traced Christ's genealogy from Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel, and through David, the king. He told of the visit of the wise men and their gifts to the Child Jesus, the King of Jews. Matthew set forth the laws of the kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount; the mysteries of the kingdom in the thirteenth chapter; the Olivet Discourse, pointing on to the end of the age and the second coming of the King in glory.

These are just a few of the facts about this first Gospel record that may well have been foreshadowed in one of the four pillars that up held the gate of the Jewish tabernacle.

Mark emphasized that part of our Lord's life on earth which tells us that He was the faithful Servant of the Lord.

The key words are “straightway,” “immediately,” “forthwith,” words that remind one of prompt obedience to His Father's will. The key verse is Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Mark gives no record of the genealogy or birth of Christ; for who asks for these things concerning a servant? He portrays the One who unceasingly went about “doing good,” ministering to the needs of others, ever demonstrating His mighty power. This is not to say that Mark did not present Christ as the King of the Jews as well. Indeed, all four of the Gospel writers gave abundant testimony that Jesus was eternal God, perfect Man, King of Israel, Servant of God and Saviour of the world. But each of the four emphasized some particular phase of His Person and work, that we might get a more complete portrait of Him. Surely Mark is as one of the four pillars at the gate of the Jewish tabernacle.

Luke presented Christ as the perfect Son of Man.

Therefore, he gave His genealogy through Mary, tracing it back to Adam, the father of the human race. It was Luke who told of the humble shepherds, the

lowly manger, the Boy Jesus in the temple. Luke recorded many of the parables which tell of the compassion of the seeking Son of Man. Let us not forget that Luke magnified the Lord Jesus as eternal God, but he dwelt particularly upon His sympathetic humanity, as the seeking Saviour of men. Luke may have been in the mind of God as symbolized by one of the four pillars in the Jewish tabernacle.

John plainly stated his purpose in verses 30 and 31 of the twentieth chapter; for he wrote to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the eternal God.

The deity of Christ is set forth in John as in few books of the Bible, plainly, repeatedly, forcefully. John gave no record of the genealogy or birth of Jesus, because God has neither beginning nor ending. He opened his Gospel with the majestic statement, “In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God.”

John has preserved for us seven of the most profound of our Lord's discourses, all emphasizing His deity:

- “The New Birth”;
- “The Living Water”;
- “Christ's Equality with the Father”;
- “Christ, the Bread of Life”;
- “Christ, the Light of the World”;
- “Christ, the Good Shepherd”; and
- “His Farewell Discourse to His Disciples.”

John gave us the seven statements of our Lord, declaring that He is the great “I AM” who spoke to Moses from the burning bush. It was John who told us of His raising Lazarus after he had been dead four days. No wonder Christians love the book of John! It exalts the Lord in all His deity and glory! And it may well answer to one of the four pillars in the gate of the Jewish tabernacle.

3. The Only Gate.

We have already seen from this study that there was only one gate of entrance into the tabernacle; and that the penalty of death faced any who might attempt to approach God in any other way. We have also spoken constantly of the fact that Christ is the only Way of Salvation, the only Way to the Father and heaven and eternal life. The central theme of all the Word of God is “Christ, the Way.”

“The Way of the Cross Leads Home!”

Immediately in front of the gate was the altar of burnt offering. There the blood was shed that pointed on to Jesus, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). As the high priest, on the Day of Atonement passed on into the Holy Place, he sprinkled the blood upon the sacred vessels. As he entered the Most Holy Place, he sprinkled the shed blood on and before the mercy seat. God was teaching His children that “without shedding of blood is no remission” of sin (Hebrews 9:22).

Men may preach a social gospel; they may deny the efficacy of the atoning blood of Christ; but when they do, they are trying to enter a man-made way, which is not the way to God. They are thieves and robbers, who seek to enter the sheep fold without entering the only door, which is Christ. They are “blind leaders of the blind,” “wolves in sheeps' clothing.” And they are turning the never-dying souls of men away from the only Saviour of sinners; they are serving Satan and all his hosts.

To deny the virgin birth of Christ, His sinless life, His blood atonement, His bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His intercessory work at the throne of grace, and His coming again in power and great glory — to deny these precious truths, is to crucify afresh the Son of God and to trample under foot the precious blood of the covenant (See Hebrews 6:6; 10:29).

4. The Gate for Sinners.

The Jew who entered the gate of the tabernacle took with him an offering, a sacrifice. And by this act he confessed his guilt, his need of a Saviour. There is no other way for sinful man to approach a holy God. “All have sinned”; and all must go to Him in penitence and confession of sin. The Pharisee may pray “with himself’; but his prayer does not reach the throne of God. The publican knows the secret of answered prayer; for he cries out, from his sense of guilt, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”

5. A Wide, Low Gate — for All.

The gate of the Jewish tabernacle was twenty cubits wide, but only five cubits high. It met the need of the child, as well as that of the full-grown man. The gate had the same area as the door; yet the door was twice the height of the gate and one-half the width. Why? Because the door was used only by the priests, who represent the saints of God.

The lesson is very plain: The gospel invitation is to all the world. “Whosoever will” may be saved! But how few, comparatively, enter in through the gate and on into the Holy Place of prayer and communion with God by faith in the cross of Jesus and His empty tomb! Yet the wide, low gate of invitation to all the world still stands open. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

6. The Gate to Eternal Security.

Once the sinner entered the gate, bringing his sacrifice that pointed on to Christ, he was surrounded by the fine white linen court — safe because of the atoning blood. Sin had separated him from God; but he confessed his sins, figuratively transferred them to the great Sin Bearer, and was accepted before Him.

The white linen hanging that had shut him out from the court now enclosed him. The righteous law of a holy God which had condemned him was now magnified and vindicated in the Person of the coming Redeemer, in whom the sinner had put his trust.

It had been only a step from without the gate into the court that now enclosed him and spoke to him of pardon and peace and eternal life. It is only a step from darkness to light, an acceptance by faith of the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour of sinners; and the blood-bought sinner saved by grace is eternally secure. His soul is committed to Him who always keeps His promise!

The gate of the tabernacle faced the east, toward the sun-rising. Christ is the source of all light; He is the Light of the World; and “in him is no darkness at all.” One day He is coming again as “the Sun of righteousness . . . with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2). My friend, do you know Him as your light and life? If not, will you look to Him for salvation, and be eternally secure by faith in His finished work on the cross?

The gate of the Jewish tabernacle has perished centuries ago, but the gate of salvation stands open, inviting you to enter today. The door of the tabernacle has perished; but Christ is the door, “the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).

The veil of the temple was rent in twain when He died on the cross; God did that — to open forever the way into His presence, through the cross of Jesus. No longer do we need the gate or the door or the veil of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

The One of whom these beautiful hangings spoke has come!

He has opened “a new and living way” into His presence — the way of the cross. There is “nothing between” the redeemed soul and the Saviour! The gate of salvation, the door of fellowship, the veil that gave access into the very throne room of God — these all stand open, forever open to the sinner who will be saved by God's grace.

Christ is the gate; He is the door; He is the veil!

“Behold the Lamb of God! Behold, believe, and live: Behold His all-atoning blood, And life receive.

“Look from thyself to Him; Behold Him on the tree:

What though the eye of faith be dim? He looks on thee.”

~ end of chapter 3 ~ http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/

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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER FOUR “THE TENT OF THE CONGREGATION”

God’s Dwelling Place “In the Midst” of His People Exodus 26:1-37; 36:8-38

IN THE first chapter of this series we mentioned the twofold significance of the “earthly sanctuary” which God told Moses to build “according to the pattern” which He showed him in the mount:

(1) As God’s dwelling place “in the midst” of His people, it foreshadowed the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, who became flesh that He might “tabernacle” among men; and

(2) As God’s dwelling place “in the midst” of His people, it also typified the church, which is the bride of Christ, His body, “an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22).

Thus this tent of the congregation became a remarkable foreshadowing of the glories of Christ, “Immanuel, God with us,” as well as a prophetic picture of the union of Christ and His church and the union of the members of His blood-bought bride one with another.

That is why the Holy Spirit wrote, in Hebrews 9:24, saying,

“Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

He who nearly two thousand years ago “tabernacled” among men is now at “the right hand of the Majesty on high,” interceding for His own, praying that they may be one in Him, even as they live one with another in the bond of unity that only the redeemed souls of men can know. And in the person of His own Holy Spirit He dwells in that living temple which is His church.

There were two “holy places made with hands” in the Jewish tabernacle. These,

as we have seen, were the Holy Place, into which only the priests could enter, as they ministered before the Lord on behalf of His people; and the Holy of Holies, into which only the high priest could go just once a year with the shed blood of the sacrifice that pointed on to Christ. God dwelt in that Most Holy Place, in the Shekinah Glory, literally “in the midst” of His people, Israel. The veil separated these two rooms of the tabernacle, while the door on the east of the Holy Place closed from the view of men the sanctuary where the priests ministered daily before the Lord.

The Holy Place was twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide; the Holy of Holies, ten cubits in length, in width, and in height, a perfect cube. Someone has estimated that the tabernacle was forty-five feet long and eighteen feet wide. The walls were made of boards of incorruptible acacia wood, covered over with gold, and set upright in sockets of silver. These boards were made secure by bars that connected the entire structure. Over the whole there were four coverings. And the “tent” was securely fastened by “pins,” or “nails,” driven into the ground, to which were attached cords that went over the coverings.

As we remember that much gold, silver, brass, and wood went into the making of this sanctuary; as we think of the cost of the coverings of fine linen, goats’ hair, rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, to say nothing of the price of other materials — as we think of the value of all these, we realize that this was a very costly tabernacle. It has been estimated that not less than $1,500,000 must have been required to erect it according to the God-given pattern. That is why God had told Moses to have Israel “ask” for the jewels and riches of Egypt before they left that country on that first Passover night. Had they not earned them during their four hundred years of bitter bondage, when they had not been paid by the wicked Pharaohs of Egypt?

Costly as was this “earthly sanctuary” for God to dwell among His redeemed people, yet silver and gold could not begin to pay the awful cost to the Son of God of purchasing with His own blood “the temple” which is His church, “a people for his name”! We were “bought with a price,” the price of the blood of Jesus, God’s sinless Son and our only Saviour!

- To hold communion with God, Israel’s representative, the priest, had to go to the tabernacle.

- To have fellowship with the Lord, the sinner has to meet Him at the cross.

This is where the Man, Christ Jesus, eternal God and perfect Man, has made possible sweet communion between a holy God and His redeemed children.

There is no other way home. There is no other way of access to the Father. “In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). And in Him alone sinful man finds justification and peace and righteousness and joy — forever!

This communion between God and His children was made possible when the Son of God became Man.

“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:16).

In other words, when He came into the world to redeem His fallen creatures, He did not become an angel; He identified Himself with man by being born of the Virgin Mary.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

When God told Moses to make “a sanctuary,” that He might “dwell” among His people (Exodus 25:8), He knew that, “in the fulness of the time,” He would “tabernacle” among men in the person of the Lord Jesus, and that He would build His church for “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Yes, all this was in the eternal purpose of the eternal God (Ephesians 3:11).

Moreover, as Christ Jesus, our Lord, is “a sun and shield” (Psalm 84:11) — “a sun” for the dark days of trial and sorrow, “a shield” from the burning of “the burden and heat of the day” — even so the Lord God “spread a cloud” over Israel “for a covering; and fire to give light in the night” (Psalm 105:39).

May His Holy Spirit teach us today the glories of Christ as foreshadowed in the tent of the congregation of Israel, with the Shekinah Glory “in the midst.”

THE FOUNDATION — SOCKETS OF SILVER

Exodus 26:19-25; 32

That the Jewish tabernacle was a type of our crucified and risen Lord, as well as a type of the "spiritual house" which is the true church (I Peter 2:5), is seen in the very foundation upon which the boards which formed the walls rested. That foundation was made of silver, provided by the atonement money of the children of Israel.

There were forty-eight boards which, securely braced together by bars, rested in sockets of this silver. Each board stood firmly upon two sockets, fixed in an upright position by two tenons which were placed into their respective grooves in the silver sockets. As there were two sockets for each of the forty-eight boards and four sockets under the pillars that upheld the veil, a total of one hundred silver sockets formed the foundation of the tabernacle. As each pair of sockets weighed ninety pounds, the cost of the foundation was very great; it has been estimated that this atonement money weighed more than four tons.

The redemption money, put to this use by Moses, was doubtless in the mind of the Apostle Peter when, many centuries later, he wrote to his fellow Christians, saying that Christ had become the Foundation Stone of the church at a very costly price, even His own precious blood. This, in part, is what Peter said,

"Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Peter 1:18-20).

And the Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthian Christians, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, said,

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11).

There is no other way of access to a holy God than by the bloodstained cross of His only begotten Son, our Saviour.

We turn to Exodus 30:11-16 to learn how this silver for the atonement money was obtained. When the count was taken of the number of the children of Israel, the Lord commanded that every male over twenty years of age — able to go to war — should pay half a shekel of silver as the atonement money. By this act he confessed that he was a sinner and that he deserved to die, and that, by faith in

the promised Redeemer, he brought to God the redemption money.

The rich were not to bring more; the poor were not to bring less than the God-appointed sum. Thus all acknowledged that they had “sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

In the free will offerings it was not so; each man gave according to his ability. But the price of the redemption money was designated by the Lord God Himself. In this way He was teaching His fallen creatures that natural birth did not admit them into His family, that every sinner had to be “born again” (John 3:38), if he would enter into the kingdom of God. Even from the time God made the “coats of skins” for Adam and Eve, to clothe them, He has been teaching sinful man that “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11).

It was when Israel was being numbered that the atonement money was received for the Lord. Does this not remind us of the vital fact that we should number among God’s people only those who profess to believe in the shed blood of Christ for their salvation? Let us beware of estimating the number of Christians by the population of countries called Christian. The only true Christians are those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, those who have accepted personally the ransom which the Lord has provided.

In Exodus 38:25-27 we find that the vast sum of silver paid by those who brought to Moses the redemption money was presented by 603,550 men, each paying his half shekel. This was the number of men able to go to war. They had been “saved to serve.” And is this not ever God’s plan for His own? He uses His redeemed children to do His service, to tell others and yet others of His “great salvation.”

We have seen that the tabernacle was a type of the church of Christ, and that the silver foundation foreshadowed His redemptive work on the cross. All the boards of incorruptible wood, covered over with gold, stood upon the redemption price, the atonement money of God’s people. Every board of shittim wood was tenoned and mortised into the sockets of silver, even as every member of the true church is united to Christ, rests upon Him, and cannot be separated from Him. If that is not true of you, my friend, then you are not a member of the church of the living God. You may belong to one denomination or another. But unless you are joined to Christ, unless He is the sole Foundation upon which you rest, you are not in the church of God.

The Jewish tabernacle had no other foundation than that of the silver sockets; yet it was never blown down. It braved every desert storm.

The wilderness is a place of rough winds; it is called a “howling wilderness.” But the sockets of silver held the boards upright, and the tent defied the rage of the elements. Even so the born again child of God can testify to the eternal truth that Christ, the Foundation Stone of the church, is the only sure Foundation against all the storms and shifting sands of the wilderness which is this godless world. Satan may do his worst; the church of the Lord Jesus will stand for all eternity. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). These are the words of our living Lord!

Each board of the tabernacle was provided with two tenons — not one, but two; and each tenon was imbedded in its own socket. The word for “tenon” is “hand,” suggesting the hand of faith which lays hold upon the finished work of Christ for a standing before God.

My friend, does the hand of your faith reach out after God? Here is the divine provision for it in the work of Christ. Each board stood upon two sockets. Why two? Because two is the number of competent witness and testimony. The law of Moses said that “at the mouth of two witnesses” a thing should be established (Deuteronomy 17:6).

Under the Jewish law a murderer was stoned to death on the testimony of two witnesses. Thus two is the number of competent witness; and the two sockets for each board in the tabernacle suggest that we know that our salvation is eternally secure! Because God’s Word is “forever settled in heaven,” we may know that we are saved, for all the endless ages!

Moreover, our Lord Himself said, “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19).

Again, as each board stood upon two sockets, so also the same, equal grace is provided for each believer. No Christian is more saved than another, however varied the capacities of the different members of the church may be. Temperaments, experience, opportunities, differ; but not the gift of God’s grace in saving the souls of men!

A groove was made in the socket for the tenon so that, when the board went

down in the socket, the tenon was the exact size for the place provided for it. There is nothing that fits so perfectly the poor sinner's need as does the work of Christ. Faith drops its hand into the place provided for it. Then, just as the tenons, imbedded in the sockets were in visible, so also the believer does not parade his own faith. It is not on exhibition, but is hidden in that upon which it rests. Now the boards were not suspended from the sockets; they did not hold on to them; they rested upon them. So also the believer is not clinging to Christ, or holding on to salvation, as though all depended upon his own strength. He is resting his whole weight upon the provision made by the Lord Jesus Himself, when He finished the work of redemption on Calvary's cross.

Then again, one board was not resting upon the sockets of another board; each had its own socket, although the sockets were all of the same material. There must be personal faith in the same Saviour. I cannot rest upon the faith of my mother.

You must have personal dealings with the Lord, if you are to be saved, my friend. Accordingly, each man in Israel had to present his own half shekel of silver, even as the Psalmist wrote, saying,

"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul is precious" (Psalm 49:7, 8).

Only the precious blood of the Redeemer can avail to purchase salvation for His fallen creatures.

In rearing the tabernacle, the Merarites, one of the three families of the Levites, first put the silver sockets in their places. No boards or bars or hangings or coverings could be put in place until the silver sockets were set in order upon the desert sand to support the whole sanctuary.

Likewise, the Lord Jesus had to die, to pay the price of redemption, in order that we might be born again. There can be no growth in grace and in the knowledge of Him until we are first new creatures in Christ Jesus.

This, my friend, is the message of the sockets of silver. He who "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24) is the only sure foundation; for beside Him, there is no one who can redeem the souls of men!

THE GOLD-COVERED BOARDS AND BARS AND THE RINGS OF GOLD

The walls of the tabernacle were composed of forty-eight boards of acacia wood, covered over with pure gold, and braced together with fifteen bars of the same incorruptible wood, covered with gold, and held in place by rings of gold.

There were twenty boards on the north; twenty on the south; and eight on the west. The hanging that was called the door was on the east. Each board stood upright in two silver sockets, while the boards were firmly held together by five bars on the north, five on the south, and five on the west.

Of the five bars on each of these three directions, four were short; i.e., two above and two below, a middle long bar that reached from end to end, and was passed through the midst of the boards, out of sight. The four short bars were put through rings of gold, which were fastened to the boards. After this manner the wall of the tabernacle was braced together.

We have seen that this sanctuary was a type of Christ dwelling “in the midst” of His church; and in these boards, bars, and rings we see some beautiful and minute details, illustrating this eternal truth.

- The incorruptible wood speaks to us of our Lord’s sinless humanity;

- the gold of His deity — two natures in one Person; for He was sinless, perfect Man, as well as eternal God.

- The boards resting on silver sockets made of the atonement money, also remind us of individual believers.

Each one rests his soul upon the redemption that Christ wrought on Calvary for his personal salvation; yet all believers are bound together by the bond of unity that is found only in Christ, even as all the boards were bound together by the gold-covered bars.

Before the boards were made ready for use in the tabernacle, they had been rooted in the earth, as stately acacia trees. When they were needed for God’s dwelling place, they were cut down, forever severed from the earth. Stripped of their natural beauty, robbed of every leaf and bough, these acacia trees were cut to the God-appointed size and shape. And then they were overlaid with pure gold, a beauty not their own.

What a picture of the child of God! When he gets a vision of Christ, he abhors

himself, in all his earthly pride and self-glory. He is separated from this Christ-rejecting world; for he has set his face toward that heavenly city, “whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). He is “in the world” but “not of the world” (John 17:13, 14).

The axe is laid to the roots of all the false hopes and glories that had been his; and, if he is yielded to his Lord and Saviour, he lets Him shape and mold him according to His own divine pattern — for a life of service now and for eternal service and glory in the life to come.

Having “put off” the “old man”:

- He puts on the “new man” in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 4:22-24).

- He finds his satisfaction and joy in the things of God.

- He has been “crucified with Christ”;

- He is “risen with Christ”;

- He has been made to sit with Him “in heavenly places” (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1, 3; Ephesians 1:3).

Having become a partaker of “the divine nature” in Him (II Peter 1:4):

- He is given a glory and a beauty that only God can bestow, foreshadowed in the golden-covered boards of the tabernacle.

- He has been “accepted in the beloved” Son of the Father.

In the world, yet established upon the redemption that is his in Christ, the foundation stone of the church, his body is the “temple of the Holy Spirit” (I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). And thus he is a “living stone” in that temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (I Peter 2:4).

Each board in the Jewish tabernacle stood upon its own sockets, even as every soul has to accept Christ as a personal Saviour and Lord, in order to be saved. Yet the boards were bound one to another by the bars that united them and held them in one firmly fixed dwelling place for the Lord God “in the midst” of His people. Likewise, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, composed of different

members, is one household of faith, one body, one bride; and each member has a responsibility to his fellow Christians. We are all, in a very real sense, our brothers' keeper.

While the four short bars on the west, north, and south were passed through rings of gold; yet the long, middle bar was made "to shoot through the boards from the one end to the other"

(Exodus 36:33). Thus it was invisible, even to the eyes of the Levites who erected this sanctuary; it was buried in the heart of the boards.

It is a beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus, "whom having not seen," we love (I Peter 1:8), the One in whom the believers are united one to another. Verily He is "in the midst" of His own, unseen except to the eye of faith! And verily in Him we are eternally secure! His promise will never fail:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and 1 give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27, 28).

It has been suggested that the ring is the emblem of love; and that the four outward bars that held the boards together remind us of the four outward tokens of that unseen bond of Christian unity and communion mentioned in Acts 2:42 — "doctrine," "fellowship," "breaking of bread" and "prayers."

When the doctrine of believers is true to our crucified and risen Lord, then we have sweet fellowship one with another, in Him, as we sit around the Lord's Table, and offer our united petitions to the Father in His all-prevailing name.

No board was complete until it had the rings upon it, plainly declaring that no board stood for itself alone, but that it had a connection with all the others. Thus the rings remind us of the eternal link between the believer and Christ; for once the bars were passed through these rings of gold, the whole structure stood firmly fixed. Not only are we, as Christians, linked to Christ for all eternity, but we are also forever linked to one another.

The gold of these rings speaks of the divine tie; for we are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13).

Such is the message of the golden-covered boards and bars and the rings of gold.

We were once lost sinners “in the world” and “of the world.” But we were cut down, so to speak, “crucified with Christ” — yea, “risen with Christ,” and forever placed in gold, our lives hidden “with Christ in God,” and made to rest upon Him who is the only sure foundation (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1, 3; I Corinthians 3:11).

Given a ring of gold, we were eternally linked with Christ and with fellow-believers in Him.

Held together by the four boards of the doctrine of the Word of God, fellowship, the Lord’s Supper and prayer; we are indwelt by the living Christ. That is why “all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom” we “are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:21, 22).

THE COVERINGS

There were four coverings that went over the tabernacle, each of which holds a message for us concerning the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The outer covering was made of badgers’ skins; or, as the Revised Version translates the word, “seal skins,” or “porpoise skins''

Just beneath that was a covering of rams’ skins dyed red; under that, a curtain of goats’ hair; and below that, the beautiful fine twined linen curtain, embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet cherubim.

One standing on the outside could see only the outer covering of badgers’ skins, or seal skins; the priests on the inside of the sanctuary could see only the beautiful curtain of fine twined linen with the figures of cherubim embroidered on it in blue, purple, and scarlet.

Let us begin with the heavy, outer covering, and consider in some detail the lesson each of these coverings has for us. We find them described in Exodus 26:1-14; 36:8-18.

1. The Covering of Badgers Skins.

This outer covering over the tent of the congregation was made of a hard, durable skin or leather, which, as we have seen, commentators call them “seal” or “porpoise skin.” In Ezekiel 16:10 God told His people, Israel, that He had “shod” them “with badgers’ skin.” From this we know that the material which was used for the outer covering of the tabernacle was durable enough for shoes or sandals, which served to protect the feet from the burning sands of the desert.

This strong, durable tent protected the other coverings, the veil, the door, the gold, and the furniture inside the tabernacle from sun and rain, from dew and desert sand.

The outer covering, visible to all from without, suggests to us the humility of the meek and lowly Man of Galilee. Possibly the brown “tent” above the sanctuary looked very much like the tents of God’s people. Likewise, the Christless world has ever considered Jesus as just another man. And His own people, Israel, saw “no beauty” in Him, “no form nor comeliness,” that they “should desire him” (Isaiah 53:2). He was the “Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief’ (Isaiah 53:3).

He was known as “the carpenter’s son.” He had nowhere to lay His head, no earthly home, no human companions who fully understood His mission of love. Even His disciples “forsook him and fled” as He was “betrayed into the hands of sinners.” And in His suffering He endured cruel scourging and mocking. They did spit upon Him in gross insult and contempt. They reviled Him and buffeted Him. In His death “his visage was so marred more than any man” (Isaiah 52:14). The Creator of all things “became poor,” that we “through his poverty might be rich” (II Corinthians 8:9).

The unbelieving world still sees in Him just a good man, possibly a great teacher, a martyr to a righteous cause, whose life ended in defeat at the cross. But even as the priests, on the inside of the sanctuary, looked up and saw the beautiful covering that spoke eloquently of His eternal deity, His divine perfections, His matchless beauty, so also in every age only His loved ones know Him as eternal God and the holy Son of Man. None can see the glories of the sinless Saviour and Lord except those who have met Him at the cross, and have been born again by His precious blood. To these He is “the chiefest among ten thousand,” the One “altogether lovely” (Song of Solomon 5:10, 16).

Just as the outer covering of the tabernacle protected the fine linen curtain from

every stain, just as it protected the gold from the corroding power of the elements; so also the life of humiliation of the Son of Man was without a stain of sin. His deity was in no wise marred. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26). Of Him His Father in heaven bore witness, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). Even the officers, sent by the Jews to take Him; and Pilate, who allowed Him to be crucified, were forced to admit: “Never man spake like this man . . . I find no fault in him” (John 7:46; 19:4).

It was because our Lord was without sin, because He was eternal God, that He was worthy to be our Substitute, bearing the curse of the sins of the world “in his own body on the tree.”

Our own sinful natures will not allow us to enter fully into the depths of the meaning of the sufferings of the Son of God. Yet, as His redeemed children, His “temple,” we may expect to suffer shame and reproach for His name’s sake. The apostles were glad “that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41). Moses esteemed “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward” (Hebrews 11:26).

For every trial our risen Lord gives grace sufficient. Even as the sandals which God provided for His people, made of this same leather that formed the outer covering of the tabernacle, separated them from the burning sands of the desert, so also the cross of Jesus separates us from this godless world. “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord” (Matthew 10:24).

And we may expect to bear reproach from the godless world. He bore the crown of thorns for us! Surely we shall rejoice if we are counted worthy to “know . . . the fellowship of his sufferings” (Philippians 3:10).

When Christ returns in power and great glory to reign, then the badgers’ skins will be rolled off, as it were; and He will shine forth in all His eternal glory and uncreated beauty. Before Him “every knee” shall “bow,” and “every tongue . . . confess” that He is Lord (Philippians 2:10,

11).

In that coming day “we shall be like him” (I John 3:2). As the spotless bride of the heavenly Bridegroom, we shall behold and share His glory.

Then we shall count “the sufferings of this present time” as “not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

2. The Covering of Rams’ Skins Dyed Red.

Underneath the outer covering of badgers’ skins was one of rams’ skins dyed red. In all probability these skins were taken from the rams sacrificed upon the brazen altar as burnt offerings unto, the Lord; for the skin of this sweet savour offering was given to the priest (Leviticus 7:8). Not so the skin of the sin offering, which was burned outside the camp (Leviticus 4:11, 12).

As we shall see from our later study of the five offerings, the whole burnt offering was dedicated to God, and foreshadowed our Lord’s complete consecration to His Father’s will, “even unto death.”

As the ram speaks to us of the vigor and strength and fixed purpose of Christ in setting His face steadfastly toward Jerusalem and the cross, so also this covering over the Jewish tabernacle, made of rams’ skins dyed red, reminds us of His sacrificial death for us on Calvary.

The rams’ skins had to be dyed red, even as our Saviour had to be crucified, “dyed red,” as it were, in His own precious blood. His sinless life could not save us. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6.23); and a sinless Substitute had to die. If we had only His spotless life before us, it could but condemn us for the blackness of our sins!

We could never, never, in our own strength, measure up to His perfect standard of righteousness. Even after we are born again by His Holy Spirit, Satan all too often gets control of our lives, and makes us “grieve the Holy Spirit of God.” Christ had to die — vicariously; and we have to accept Him as our perfect Substitute, in order to be clothed in His righteousness, made fit for His holy Presence.

We get a glimpse of His great love for us, of the depth of His humility, as we see Him facing the cross, in Gethsemane’s garden. As He prayed there, “his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). “When he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared [i. e., trusted]; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:7, 8). It was love that led Him to Calvary!

He gave our first parents an object lesson that pointed on to His cross when He provided for them “coats of skins” to take the place of the fig leaf aprons which they had made to cover their sin and shame. Leaves speak of profession without fruit; the coats of skins were obtained by the shedding of blood. Man may sew together the best leaves of human effort — religious, intellectual, social, and moral; but all his self-righteousness is compared by the Lord God to “filthy rags” in His holy sight (Isaiah 64:6).

No covering that man has devised can make him unashamed and unafraid in the presence of God. But thanks be unto Him! He has provided a robe of righteousness in Christ for all who will put their faith in His atoning blood! Christ Himself is our righteousness!

When Abraham went up Mount Moriah to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, when God stayed his hand, He provided, not a lamb, but a ram, caught in the thicket by his horns. This is very significant as we look for the meaning.

- The lamb speaks to us of the meek and lowly Jesus, the unresisting One, who suffered in our stead;

- The ram, of the strong One who steadfastly faced the cross.

- The thicket may well represent the condition of Israel when our Lord came unto His own.

God had brought a vine out of Egypt, had cast out the heathen nations from Canaan, and had planted His vine in this land of promise. He looked for it to bring forth grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes. The vineyard had become a thicket, filled with thorns and brambles, the curse of barrenness.

- The horns of the ram suggest the kingly authority of our Lord (Psalm 92:10), which furnished the occasion for the Jews, in their envy and hatred, to deliver Him up to death.

The superscription upon the cross was, “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” The ram was caught by his horns in the thicket! How perfectly is the will of God shown in all this! His counsel was to be fulfilled, and the wickedness of the Jews was but the occasion for Him to show the sacrifice He had provided. Christ, in the full energy and vigor of a perfect Manhood, offered Himself as the true Sacrifice, as a covering, which Isaac could never be!

The Lord Jesus, many centuries later, told the unbelieving Jews that Abraham had rejoiced to see His day, and that “he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56). Surely one of the times when Abraham saw by faith the day of Christ was when he offered up the ram instead of his beloved son on Mount Moriah! The ram died; his son lived. Abraham foresaw the coming Saviour; and by faith he inherited eternal life!

The rams’ skins dyed red covered God’s sanctuary without doubt pointing the sinner in Israel on to the One whose whole burnt offering on Calvary should take “away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Again, we remember that the tabernacle in the wilderness was a type of the church, “the temple of the Holy Spirit.” It is the blood of Christ, and that alone, which separates the church from the God-dishonoring, Christ-rejecting, Spirit-resisting world.

Yieldedness unto His perfect will and wholehearted consecration unto Him are learned only at the foot of His cross. Then one day, when we are “face to face with our Redeemer,” clothed in His righteousness, we shall better understand His unfathomable love that led Him to the cross.

Of that yet future day we can sing even now, in the words of the old hymn:

“When I stand before Thy throne,

Dressed in beauty not my own;

When I see Thee as Thou art,

Love Thee with unsinning heart;

Then, dear Lord, shall I fully know Not till then — how much I owe.”

3. The Curtains of Goats’ Hair.

With explicit detail concerning measurements and design God told Moses how the two inner coverings over the tabernacle were to be made: the curtains of goats’ hair just beneath the covering of rams’ skins dyed red, and the beautiful curtains that only the priests could see on the inside of the sanctuary. (See Exodus 26:1-13; 36:8-18).

A careful reading of Exodus 26:7-13; 36:14-18 will make clear to us that the eleven curtains of goats' hair, coupled together — "five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves," the two parts fastened together by "fifty taches of brass" — covered the entire "tent."

Whereas the beautiful, inner covering was made of ten linen curtains, each twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide; the goats' hair covering was made of eleven curtains, each thirty cubits long and four cubits wide. One of the eleven curtains of goats' hair was doubled and hung over the door "in the forefront of the tabernacle," while "the half curtain" that remained hung "over the backside of the tabernacle."

Thus all of the fine linen curtains were completely covered and protected by the pure white curtains of goats' hair.

The extra curtain of goats' hair that hung over the door hid from the gaze of all on the outside of the tabernacle the fine linen hanging on the inside, which was called the door.

It hid also from view the golden hooks and the beautiful chapiters of the five pillars that upheld the door. Only the priests on the inside could see these beautiful materials, which speak to us of the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This white curtain of goats' hair over the door met the eye of the worshipper the moment he entered the gate. And what a reminder it was of the fact that, by faith in the coming sacrifice of the promised Redeemer, his sin had been put away!

Only by way of the door, over which hung the memorial of full atonement for sin, could the priest approach God. It was the only way into the Holy Place, and on into the Holy of Holies, where the Lord God dwelt in the Shekinah Glory.

Sometimes the daily sin offering was a kid of the goats (Leviticus 4:23, 28; Numbers 28:15).

And on the great Day of Atonement two goats were presented unto the Lord: one to be slain, and his blood sprinkled in the Holy of Holies, on and before the mercy seat; the other, to become the scapegoat, symbolically bearing the sins of God's people away (Leviticus 16:5-10, 15-22).

Both were typical of Christ:

(1) He is our Sin Offering, slain for us, His “blood of sprinkling” speaking “better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24);

(2) He is the one perfect Sacrifice, who bore all our sins away, remembering them no more for ever!

When the high priest, on this one day in the year, entered into the Holy of Holies with “the blood of sprinkling,” he approached God, who dwelt in the pillar of cloud and fire, above the mercy seat. He approached Him on the ground of the shed blood.

The Epistle to the Hebrews makes it very plain that the Holy of Holies was a type of heaven, into which Christ, our Great High Priest, has entered “once for all,” with His own precious blood, to atone for our sins. And only upon the merit of His shed blood may we have access unto our holy God, communing with Him in fellowship at “the throne of grace.” (See Hebrews 4:14-16; 9:1114, 23-28).

Of this “throne of grace,” the mercy seat was a significant type. Beneath it, in the Ark of the Covenant, was the broken law; for in the ark the Ten Commandments were kept. Above it was the glory of God, demanding righteousness. But upon and before the mercy seat was the sprinkled blood, foreshadowing the precious blood of the perfect Sacrifice who was to come.

And the blood-sprinkled mercy seat hid from view the broken law!

Instead of a judgment throne, demanding the penalty of the broken law, to be executed upon the sinner; instead of a judgment throne, demanding righteousness from the sinner, whose guilt necessitated a verdict of death; it was a mercy seat, a “throne of grace,” where the high priest, as the representative of a guilty people, could find pardon and peace.

- Not that God’s holy law was not vindicated; it was, in the death of His Son!

- Not that it was not magnified; it was, in the willing sacrifice of the only One who could be a sinless Substitute!

Israel deserved to die; the guilty Gentile world deserves to die. But by the blood of Jesus, applied to the guilty heart by faith, the sinner is accepted before God on the merit of His death, whose blood, shed for the remission of sin, paid all the debt of a guilty world. God’s holy law is forever vindicated. He is “just, and the

justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). And the pardoned sinner, redeemed by the perfect Sin Offering, is no longer afraid to meet a holy God. Of this blessed truth the curtain of goats' hair, which hung over the door of the tabernacle and above the fine linen curtain, speaks in no uncertain terms.

When the priest placed his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, and sent him away into the wilderness, he was portraying, in shadow and in type, what our Lord did for us when He bore away "the sin of the world." (See Leviticus 16:21, 22; John 1:29). Hear what His Word tells us of His full and complete forgiveness, freely offered to the penitent sinner who accepts Him as his perfect Sin Offering:

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" (Isaiah 44:22, 23).

"Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isaiah 38:17).

"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us"

(Psalm 103:12).

"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 10:17).

As we bear in mind the fact that our Lord Jesus was the Lamb of God, "without blemish and without spot," we realize that He was worthy to become our Substitute on Calvary. Of His holy, sinless life the pure white curtains of goats' hair plainly spoke. His Father in heaven bore witness to His sinlessness when He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Son could say, without fear of contradiction, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). John the Baptist, Jesus' own works, His teachings, the apostles, the whole Word of God — all these prove finally and forever that Jesus of Nazareth was the holy Son of God. This is why the Holy Spirit could say of Him, through the Apostle Paul, as He became our Sin Offering,

"He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the

righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

4. The Beautiful Curtain of Fine Twined Linen.

In an earlier lesson we observed that the hangings which formed the gate, the door, and the veil of the tabernacle were of the same material as that of the inner covering above this tent of the congregation — fine twined linen, embroidered with cherubim of blue, purple, and scarlet. All of these hangings and curtains speak to us of the glories of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

And again we are reminded of the fact that the priests in the Holy Place and the high priest in the Holy of Holies could see nothing but these beautiful foreshadowings of our blessed Lord — these and the gold, which also pictured His deity.

Not only so; but no one other than priests could behold these things of glory and beauty. Even so, in this Christian era, only the believer-priests; the born again children of God, can see in the lowly Jesus of Nazareth all the divine perfections of His eternal deity and matchless glory. The unbelieving world sees Him only as a man; His loved ones see Him as the God-Man, the one "altogether lovely."

We turn to Exodus 26:16; 36:8-13 for the Holy Spirit's description of the beautiful covering which the priests within the sanctuary saw as they looked up.

Five curtains were coupled one to another in one piece; five in another; while the two sections were fastened together by golden clasps which took hold of loops of blue. The pure white linen of these curtains suggests to us our Lord's perfect humanity. There was no flaw in His Being; there was no coarseness. He was altogether without sin! His own Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, not to see if He would sin; but to prove to men, angels, demons, and the devil himself that He could not sin!

Cherubim of blue, purple, and scarlet were embroidered upon this fine twined linen for the gate, the door, the veil, and the inner covering above the tabernacle.

Blue is the heavenly color, and is suggestive of Christ's deity. He repeatedly told the Jews, when He was on earth, that He had come down from heaven, that He and the Father were one, that He was the great "I AM" who had spoken to Moses from the burning bush. (Read the book of John for many of these references). He willingly received worship, allowing His disciples to call Him

“Lord” and “God.” He was ever the all-powerful, all-wise Creator, the Lord God!

Scarlet speaks to us of sacrifice. Our Lord came down to earth to die for sinners. He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). He shed His own precious blood for guilty man, that He might lead “many sons unto glory” (Hebrews 2:10), that they might share with Him the joys of heaven and eternal life.

Never can we forget the scarlet thread of sacrifice that runs throughout the inspired Word of God. The coats of skins which God provided for Adam and Eve; Abel’s lamb slain; Abraham’s offering of Isaac; the Passover lamb; all the blood shed on Jewish altars — these speak to us of the precious blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God. And when we see Him in the glory, we shall see “the print of the nails in His hands” and His wounded side. The Lamb on the throne is the Light of heaven. And only by faith in the blood of His cross shall His redeemed be there, forever with Him.

Purple is a mixture of blue and scarlet; and it is the color of kings. The eternal God had to become a Man, in order to die. He had to be God all the while, in order to be the sinless, allpowerful Saviour. He was very God and perfect Man. And He will one day be acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords. “Every knee shall bow” before Him.

He it is whose voice shall raise the dead; and He it is who is the “Judge of all the earth” (John 5:19-30; cf. Genesis 18:25).

The cherubim are symbols of our Lord’s majesty and power.

Cherubim execute His holy will, both in mercy and in judgment. As the priests within the Lord’s sanctuary beheld the beautiful cherubim of blue, purple, and scarlet above and on the door and the veil, possibly with outspread wings, they must have worshipped with songs in their hearts akin to those the Psalmist sang:

“I will abide in thy tabernacle forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings” (Psalm 61:4).

“Be merciful unto me, O God . . . for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge” (Psalm 57:1).

“Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice”

(Psalm 63:7).

“He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust” (Psalm 91:4).

Someone has said that the three outer coverings over the tabernacle suggest to us rest of conscience, while the beautiful covering is symbolic of rest of heart. The work of Christ speaks peace to the guilty conscience; the Person of Christ speaks peace to the heart. We thank Him for His great salvation; we love Him for His glorious Person. If faith takes hold of these marvels now, “what shall it be when we see Him!”

The ephod of the high priest was made of this same beautiful material. Herein we are reminded of the Christian’s adornment with the righteousness of Christ. Aaron’s robes of glory and beauty cost him nothing! And our robes of righteousness are the free gift of God’s grace! We are crucified with Christ, risen with Him, identified with Him in His death and resurrection, even as we shall reign with Him in glory forevermore.

As we meditate upon the glories of Christ as seen in these beautiful hangings and linen curtains, our hearts reecho the doxology of the aged John, who saw the risen Lord on the Isle of Patmos many centuries ago:

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:5, 6).

THE PINS AND CORDS

Pins of brass and cords of linen held the tabernacle and the outer court securely in place. These pins, or nails, were driven into the ground; the cords were fastened to them, and passed over the outer covering of badgers’ skins, tying down the coverings of the tent, as well as holding in place the linen curtain in the outer court. (See Exodus 27:19; 35:18). The word “pin” is also translated “nail” (Judges 4:21; 5:26); and “stake” (Isaiah 33:20; 54:2).

For the typical teaching concerning the pins and cords of the tabernacle, we

quote some striking paragraphs from the pen of the late I. M. Haldeman, D. P.:

“The pin or nail is a symbol of our Lord. He is called a Nail — ‘A nail in a sure place.’ This is set forth in a remarkable scripture in Isaiah 22:20-25. The Lord speaks of a certain Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, as His servant. He says He will commit His government unto him.

“Then he makes this far-reaching promise:

“ ‘And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house.’

“After His death, His resurrection, and ascension into heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ applied this scripture to Himself. In a letter which He sent through the Apostle John to the church in Philadelphia, a city in the province of Asia, He said, ‘He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth . . .’ (Revelation 3:7).”

Then Dr. Haldeman goes on to enlarge upon this Scripture, making clear that our Lord Himself is “the nail in a sure place,” to whom this far-reaching prophecy refers. As such, He is the Prince of the house of David, and will one day take the throne of His father, David, and rule over the house of Jacob forever! (See Luke 1:32, 33).

In verse 25 of this prophecy quoted from Isaiah 22 Dr. Haldeman cites further a significant reference to the Antichrist, who will pose as “the nail in a sure place,” but will be a counterfeit from the devil himself. We know that he will make a covenant with the Jews during the seventieth week of Daniel’s prophecy; and we know that he will be “removed, and be cut down, and fall,” even as the Holy Spirit plainly tells us in this passage. His doom will be sealed when the Lord shall return in glory, to set up His millennial kingdom, delivering His ancient people, Israel, from this false Christ, this Satan-inspired impostor. Then the beast and the false prophet shall be “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20).

The pins, or nails, of the tabernacle were made of brass; therefore, they did not rust. As they withstood every desert storm, even so Christ’s holy life withstood

every onslaught of Satan. How minutely do the many details of this God-given pattern for the tabernacle in the wilderness foreshadow the glories of our crucified and risen Lord!

The cords suggest the drawing and holding power of Christ. He binds us and holds us eternally secure with His cords of love! Again, “the pins and cords went together.” Even so the Person and the work of Christ must go together. He is our Surety; He is the Anchor of our souls. In Him we are forever safe! (See Hebrews 6:19, 20; Colossians 2:7).

THE DOOR — THE WAY INTO THE HOLY PLACE

The beautiful hanging that was called the door was up held by five pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold and set upright in sockets of brass. (See Exodus 26:36, 37; 36:37, 38). This hanging was fastened to the pillars by hooks of gold. The chapiters “with their fillets” must have been beautiful, visible only to the priests within the sanctuary. Here, as elsewhere in the tabernacle, the brass sockets speak of judgment upon sin; the gold symbolizes Christ’s deity; the fine linen suggests His perfect humanity; while the blue, purple, and scarlet cherubim remind us of all the glories of our Lord in His deity, His sacrifice, His royalty, and His divine authority and power to execute His holy will.

The ordinary Jew could not enter through the door into the Holy Place; only the priests had this privilege of fellowship and communion with God. “The way into the holiest of all” had not yet been opened — not while “the first tabernacle was yet standing” (Hebrews 9:8).

“The way into the holiest,” even heaven itself, had not yet been opened by the blood of Jesus’ cross; that is why only the priests, the representatives of God’s children, could enter this holy sanctuary, which was a type of heaven and the presence of God.

All the other believers in the promised Redeemer could enter through the gate, and present the sacrifices at the brazen altar, acknowledging their faith in the Saviour to come. But that was as far as they could go. They were saved by faith in the blood of Jesus, which was to be shed for sinners of all ages. But only the finished work of Christ on Calvary opened the way to perfect fellowship and communion with a holy God.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He said plainly: “I am the door of the sheep .

. . by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture . . . I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:7, 9, 11).

My friend, do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Way to heaven and eternal life? You may know about Him, yet not know Him as your personal Saviour and Lord. Receive Him into your heart by faith; become a believer-priest, a member of His bride, His church; and you will enter into His presence now by faith, and in the endless ages to come you will share and behold His glory. Christ is the Door!

The story is told of two men, one of whom knew only about Christ, the Good Shepherd; the other knew Him as a personal Saviour and Friend. The first was a young actor; the second, an elderly saint of God. They were both sitting among friends one evening when the young man was asked to read "The Shepherd Psalm."

At first he hesitated; then he agreed to do it if, afterward, his elderly friend would read this priceless Hebrew poem and song of praise. When the young actor had finished reading the Psalm, there was a burst of applause from the circle of friends, so beautiful was his expression.

Then the old man rose to his feet; and in a quivering, piping voice, made feeble by many years, he too, said the twenty-third Psalm. But what if his voice was thin and weak! His face was aglow! His heart was singing "The Shepherd Psalm"!

When he sat down, there was no applause, but there was not a dry eye in the room. The young actor then spoke again; and this is what he said, "My friends, I know the Psalm; but this man knows the Shepherd!"

Do you, my readers, know the Shepherd in all His beauty and loveliness and grace? Enter today through the Door, into the sheepfold. Then you, too, will love the sound of His voice; you will love to follow Him, wherever His will may guide you now, and on into His presence and glory forever.

THE VEIL — A TYPE OF "HIS FLESH .

In Exodus 26:3133; 36:35, 36 we read the description of the veil, which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. We have already observed

that it was made of the same beautiful materials as were the gate, the door, and the inner covering above the tabernacle. Nor do we need to dwell longer here upon the significance of the fine linen and the cherubim embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet; for in all of these hangings and curtains the symbolism was the same, foreshadowing the glories of the Person and work of Christ.

BROKEN FOR US”

The veil was hung by golden clasps upon four pillars of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, and set upright in sockets of silver. Again, the incorruptible wood speaks to us of Christ’s sinless life on earth; the gold, of His deity; the silver, of His finished redemption.

The Holy Spirit does not leave us to question the significance of the veil which separated the two rooms of God’s earthly sanctuary; for in Hebrews 10:20 we are told plainly that “the veil” was “his flesh” — the broken body of our Lord Jesus, through whose death we have access unto the Father. Listen to His Word:

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest [Jesus] over the house of God; let us draw near . . .”

(Hebrews 10:19-22).

The unrent veil in the Jewish tabernacle, and later in the temple in Jerusalem, closed “the way into the holiest of all” from the gaze of men. Only the high priests, as we know, could enter the Most Holy Place, where God dwelt in the Shekinah Glory; and even the high priest could enter there but once a year, on the Day of Atonement, not without the blood of the sacrifice which pointed on to Christ.

In all this God was saying to His people something like this:

“Stay back; do not draw near My Holy Presence, lest ye die. The one perfect Sacrifice has not yet shed His blood. Full atonement for sin has not yet been made. Only the high priest, as your representative, may draw near for a moment, as it were; but even he may not sit down — the work of redemption is not finished. And even he may approach Me only because of the blood-sprinkled

mercy seat, which hides from view My broken law."

But the day came when Jesus died! And as He hung upon the cross, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Matthew 27:51; cf. Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

God did that! They tell us that "the veil was so woven together that two pairs of oxen attached to either edge and driven in opposite directions could not tear it asunder. It was not stretched, drawn tight and fixed. It hung in a loose fold. It could not be cut or torn by a direct stroke; it was too soft and yielding for that" (I. M. Haldeman).

Josephus, the great Jewish historian, tells us that the veil was six inches thick. God rent asunder that veil — from top to bottom; not like man, from bottom to top. They tell us that the unbelieving Jews sewed the rent veil together again; but their vain attempts could never, never close "the way into the holiest of all," even heaven itself, which had been forever opened by the broken body and shed blood of the Son of God!

The veil was rent in twain while hanging between earth and heaven, even as Christ was crucified, lifted up between heaven and earth on a Roman cross. When He cried out in triumph over sin and death, saying, "It is finished!" — even at that hour the Passover lamb was being sacrificed upon the brazen altar in the temple court (See Matthew 27:46, 50; John 19:30).

It was the time of the evening sacrifice; and Christ Himself was the Passover Lamb!

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — all are careful to tell us that He was crucified on the feast of the Passover; and Paul says plainly that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7).

By the rending of the temple veil, God was saying to His redeemed children something like this:

"Draw near unto Me, My children, even unto the throne of grace. Do not be afraid. Above the broken law is the blood-sprinkled mercy seat; for your Passover Lamb has sprinkled His own blood before the throne of grace. Your perfect Substitute has died in your stead. A full atonement has been made for sin — 'once for all. ' No longer need you go to an earthly priest; the priesthood has

been done away. Christ is your Priest—your Great High Priest. His blood is efficacious to cleanse from all sin. His prayers at the throne of grace avail! He is dealing gently with you. My children, draw near unto Me by faith, through prayer and worship and praise, ‘through the veil... that is to say, his flesh’!”

Standing in His presence, by faith, we are unafraid; our souls shall never die; for the broken law is covered by His precious blood. And one day we shall see Him “face to face” — to worship Him forever for His unspeakable love!

“What a wonderful Saviour!”

“Let us draw near . . . Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 10:22; 4:16).

SAVED TO SERVE

As we bring this lesson to a close, we are overwhelmed at the thought of the goodness and the grace of God.

We have but touched the fringes, as it were, of the depth of spiritual truth, foreshadowing the glories of our Lord Jesus as set forth in the Jewish tabernacle. Doubtless when we get to heaven, we shall still be finding out, from all these things, hitherto unfathomed truths concerning God’s grace.

But to know even now, in this world of sin and tragedy and sorrow, that God dwells “in the midst” of His own — this gives peace and joy that “none but His loved ones know.”

As we praise Him for His grace, may His Holy Spirit empower us for His service, that we may tell others, and yet others, of His never-dying love!

~ end of chapter 4 ~
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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE BRAZEN ALTAR

A SHADOW OF THE CROSS Exodus 27:18; 38:14

WHEN the Israelite passed through the gate into the court of the tabernacle with his offering, he stood before an altar made of wood covered over with brass. Although the five different offerings were presented to God here, yet this "brazen altar" was called by the Holy Spirit "the altar of burnt offering" (Exodus 38:1); and the burnt offering was only one of the five.

We shall see the significance of this name in this study and in our next lesson, which will have to do with the different offerings required of Israel by her righteous God.

The New Testament, especially the book of Hebrews, makes it very plain that this altar foreshadowed the cross of the Lord Jesus, and that the sacrifices offered thereon pictured in type His broken body and shed blood on Mount Calvary. This is what the Holy Spirit meant when He said, through the inspired apostle,

"We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:10-14).

These wonderful words were addressed to Hebrew Christians who had left the temple worship, following the death and resurrection of Christ. The temple was still standing; and the nation of Israel, as a whole, still rejected Christ as her Messiah. But the Hebrew Christians, having withdrawn from the temple worship because they realized that the Lord Jesus had come to fulfill the Mosaic Law and to put an end to all the ceremonies and ritualism that had foreshadowed His coming into world, these Hebrew Christians were being bitterly persecuted by the unbelieving Jews for their stand. That was the immediate occasion for the Epistle to the Hebrews — to establish the young Jewish believers in the faith, to encourage them in their persecutions, and to warn them not to return to Judaism, which system had crucified the Lord of glory.

The Holy Spirit was proving, from the Old Testament Scriptures, that Christ is better than Judaism, which was only "a shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1).

Within a few short years after Christ died and rose again, God permitted the Jewish temple to be destroyed; it was no longer needed to show forth the promised Redeemer. He had already come! But until it was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Roman emperor, Titus, the Christless Jews still offered the sacrifices in the temple, still continued with the empty ceremonies and ritual that had already been "done away" in the Lord Jesus.

That is why, in the verses which we have just quoted from the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews, the Holy Spirit said that "we have an altar"; that is, the cross of Jesus, "whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle."

Those who rejected the Lamb of God had no part in the worship at the foot of His cross!

The bodies of the animal sacrifices for the sin offering and the trespass offering were burned outside the camp of Israel; that is why the Lamb of God "suffered without the gate" of Jerusalem when He died upon the accursed tree.

He came to fulfill the law!

Surely the Hebrew Christian would not be ashamed or afraid to "go forth therefore unto him without the camp" of the nation that had rejected the only true and worthy Sacrifice! It would be a privilege thus to bear "his reproach." And for every trial suffered here, an abundant reward awaited the Christian in

that “continuing city . . . which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

My Christian friend of today, whether Jew or Gentile, are you willing to suffer shame and reproach and persecution, if need be, for the Lamb of Calvary? I ask myself the same question.

He became “a curse for us,” bearing our reproach, even the sins of all the world. May He help us, by His grace, to rejoice in trial for His name’s sake.

It is a wonderful lesson that lies before us today.

- The cross of our Lord is our altar.

- The brazen altar of burnt offering was but a faint shadow of the cross.

This was a part of the meaning implied by the Spirit of God when He wrote, saying that the law of Moses was “a shadow of good things to come.”

As we compare the description of the pattern of the brazen altar which God showed to Moses in the mount (Exodus 27:18) and the description of the finished altar (Exodus 38:14) with the Holy Spirit’s explanation of the meaning of this altar of sacrifice, as set forth in Hebrews and in other portions of the New Testament, we shall praise God, with enlightened hearts and minds, for the wonders of the meaning of Calvary.

“AN ALTAR OF SHITTIM WOOD” COVERED WITH BRASS

TWO materials went into the making of the altar of burnt offering: a very durable wood called “shittim wood,” or acacia, and a complete covering of brass. Three other pieces of furniture, all in the tabernacle and all covered with gold, were made of this same “incorruptible” wood. And in each case the shittim wood pictured the spotless humanity of our Lord.

In our last lesson we saw that the brass typified judgment borne for us; whereas the gold, seen only by the priests in the sanctuary itself, was a symbol of Christ’s deity and glory. None but His blood-bought children know Him as very God! But on the outside of the sanctuary, in the open court, visible to all who entered through the gate, there were the altar of burnt offering and the laver of brass, reminding the sinner who approached God that “the wages of sin is death,” and

that the defilement of sin had to be cleansed before any child of Adam might enter into the Lord's sanctuary.

In the altar of burnt offering the brass was also a symbol of "the all-enduring strength" of Jesus, "the mighty God." He was, indeed, the God-Man, perfect in His humanity, without sin; at the same time eternal God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Judge of all the earth.

Before He was born in Bethlehem, the Angel Gabriel told Mary that He was to be the holy Son of God. When the apostles prayed, applying the prophecy of the second Psalm to Christ, as they were guided by the Holy Spirit, they referred to Him as the "Holy Child Jesus."

During His earthly ministry even the demons bore testimony to the fact that He was "the Holy One of God."

And both Peter and Paul said that the sixteenth Psalm was a prophecy of His resurrection; for the body of the sinless Son of Man "saw no corruption." (See Luke 1:35; Acts 4:27; Mark 1:24; Acts 2:27; 13:35).

The body of Jesus was raised from the dead! Thus Old Testament and New tell us of Christ's spotless, incorruptible life on earth — first in prophecy, then in fulfillment. And these passages quoted may be multiplied manifold.

- His life, His teachings, His miracles of grace, bear witness to His sinlessness.

- The Father's voice, His disciples' testimony, even the admission of Pilate and the centurion and the thief on the cross, declared the spotless character of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

The wood of the altar of burnt offering was completely covered with brass, giving strength to endure the fire that was kept burning day and night as the continual sacrifices were being offered to God.

Had the Lord Jesus been less than God, He could not have borne the anguish, the fires of testing, that He suffered on the cross. Had he been less than God, He could not have been the spotless Substitute for the sinners' guilt.

The incorruptible wood and the brass remind us of these precious truths.

“THE ALTAR . . . FOURSQUARE”

God had said to Moses, when He gave him the pattern in the mount,

“Thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits” (Exodus 27:1).

It has been suggested that the altar was foursquare, the same on all sides, to show forth completeness and equality.

- “God is no respecter of persons.”

- “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, bond and free — all must be washed in the blood of Jesus, if they are to stand before a holy and righteous God.

Nicodemus, the respectable, highly educated ruler of the Jews, went to heaven just as the dying thief was received into Paradise, on the merit of the atoning blood of Christ.

The sinful woman of Samaria, the self-righteous Saul of Tarsus, stumbling Peter, mercenary Matthew — all were given new hearts and changed lives on the basis of the cleansing, transforming blood of Christ.

Not only was the brazen altar foursquare, offering equal opportunity to all; but it rested on the ground within reach of all.

It was only three cubits high. There was no ladder to climb, in order for man to place the victim upon the altar; nor can the sinner reach heaven by any upward progress of his own. God had to come down to sinful man. He was Jacob’s ladder, the only Way to heaven and eternal life.

There was no abatement of the penalty because of the worthiness of the

Substitute — all was foursquare. He who knew no sin became our Sin Bearer. From Him even His righteous Father turned His face away when He bore our sins “in his own body on the tree” (I Peter 2:24).

“THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR”

At each of the four corners there was a horn or projection, of one piece with the altar proper, even as God said to Moses,

“Thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass” (Exodus 27:2).

At least two significant facts were associated with the horns of the altar: there the innocent victim was doubtless bound as the blood was shed; and the horns of the altar were a place of refuge in time of trouble.

Psalm 118 was always the concluding anthem of the Jewish Passover Feast; and it is believed that this was the “hymn” which our Lord sang with His disciples at the Last Supper. Of course, we know that the Psalms were Hebrew poems, set to music, and used in the temple worship.

Now the significant fact is that Psalm 118 is without doubt one of the Messianic Psalms. And in verse 27 we read these heart-searching words, “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.”

Evidently the custom was to bind the animal sacrifice, presented alive to God, to the horns of the brazen altar. And when the Holy Spirit applied the figure to our Lord, He used this familiar custom to show us that our heavenly Sacrifice was bound to the horns of the altar, as it were, by the cords of love — His own fathomless love!

It was His love that led Him from heaven’s glory to Calvary. When He set His face steadfastly toward Jerusalem and the altar, which was His cross, He knew the anguish of soul, the suffering and sorrow that He was to bear for a guilty world. The love of Christ that passeth knowledge nailed Him to the accursed tree!

The horns of the altar were sprinkled with the blood of atonement (Exodus 29:12); and Calvary's cross was stained with the precious blood of our Lord and our God. The blood-sprinkled horns of the altar pointed to the four corners of the earth; the cross of Jesus towers above "the wrecks of time," inviting all men of all ages to look unto Him for eternal life.

The cross of Jesus offers a worldwide remedy for a guilty world.

To the horns of the altar the guilty fled for refuge; and to Christ the sinner flees for safety from the righteous judgment of God.

Two men who lived in the days of David and Solomon stand out before us in striking contrast — Adonijah and Joab. Both fled for safety to the horns of the altar. Adonijah was spared at the time, though afterwards executed for a later rebellion; whereas Joab was slain, even at the horns of the altar. (See I Kings 1:50-53; 2:28-34).

Why the difference?

It seems as though Adonijah's finding refuge and safety during David's lifetime speaks to us of mercy in this age of grace; while Joab's execution during the reign of Solomon foreshadows swift and certain judgment upon all rebels during the reign of Christ, the greater than Solomon. "Now is the day of salvation." It will be too late for the Christ-rejecting word to look for mercy when they see the righteous King coming again in glory to reign. If they reject His mercy now, they will meet Him as the holy and just Judge of all the earth.

All the vessels used at the altar of burnt offering and the grate on which the sacrifice was consumed were of brass — again reminding the sinner of judgment borne by the substitute, a type of the only Substitute for the guilty one. There were the brass pans to receive the ashes of the victim, the shovels, basons, fleshhooks, and firepans.

. AND GRATE

. OF BRASS"

"THE VESSELS

The “grate of network of brass” was to be “even to the midst of the altar” (Exodus 27:45).

That means that the grate on which the sacrifice was burned was one and one half Cubits high, for the altar was three cubits high (27:1). Thus the height of the grate was exactly the height of the mercy seat which covered the Ark of the Covenant, in the Holy of Holies. It is a beautiful truth — that God’s justice and His mercy are of equal dimensions.

His justice demands the vindication of His holy law; but His mercy provides the Sacrifice to put away sin, paying the penalty in the sinner’s place.

The Psalmist expressed it in words we love to remember.

“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other”

(Psalm 85:10).

“THE BRAZEN RINGS” AND THE STAVES

When God was showing Moses the pattern in the mount, He said,

“. . . and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof . . . And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar to bear it” (Exodus 27:47).

The priests and the Levites had complete charge of all the sanctuary. Before Israel journeyed on the march, the priests went into the Holy Place and into the Holy of Holies, and covered all the sacred vessels and pieces of furniture before the Kohathites, one of the three families of the Levites, carried them on the journey. The Kohathites were not to “touch any holy thing, lest they die” (Numbers 4:15; cf. 4:1-15).

These Levites were to carry the pieces of furniture by the staves that went through the rings.

For the golden-covered articles inside the sanctuary, the rings were made of gold; while the staves were covered with gold. For the altar of burnt offering the rings were of brass, the staves covered with brass.

In this manner these vessels of the tabernacle and all connected with the worship were protected from the gaze of men; and in this manner they were reverently carried on the march.

Of course, every Israelite who entered the gate could see the brazen altar and the laver; but none but the priests were allowed to see the beautiful vessels in the Holy Place; none but the high priest, the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat.

Surely in all of this God was teaching His people to worship and honor the One of whom these sacred things spoke; and He was teaching them that, before the guilty one could enter into His holy presence, sin had to be put away.

THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE FOR SIN

The whole burnt offering, the fat of the sin and trespass offerings, and memorials of the peace and meal offerings were burned upon the brazen altar; but the flesh and bones of the sin offering and of the trespass offering were burned outside the camp, at some distance from the tabernacle.

It was to this that the Holy Spirit referred in Hebrews 13:10-14, which we quoted in the beginning of this lesson.

We shall have more to say upon this subject in our next lesson, concerning the five offerings; but just here we need to remember that the brazen altar was the place of sacrifice for sin. There the animal sacrifice was led by the offerer.

This guilty one confessed his sins, symbolically transferring his guilt to the substitute by laying his hands upon the head of the victim, even as he acknowledged his sins. There the blood was shed and poured out on the ground before the altar, a constant reminder of the atoning power of the blood of Him who was to come.

“The life of the flesh is in the blood.” And “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul”

(Leviticus 17:11).

By this sacrifice the offerer was accepted before God — by faith in Christ, of whom the animal sacrifice was but “a shadow” or type. Sin had been confessed and dealt with; faith had taken hold of the promise of a Redeemer who was to shed His blood upon the altar which is Calvary’s cross.

THE CONTINUING SACRIFICE “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out” (Leviticus 6:13).

This was God’s express command concerning the fire upon the altar of sacrifice. Day and night the fire burned. “The claims of the altar had to be met in full.”

God in His holiness was teaching sinners that sin must be judged, that “the wages of sin is death”

Moreover, He was teaching His children that He was always ready to accept their offering. Never, never does He turn the penitent sinner away unforgiven!

Day after day, year after year, century after century, Israel brought the continuing sacrifice for sin; but when our Lord offered Himself upon the altar, when He endured the fires of condemnation for all our sins, He did it “once for all.”

“He needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins (He

had no sins of His own; the priests in Israel needed a Saviour), and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself’ (Hebrews 7:27).

“Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world [age] hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself’ (Hebrews 9:25, 26).

There was no chair in the tabernacle, because the priest’s work was never done.

The fire had to be kept burning; the ministry in the sanctuary had to continue.

Priests died, and others took their places. But when our Lord finished the work of redemption, He ascended into heaven, and “sat down” on the right hand of the Majesty on high, to await the day when all His enemies should be made His footstool. (See Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13).

My friend, do you get the picture? No earthly priest, no human being, could redeem a soul; but Jesus, our Great High priest, has finished His work of redemption; there is nothing that you or I can add to what He has done! It is all of grace. And our eternal security depends not upon us, but upon Him who bears the marks of Calvary in His hands and feet and side. “There is no more offering for sin” (Hebrews 10:18).

We cannot know the depths of suffering which Christ bore for us. He endured the fires of judgment that no human being can fully comprehend. Fire is a symbol of judgment in the Word of God. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, offered strange fire before the Lord; judgment in death fell upon them in the form of fire (Leviticus 10:1, 2). Fire and brimstone fell upon wicked Sodom and Gomorrah, and consumed them. The wicked will spend eternity in a place which our Lord described as a lake of fire and brimstone, “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:48).

Upon the altar of burnt offering, in the very heart of it, the fire burned. In the heart of the sinless Son of God the fires of judgment burned — not for His own sins, for He had none — but for the sins of a guilty world. Not the physical suffering alone, not the mocking and shame which He endured; but the anguish of soul when He became “an offering for sin” — that was the real suffering of the cross for the sinless Son of God. (See Isaiah 53:10).

There are those who find fault, saying that it was not just for God to lay the sins of the world upon Jesus. But they do not know what they are saying. Jesus was God; and He took the sins of the world upon Himself. Has God not a right to do what He pleases with Himself? In the eternal councils of the eternal Holy Trinity God took upon Himself the sins of the world. And Christ Jesus was “God manifest in the flesh.”

THE REMOVAL OF THE ASHES TO A CLEAN PLACE

After the burnt offering had been accepted by God and burned upon the altar, the priest, in white linen garments, took the ashes out from underneath the grate, and

they were taken to a clean place without the camp. The ashes were precious because they were to be used in sprinkling the unclean, as in the case of the leper.

This part of the ritual speaks to us of our Lord's crucifixion "without the gate" of the city of Jerusalem, and of His burial in Joseph's new tomb, wherein "corrupting flesh had never lain." It was "a clean place" provided by loving hands for Him whose body "saw no corruption."

"The value of the ashes does not lie in what we think of them, but in the high estimate put on them by God Himself." And how precious in the eyes of the Father were "the ashes of the whole burnt offering," when the fires of judgment had consumed the Sacrifice!

"If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:13, 14).

Thus the Holy Spirit speaks to us concerning the efficacy of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus!

FROM THE ALTAR TO THE THRONEROOM

If we could have been a witness to the ministry of the priest in Israel, we should have seen him going from the altar of burnt offering on into the sanctuary day after day; but first he ministered at the place where the blood was shed.

That blood was sprinkled on all the vessels in the tabernacle by the high priest, as on the Day of Atonement, he went into the very throne room, the Holiest of All, to represent his people before the Shekinah Glory. The altar was thus associated with all the vessels in the sanctuary.

Before we may talk to God in prayer, before we may know Him as the Light of the World and the Bread of Life, we must meet Him at the foot of the cross, where His blood was shed.

The light for the golden candlestick was taken from the altar of burnt offering.

The fire for the golden-covered altar of incense was taken from off the brazen altar.

Nadab and Abihu took “strange fire” before the Lord; they refused the way of the cross; therefore, they died by devouring fire from God. God is “the light and life of men” only as men put their faith in the Sin Offering upon Calvary’s altar.

God hears the prayers of men only as they go to Him in the name of His only begotten Son!

“He is able to save them to the utter most that come unto God by him” — Jesus! (Hebrews 7:25). But first the sinner must approach the Father in the name of the Son.

There was no other altar of burnt offering in Israel. And “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” but by the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12).

“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”

“The Brazen Altar smokes no more,

On which the Victim lay,

Where sin’s unmeasured doom He bore When I had naught to pay.”

~ end of chapter 5 ~ http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/

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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER SIX THE OFFERINGS UPON THE BRAZEN ALTAR

Christ — Our Offering on Calvary's Cross Leviticus 1:1-7:38

THE BRAZEN altar just inside the tabernacle gate would have been of no avail without the offerings presented to God upon it, just as the cross of Jesus would have served no purpose without the wondrous Sacrifice who was nailed there as our Substitute.

We turn to the first seven chapters of Leviticus for God's instructions concerning the offerings connected with the brazen altar; and as we read these sacred pages, in the light of the book of Hebrews, which interprets their meaning, we bow in reverence and awe before Him who "loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us a kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Revelation 1:5, 6).

When Israel left Egypt on that first Passover night, she turned her face toward the land of promise. She was saved by the sheltering blood that pointed on to Christ. She was delivered from the enemy by the mighty hand of God. But little did she know her own weakness, her own frailty. Little did she realize that before her lay forty years of sinning and wandering and murmuring against God and His servant, Moses, before she should possess the land promised to Abraham.

In the offerings and the sacrifices presented unto God at the brazen altar Israel's God was teaching her that there had to be a full atonement for sin, and that in the promised Saviour every need of the sinner was met.

Now that Christ has come to fulfill all the types and shadows set forth in the offerings and sacrifices for sin; even as we, too, are journeying on a pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan, so to speak, from this godless world to our heavenly home; we see our own frailties and weaknesses.

Then we look from ourselves to Him who was our all-sufficient Offering on the altar of Calvary; and we thank Him for His grace!

May His Holy Spirit teach us in this study some of the deep truths that add

meaning to the message of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE FIVE OFFERINGS

There were five offerings connected with Israel's worship of the Lord God. They show what the Son of God is to the Father, and "what He has become in grace to sinners." When viewed as a whole, they portray in shadow and in type the one perfect offering of Christ. When considered separately, they set forth the different aspects of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus, as the Sacrifice sufficient for every need of the human soul.

The first three of these offerings are called by the Holy Spirit the "sweet savour offerings'"; the last two, the "non-sweet savour offerings."

This classification by the Spirit of God can be readily understood from the names of the offerings themselves:

(1) The burnt offering;

(2) The meat [meal] offering;

(3) The peace offering;

(4) The sin offering;

(5) The trespass offering.

The first three set forth the perfections which God the Father finds in the Lord Jesus; the last two portray Christ as the Sin Bearer for a guilty world.

In the sinless life of the Son the Father found delight; but when the Son became a Sin Offering, a curse for us, then the Father had to turn His face away from His well-beloved Son, while the Son uttered that heart-searching cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

He was, in that hour of darkness, the "non-sweet savour offering" for a guilty world.

Of all the prophetic pictures in the Mosaic Law concerning Christ's finished work on Calvary, the burnt offering presents the highest type.

- The burnt offering speaks to us of the beloved Son of God, in whom the Father was always well pleased.

- The peace offering presents God's righteousness in Christ as the only ground of fellowship between a holy God and His redeemed children.

- The meat [meal] offering, which was the only one of the five presented without blood, portrays the glory and beauty of the One "altogether lovely," upon whose Person the born again soul delights to feed.

- The sin and trespass offerings set forth the sinner's Substitute, not only for deliberate trespass against God and man, but also for the old, sinful nature with all its guilt inherited from Adam.

Christ, our Sin Offering and our Trespass offering, bore "the wages of sin" for us in His death, and gave unto us the free gift of "eternal life" (Romans 6:23).

It is significant that, when the Holy Spirit described these five offerings in the opening chapters of Leviticus, He began with the sweet savour offerings, which were a delight to God; yet when the sinner brought his sacrifice to the brazen altar, he reversed the order, presenting first the sin offering and the trespass offering.

He had to meet God on the basis of the blood shed for the redemption of sin before he could go on with Him in consecration and communion and fellowship. He had to know that his sins were washed away by faith in the promised Saviour before he could learn more and more of the beauties and perfections of His wonderful Person. But by faith in Him who was to come to put away sin and to pay the penalty "once for all," the sinner in Israel could present unto a holy God his offerings that symbolized dedication and thanksgiving and communion with Him.

That is why he first brought the sin offering and the trespass offering.

Then, knowing that the penalty of his sin had been paid, in type, and that forgiveness for all his trespasses and iniquities had been granted, he brought to God the burnt offering and the meat [meal] offering in token of his desire to

consecrate himself wholly to His service. Finally, with “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” filling his heart, he had sweet fellowship and communion with Him as he presented unto Him the peace offering.

The priest in Israel had to offer sacrifices “for his own sins” (Hebrews 7:27). Then he ministered on behalf of others who brought their offerings to the altar, whether these were presented for the nation as a whole, or by a ruler of the people, or by any one of the congregation.

THE CREATURES USED IN THE OFFERINGS — TYPICAL OF CHRIST

One or more of five different animals or birds could be used in the offerings and sacrifices that were acceptable unto God:

(1) a bullock or ox;

(2) a sheep or lamb;

(3) a goat;

(4) a turtledove;

(5) a young pigeon.

The bullock speaks to us of Christ the strong One, patient and faithful as the Servant of God, “obedient unto death” (Philippians 2:8).

The sheep and the lamb remind us of Isaiah’s description of our Lord’s meekness and submission to His Father’s will; for He was led “as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb,” so He opened “not His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus was the Passover Lamb, “without blemish and without spot” (I Peter 1:19).

The goat is a picture of Christ, the sinner’s Substitute, bearing “the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

The turtledove and pigeon symbolize “mourning innocency,” and are “associated with poverty.” The fowls of the heavens also speak to us of the Heavenly One, who came down to offer Himself as our Sacrifice upon the altar.

If an Israelite was not rich enough to offer a lamb or one or the other more expensive sacrifices, he could present unto God two turtledoves or two young pigeons (Leviticus 5:7; 12:8).

Mary, the mother of our Lord, obeyed the command of Leviticus 12:8 when she took the Infant Jesus to the temple, and offered "a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:24). The offering of these birds, in any of the Levitical ceremonies, foreshadowed the coming into the world of the sinless Man of Sorrows, who, "though he was rich," yet for our sakes "became poor," that we "through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9).

Of course, no animal sacrifice, however perfect physically, could satisfy the holiness and the justice of God. But these Old Testament sacrifices and offerings were object lessons to God's children to point them on to Jesus, "the Lamb of God," "without blemish and without spot." That is why the Holy Spirit said, in Hebrews 10:1-18, those wonderful words, part of which we quote just here:

"The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year [i.e., on the Day of Atonement]. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he [Jesus] cometh into the world, he saith [in addressing His Father in heaven], Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."

That body of our Lord was "prepared," in order that He might offer it as the all-sufficient Sacrifice on the cross. God cannot die; and He had to take upon Himself a human body, in order to suffer, in order to "taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

But let us continue reading our Lord's prophetic words spoken to His Father concerning His own offering of His body upon the altar which was His cross:

"In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) To do thy will, O God . . . By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus

Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man [Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool . . . there is no more offering for sin".

This is a wonderful exposition of the Old Testament record concerning the Levitical offerings!

The Holy Spirit has made it all so very plain! And the words which we have just read are only a small part of the Epistle to the Hebrews, so rich and meaningful in its interpretation of the offerings that were presented to God upon the Jewish altar of burnt offering, just inside the gate of the court that surrounded the tabernacle.

It is well to bear in mind, as we enter upon a detailed study of each of the five offerings, that the explanation of the "shadows of good things to come" in much of the ministry of the high priest in the tabernacle, as set forth in Hebrews, has to do with the great Day of Atonement.

Later in these studies we want to consider the meaning of that greatest day in all the year for God's people; but here let us remember that it represented the very best that Judaism could offer Israel; and the Holy Spirit was proving to the Hebrew Christians that Christ is far better than Judaism — better than the very best that the earthly high priest could do for the nation on the most sacred day of the year, when he went into the Holy of Holies with the blood of sprinkling, to represent his people before a holy God.

Since Christ, the Great High Priest, was so much better than the earthly high priest in his ministry on the greatest day of the year, then surely He was better than the earthly priest on every day of lesser importance to the spiritual life of the nation.

As we remember this very important point, the meaning of Hebrews becomes more clear. Even a little child, born again by the Spirit of God, could get the beautiful message it holds!

THE SIN OFFERING

In our study of the separate offerings, we begin with the first one brought by the

guilty Israelite to be presented unto the Lord — the sin offering. God's instructions concerning it are found in Leviticus 4:1-35; 6:24-30.

The first thing we note as we read these passages is that sins of ignorance did not excuse the sinner (4:2). The whole message of the sin offering is that "all have sinned," and all need a Substitute, a Saviour.

- The priest had to bring his own sin offering (4:3);

- "if the whole congregation of Israel" sinned "through ignorance," the sin offering had to be made (4:13);

- "when a ruler" sinned "through ignorance," he was commanded to bring his offering for sin (4:22); and

- "if any one of the common people" did sin "through ignorance," he was to sacrifice his sin offering unto the Lord (4:27).

Rich and poor, the self-righteous, moral man and the flagrant sinner — all possessed the old, sinful nature inherited from Adam.

And for all a Saviour had to die!

Although the different classes in Israel did not always bring the same animal for the sin offering, yet the ritual was practically the same. The sinner, of whatever class, was to present his own offering, thus recognizing his own individual guilt that, in type, was being laid upon his Substitute who was to come.

He took his offering "unto the door of the tabernacle . . . before the Lord," publicly acknowledging his sin and his need of a Saviour.

He placed his hand upon the head of the innocent victim, figuratively identifying himself with the promised Sin Bearer, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

The priest sprinkled the shed blood "seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary," and "upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord," or "upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering."

The blood was to be poured out "at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering." The fat was to be burned upon the altar of burnt offering; it was the Lord's

portion, well-pleasing to Him. But the flesh, bones, and skin, “even the whole bullock,” had to be carried without the camp “unto a clean place, where the ashes” were poured out; and there burned with fire.

None of these parts could be burned upon the altar; they had to be burned “without the camp.”

The sin offering thus became a graphic picture of the Lord Jesus, our Substitute, who, though He “knew no sin” in His holy Being, yet was “made sin for us . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Corinthians 5:21). He poured out His precious blood at the altar, which was His cross, when He “suffered without the gate” of Jerusalem, upon the accursed tree (Hebrews 13:10-12). After His death and resurrection, He ascended into heaven, and presented unto the Father “his own blood,” “the blood of sprinkling,” in that “more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands”; and “obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:11, 12; 12:24).

As each individual in Israel had to present his own sin offering, so every sinner of all ages has to look to Jesus, the only Sin Bearer, for personal salvation. None can be saved for another; every sinner bears a personal responsibility before a holy God.

As each Jew had to place his hand upon the head of the animal sacrifice, confessing his sin, so every child of Adam has to confess before God and man, angels and demons, his need of a Redeemer, and identify himself with the Christ of the cross, if he would be saved.

As the sin offering had to be slain, so Christ had to die, a Substitute for the sinner; His holy, sinless life was not enough to save the guilty soul.

As the fire outside the camp consumed the sacrifice, so the fires of divine justice burned with awful fierceness as the Sin Offering died outside the city gate.

As the wind carried the ashes of the animal sacrifice away, so God will remember our sins no more forever, and as the earthly priest sprinkled the blood of the victim before the Lord, so Christ presented His own precious blood unto the Father in “the holiest of all,” even heaven itself.

The sinful Israelite was accepted before God by faith in the atoning blood of the Saviour who was to come, even as we are “accepted in the beloved” Son of the

Father! “Without the camp” Christ died for our sins; “within the veil” He “ever liveth to make intercession” for us (Hebrews 7:25)!

Our suffering Saviour is our living Priest! The penalty of our sin is paid, for His atoning blood avails for all the endless ages!

In the Hebrew text the same word is used for “sin” and “sin offering.”

Thus the two were identified; and in this startling fact we realize, in some measure, the love of Christ, in that He was willing to “become sin ” for us, though He Himself was absolutely, eternally “without sin.”

He suffered, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (I Peter 3:18). “Being made a curse for us,” He removed the curse of sin by paying the penalty Himself (Galatians 3:13). When He made His “soul an offering for sin,” He “condemned sin in the flesh,” and

provided a ransom for the sinner’s soul (Isaiah 53:10; Romans 8:3).

“Despised and rejected of men,” our Saviour suffered for all our guilt, for all our sinful nature which we inherited from Adam, for all the iniquity of our wicked hearts! He died for us! He was our Sin Offering! He lives for us! He is our interceding Priest!

That is why Paul could say to the Jews of old,

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38, 39).

That is why our redeemed hearts can sing, in the words of the old hymn:

“Not all the blood of beasts,

On Jewish altars slain,

Could give the guilty conscience peace,

Or wash away one stain;

“But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,

Takes all our sins away —

A Sacrifice of nobler name And richer blood than they!”

THE TRESPASS OFFERING

For the Scripture which tells of the trespass offering we turn to Leviticus 5:1-6:7; 7:17.

It is not easy to distinguish the sin offering from the trespass offering; for both represent Christ, the Substitute for the guilty sinner. The bodies of the offerings for both were burned without the camp of Israel, for the reason that we have already seen. Both were to atone for sins committed wittingly or through ignorance.

In the Lord Jesus Christ both the sin offering and the trespass offering found their complete and perfect fulfillment, in that He was the sinner’s perfect Substitute on the cross.

While it is difficult to distinguish the sin offering from the trespass offering, as they “necessarily overlap”; yet in the former the penalty of sin was prominent; in the latter, atonement was made for the consequences of sin.

Christ, our Sin Offering, bore the guilt of our sinful nature; Christ, our Trespass Offering, made full and complete restitution to God and man for our acts of trespass against His holy law, both in our relationship to God and in our responsibility to our fellowmen.

“Trespass” means the transgression of the rights of others. And the trespass offering and its ceremony required a full reparation for every wrong act toward God and man.

As someone has said, the sin offering dealt with “the nature of sin”; the trespass offering, with the “sins of nature”; the sin offering, with “the root of sin”; the trespass offering with “the fruit of sin” in the life.

This is another way of saying that, while the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ has been saved for time and for eternity by faith in the shed blood of the great

Sin Offering, while he may have assurance of eternal salvation because of what Christ did in His finished work on the cross; yet in this present life the born again soul does not experience sinless perfection, because he still has the old, sinful nature.

That is what Paul meant when, in the sixth and seventh chapters of Romans, he wrote of the struggle between the old nature and the new nature in Christ, the flesh and the Spirit; the nature inherited from Adam and the new life received by faith in the Lord Jesus.

When Paul wrote those chapters, he gave expression to the struggle that every child of God knows — what he wants to do because he loves the Lord, he does not do; and what he does not want to do, he finds himself doing, in his weakness and frailty of the flesh. The climax of this bitter warfare between the flesh and the spirit is stated in the words,

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24).

But no sooner had the apostle uttered this cry than the Holy Spirit gave him the answer, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:25).

Then follows that wonderful eighth chapter of Romans, which gives the secret of victory over sin

— even the indwelling Spirit of God. Thus every need of the sinner is fully met in Christ. He was our Sin Offering, paying the penalty of guilt and sin, justifying the sinner before a holy God.

And He is our Trespass Offering, giving power and victory over sin in our daily lives, even as He promised,

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9).

Christ, our Great High Priest, takes our confession and presents it unto the Father, who is “faithful and just” to cleanse and to forgive!

Sometimes Israel’s trespass against God was that of unwittingly eating the firstlings of the flock, which had to be set apart for God; sometimes it was in

neglecting the tithe, which belonged to God. Sometimes the sin was against a fellow Israelite, such as stealing, defrauding another, or telling falsehoods.

For all trespasses there had to be:

(1) confession of the sin;

(2) restoration of any theft or fraud, with an added fifth part for restitution;

(3) The presentation to God of the trespass offering at the brazen altar.

These trespasses against "the holy things" of God and against the rights of man had to be atoned for by the offering of the innocent victim, the substitute, which was but a faint picture of Christ, our Trespass Offering. Thus every claim which God had upon the offender was redressed, and the rights of man were restored — with a plus.

When the Lord Jesus suffered "without the camp," outside the gate of Jerusalem, He atoned for the guilt of our sinful souls, as our Sin Offering; and as our Trespass Offering, He also atoned for our trespasses, our overt acts of disobedience toward God and our acts of iniquity toward our fellow creatures. He made expiation for all our sins; and He will one day give a regenerated world back to His Father — with a plus, with far more than He had in the beginning.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

He has forgiven us all our trespasses (Colossians 2:13). The consequences of our guilty acts, which condemn our own hearts as we think upon them — these He has put under the blood of His cross, if we truly love Him and trust in Him as our Trespass Offering. And we hear Him speak to us in reassuring words, saying,

"Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isaiah 6:7). "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32:1, 2).

Such forgiveness makes us bow before our holy God with repentance for the transgressions which sent Him to the cross; with thanksgiving for the love that "removed our transgressions from us . . . as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12). Such forgiveness and such love make us ashamed of our iniquities against God and man; make us want to be ever-increasingly well-pleasing in His sight and before a godless world, for His name's sake.

Conscious of our weakness, of our failures, we sing, in the words of the prayer hymn,

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,

Prone to leave the God I love Here's my heart; O, take and seal it:

Seal it for Thy courts above."

THE BURNT OFFERING

The first of the three sweet savour offerings was the burnt offering, described in the first chapter of Leviticus. "The law of the burnt offering" is set forth in Leviticus 6:8-13.

There can be no doubt that it foreshadowed the offering of our Lord, in His sinless Person, well-pleasing unto the Father; for in Ephesians 5:2 we read,

"Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

After sin had been confessed and put away, through the sin offering and the trespass offering, then the offerer brought his burnt offering, which was a picture of Christ's perfect surrender to His Father in entire devotion and perfection, and of the Father's delight in His sinless and well-beloved Son. The burnt offering was to be brought to the door of the tabernacle, in public worship on the sinner's part, that he might be "accepted before the Lord" (Leviticus 1:3).

The offerer put his hand upon the head of the victim, thus identifying himself with the substitute. Then the offerer himself slew the sacrifice, whereas it was the priest who sprinkled the blood "round about upon the altar."

All of this is highly significant. Only because we have been "accepted in the

beloved" Son of God, can we stand before Him unashamed and unafraid. Christ is our Burnt Offering; and because we have put our faith in His atoning work for us, the Father sees us washed from all sin, cleansed "whiter than snow," all our imperfections and guilt hidden forever from His sight, covered by His sheltering blood.

Having identified ourselves with the sinless Son of God by faith in Him, having acknowledged that our iniquities sent Him to Calvary, slew Him on the "accursed tree," we must leave to Him the priestly work of sprinkling His precious blood, as it were, "round about upon the altar," presenting His Burnt Offering unto the Father on our behalf.

And His death upon the altar, which was His cross, was as a "sweet savour unto the Lord." His perfect life; His complete devotion to His Father's will, all the beauties and wonders of His sinless Person — these made Him a delight to His Father in heaven. And we are "complete in him," "risen with Christ," "accepted" in Him! Our lives are "hid with Christ in God"! (See Colossians 2:10; 3:1, 2; Ephesians 1:6).

The offerer in Israel flayed the burnt offering; and the whole was burned upon the brazen altar.

Unlike the sin offering and the trespass offering, which were burned without the camp, the burnt offering was wholly consumed upon the altar. It was called "the bread [or 'food'] of God." In it God found delight and satisfaction. It was sometimes called "the ascending offering," because the Hebrew word translated "burnt offering" means "that which ascends." It ascended wholly to God, the Lord's portion, none of which was to be eaten by the priests or by the offerer. It was presented "to God," even as "Christ . . . through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14).

It was the only one of the five offerings presented wholly unto God. Only the Father can fully appreciate the perfections of the Son!

The parts of the sacrifice were washed with water; and water is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of the Word of God. Every secret thought and intent of the heart of the Son of Man, during His earthly life, could stand the acid test of the holy Word of God. There was no sin in Him!

The skin of the animal sacrificed in the burnt offering was given to the priest.

This is suggestive of the blessed truth that we are accepted before God because we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, imputed unto us by His grace.

Adam and Eve were ashamed, and afraid of God while they wore the fig leaf aprons to cover their shame, for these represented the works of their own hands, the best that they could do to make themselves fit for His presence. But God made them “coats of skins, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:7, 8, 21). He shed the blood of the innocent victim, in order to provide for His sinning creatures a covering. Thus He pointed them on to the Lamb of God who was to come, whose shed blood was to provide a robe of righteousness that would make them fit for heaven and His holy presence.

The crop and the feathers of the fowls sacrificed for the burnt offering were plucked, a picture of our Lord’s laying aside His glory when He “humbled himself” to become Man and to die on the accursed tree, wholly obedient unto His Father’s will. He laid aside His glory for a time, but not His deity — no, not for one moment! He was “Immanuel,” “God with us”!

When the priests were set apart for their sacred office, when they first began their ministry in the tabernacle worship, a miracle took place, in that the fire upon the brazen altar came from God.

Of this we read in Leviticus 9:24:

“And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.”

It was God’s pleasure to consume the sacrifice, even as it is His meat and drink to accept the work and the Person of His Son. Christ Jesus, our Lord, fully satisfies the Father’s heart. Nor dared any earthly priest offer “strange fire,” lest he suffer judgment for his sin.

Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s sons, tried it; and “there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord” (Leviticus 10:1, 2). No manmade schemes for promoting worship, no manmade programs, can be pleasing to God. Only as the sinner looks to Jesus, the Burnt Offering, well

pleasing unto the Father — only then is he “accepted” before God.

“The undying devotedness of Christ” is seen in the fact that the fire was ever to be kept “burning upon the altar”; it was never to “go out” (Leviticus 6:13) until the worthy Victim should come!

God sent the fire; then He commanded the priests to keep it ever burning upon the altar. Israel was to be reminded, day after day, year after year, century after century; that a holy God would accept him only on the basis of the sacrifice of the promised Saviour, who was to offer Himself “without spot to God.”

Thank God! The fire went out nearly two thousand years ago! Never again need our Saviour suffer! His whole Burnt Offering was “once for all”!

As we have seen, the burnt offering was placed first in the sacred record, because it was most precious to God.

Do we, my Christian friend, find our delight in meditating upon the beauties and perfections of the One “altogether lovely”? Or are we more concerned with His gifts?

The better we know Him, the more we love Him — for His Person alone.

As we think of all that He is, in His majesty and holiness and sinlessness and love, we stand amazed in His presence, to think that He should love us enough to die for us!

“Love moved Jehovah’s hand to smite;

Love moved the Son to bear:

How sweet on Calvary to stand!

The God of love is there.”

THE MEAL OFFERING

The meat [meal] offering, and the law of the meat [meal] offering are described in Leviticus 2:116; 6:1422. The translators of the King James Version rendered the word “meat” offering because in their day “meat” meant “food,” not

necessarily flesh. Before we go into the spiritual meaning of this “sweet savour offering” unto the Lord, let us pause to read carefully these portions of Scripture which tell what God has said concerning it.

The meat [meal] offering really needs to be considered in connection with the burnt offering; for it was always linked with it, as many passages of Scripture show. (See Leviticus 23:12, 13, 18; Numbers 28:7-15; Judges 13:19). Christ, our Burnt Offering, satisfies the heart of the Father; Christ, our Meat Offering, satisfies the heart of God and the heart of man. And both were offered in consecration to the Lord God. Thus the Person and the work of Christ are linked together. He could die as the sinner’s Substitute only because He was sinless Man, as well as the eternal, allpowerful God of love.

The whole burnt offering was sacrificed unto the Lord upon the altar; whereas only a portion of the meat [meal] offering was burned with fire as “a sweet savour unto the Lord”; the remainder was food for the priests. In this we see how both God and redeemed men find delight in the beloved Son of the Father and only Saviour of sinners. This is communion!

We have already observed that the meat [meal] offering was the only one of the five that was presented without the shedding of blood. Thus it was typical of the Lord Jesus in His sinless life on earth. Yet the fire that consumed the meat [meal] offering spoke also of Christ’s obedience even unto death, as well as of the proof of His sinlessness, as evidenced through the fires of trial and persecution and sorrow which led to the cross.

His life was absolutely holy, “altogether lovely,” in its perfection; therefore, the meat [meal] offering, which foreshadowed His perfect humanity, became food for God, as well as spiritual food for the believer’s soul. Moreover, in Christ, our Meat Offering, we see the perfect pattern for the Christian to emulate; in this He taught us how to live for Him after we are born again.

He is “the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5).

We turn to the second and sixth chapters of Leviticus to find the ingredients that went into the preparation of the meat [meal] offering: fine flour, oil, frankincense, salt, and sometimes green ears of corn dried and offered with oil. Two items are mentioned that were not to be put in this offering; they were

leaven and honey.

Significant truths are bound up in these passages of Scripture — truths concerning the things to be put into the meat [meal] offering, and truths concerning those to be left out of this “sweet savour” offering unto the Lord.

The fine flour speaks to us of the evenness and beauty of our Lord’s sinless life. There was not a coarse thread in any fiber of His Person. There was no roughness, no unevenness, in His Being.

He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26).

Oil was to be “mingled with” the fine flour or poured upon it; and oil in the Scriptures is always a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In His virgin birth the oil was “mingled with” the fine flour of His humanity. In His baptism by the Holy Spirit He was “anointed” with oil, as it were — born of the Spirit and anointed with the Spirit.

That our Lord Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit, we know from such passages as Isaiah 7:14 and the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke. Indeed, all Scripture truth stands or falls upon two eternal verities, one of which is the virgin birth of the Son of God — the other is His bodily resurrection.

But not only was Christ Jesus born of the Holy Spirit; He was also baptized with the Holy Spirit of God. He was “anointed” with “the Holy Ghost and with power” (Acts 10:38), for the Father gave “not the Spirit by measure unto him” (John 3:34). He was filled with the Spirit at all times, coequal and coeternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit of God. That is why He could live a sinless life, perform mighty miracles that only God can do, utter profound teachings which are divine, die in the sinner’s place as the spotless Lamb of God, rise again from the dead, and ascend into heaven.

- He was eternal God “manifest in the flesh” (I Timothy 3:16).

- “Through the eternal Spirit” He “offered himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14).

- He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness [the Holy Spirit], by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4).

Of these fundamental truths the fine flour and the oil of the meat [meal] offering speak.

Now frankincense is a sweet gum which becomes most fragrant when burned with fire. It reminds us of the divine fragrance of the life of our Lord, tested by fire, only to appear all the more beautiful in His matchless love and compassion and holiness. All the frankincense had to be burned upon the altar, suggestive of the fact that only God could fully appreciate the inner fragrance of our Lord's beautiful life.

As the fine flour symbolizes His perfect humanity; the oil, His eternal deity in His relationship to the Godhead; so frankincense, as it were, enabled Him to say to the unbelieving Jews concerning His relationship to His Father, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). He was God incarnate; and in Him "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2.9).

The Father's voice spoke from heaven when the Son was anointed with the Holy Spirit, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). He was acknowledging before men, angels, and demons the fragrance of the sinless life of His beloved Son.

Salt was put into the meat [meal] offering, and salt is a preservative.

Our Lord's words were always "seasoned with salt," even as His Holy Spirit exhorted Christians, in giving "an answer to every man" (Colossians 4:6), to emulate His gracious example.

The officers whom the Pharisees sent to take Him prisoner returned with this striking statement, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).

Humanly speaking, that was a strange excuse for officers to give for not obeying orders; but we know why they could not touch our Lord — not until His "hour had fully come" to offer Himself, a voluntary sacrifice upon the cross. His words were filled with "grace and truth." He Himself was the very embodiment of grace and truth. (See John 1:14). Even in His death His body "saw no corruption."

The prophet had foretold these very words; and both Peter and Paul, guided by the Spirit of God, applied them unmistakably to our Lord. (See Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-31; 13:34-37).

If only we, God's redeemed children, would heed His admonition to let our words be "seasoned with salt," we should be more like our sinless Saviour, and the salt would hinder the work of "the leaven of malice and wickedness" in our lives! To us the inspired Word says plainly,

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under food of men" (Matthew 5:13).

No leaven and honey were to be burned upon the altar; and what a lesson God has for us here!

Leaven in the Scriptures is always a type of sin. The Israelites were to eat unleavened bread on the feast of the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread. They were even to put all leaven out of their houses. The Lord Jesus admonished His own to beware of "the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matthew 16:11, 12). And Paul warned against the "leaven of malice and wickedness" (I Corinthians 5:8). Just as there was no "spot or blemish" in the Passover lamb, so also there was no sin in Christ's holy nature — no leaven.

That is why the meat [meal] offering, which typified His sinless life, could have no leaven in it.

Honey, likewise, is typical of the sweetness of the natural man, the unsaved man, which appears in an attractive form to the godless world, but has nothing of the God-given, divine nature.

Honey, when tested by fire, ferments, then becomes sour; it will not stand the test. Yet the fires of suffering but served to show forth the sweetness of our Lord's divine nature, His unspeakable love! Fire makes frankincense more fragrant; it ruins honey.

The fires of suffering made manifest before men, angels, and demons the beauties and perfections of the Man of Sorrows; and in Him there was no taint of the sinful nature, of which the honey speaks. No wonder God expressly commanded Moses not to put honey or leaven in the meat [meal] offering!

Sometimes the meat [meal] offering was "baken in the oven," reminding us once more of the unseen sufferings of our Lord. Sometimes it was "baken in a pan," showing forth, in type, His "more evident sufferings." Into the deeper agonies of

Gethsemane and the cross no human soul can enter; yet enough of the suffering of our sinless Saviour is revealed to us to make us love Him for all eternity!

A handful of the meat [meal] offering was burned upon the altar, as a memorial, as the “food of God.” The remainder was eaten by Aaron and his sons. And here, again, we learn yet another beautiful lesson.

The priests had communion with God, feeding upon the same food as that which satisfied the Father’s heart. Even so, we are believer-priests, feeding upon the Bread of Life, our Lord Himself. He is manna to our souls, and He satisfies His Father’s heart. Thus we hold sweet fellowship and communion with our Heavenly Father, through the merits of His beloved Son and our Saviour. (See John 6:22-66).

To Moses God said, “I have given” the meat [meal] offering unto the priests “for their portion of my offerings made by fire” (Leviticus 6:17). And to us He has given His only begotten Son, to be food for our souls. The priests ate their portion of the meat [meal] offering in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. We enter by faith into “the holy place . . . not made with hands,” behold there our great Meal Offering; and our meditation of Him satisfies our hungry hearts (Hebrews 9:11, 12). May God help us to spend more time in His presence, finding our spiritual food in Him, the Living Bread!

THE PEACE OFFERING

In Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:1121 we find the God-given instructions regarding the peace offering. It was placed upon the burnt offering and the meat [meal] offering, and presented to God last of all. With the sinner’s guilt covered by the blood of the promised Redeemer; with his transgressions forgiven; with the whole burnt offering and the meat [meal] offering having satisfied the heart of God, the Father, and having provided spiritual food for the redeemed sinner; then that man could know the blessed result of “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

His sins were covered by the precious blood of the sinless Substitute; he himself was “accepted in the beloved” Son of the Father; he was feeding his soul upon the Bread of Life; therefore, he could know “peace with God,” “the peace of God,” “peace from God”; yea, “the God of peace,” for He hath “made peace through the blood of his cross.” “He is our peace”! (See Romans 5:1; Philippians

4:7; I Corinthians 1:3; Romans 15:33; Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 2:14).

In all of this we see yet another of the countless lessons God was teaching His people in Old Testament times concerning the meaning of the coming cross of Christ. At Calvary God's holy law was vindicated and magnified; His holy Being was satisfied, and He could be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). For "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (II Corinthians 5:19).

Because the sinner is reconciled to God, he may have fellowship with Him.

That is why, in the peace offering, God received His portion; while the priest, the offerer, and his friends had their portion. The redeemed sinner held communion with God and with his fellow redeemed — all on the ground of Calvary's cross. There is no other basis for fellowship.

"The natural (unsaved) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can be know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I

Corinthians 2:14).

No man can make his peace with God. He is a bankrupt sinner, ashamed and afraid of a holy God, until he is reconciled to Him by the precious blood of Jesus. But in Christ, born again by His Holy Spirit, the child of God knows that all enmity is gone.

Christ is his Peace! And he finds his joy in communion with Him on the ground of His finished redemption.

Now different animals could be used as a sacrifice for the peace offering.

If taken from the herd, whether male or female, the victim symbolized Christ, the devoted Servant. The male suggests to us that He was the independent One; the female, the subject One, submissive to His Father's will. As in the burnt offering, the lamb portrayed the meek and unresisting Lamb of God; the goat, the sinner's Substitute. We may not all understand in like measure the marvels of the Person and work of our Lord.

Again, as in the other offerings, the laying of the hands upon the victim's head

suggests identification of the sinner with the Sin Bearer; and substitution, in that Another was to die in his place.

Only a small portion was given to the Lord, to be burned upon the altar; and this portion was taken from the inward parts which could be reached only by the death of the victim. Likewise, only God, the Father and the Holy Spirit, could fully appreciate the hidden, secret emotions of the holy Son as He “poured out his soul unto death” (Isaiah 53:12).

“No man knoweth the Son, but the Father” (Matthew 11:27).

The Lord’s offering was burned upon the brazen altar; then the priest, the offerer, his family and friends partook of their portion.

Here we are made to think of the Lord’s Table, where the redeemed child of God communes with his Heavenly Father by faith in the shed blood and broken body of the Lord Jesus. God and His people meet for sacred fellowship at that hallowed table. There “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psalm 85:10).

The “heave offering,” presented with a vertical motion, was offered to God; the “wave offering,” presented with a horizontal motion, was eaten by His redeemed children.

The “heave offering” was the shoulder, which speaks to us of the omnipotent strength of Christ; the “wave offering” was the breast, suggestive of the love of Christ, realized by His children when, like John, they lean upon His breast.

As someone has expressed it, in Christ there is “rest for the weary,” and there is “strength for the weak.”

Ceremonial cleansing was required by God before the Israelite could partake of the peace offering. Nor can the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ worship God at the Lord’s Table while unconfessed sin lies upon his heart.

The eating of the peace offering by the Israelite had to be not later than the second day after the victim was slain at the altar; likewise, we dare not attempt to separate the Lord’s Table from the altar which was Calvary’s cross. To do so is but empty mockery!

No one who denies the efficacy of His atoning blood should presume to partake of the Lord's Supper.

These are some of the spiritual lessons God would teach us through the peace offering.

His Word is filled with messages which speak peace to the believer's heart. We quote only a few of these, which remind us yet further of Christ, our Peace Offering:

"You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: . . ." (Colossians 1:21, 22).

"Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ"

(Ephesians 2:13, 14)

He hath "made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself' (Colossians 1:20).

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" . . . (John 14:27).

"The fruit of the Spirit is . . . peace" (Galatians 5:22).

"He shall be a priest upon his throne . . ." (Zechariah 6:13).

"The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

"Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means" (II Thessalonians 3:16).

"AT THE CROSS"

AS we "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29); as we meditate upon the significance of the Levitical offerings, which foreshadowed His coming into the world to fulfill the eternal purpose of the

eternal God of love; as we think upon these things, we stand in wonder and awe and praise before the altar which was His cross. And beholding Him, we may well thank Him, in the words of the poet who wrote:

“Though all the beasts that live and feed Upon a thousand hills should bleed,

Though all their blood should flow,

The sacrifice would be in vain;

The stain of sin would still remain;

Sin is not cancelled so.

“A better sacrifice than these It needs, the conscience to appease,

Or satisfy the Lord:

No blood hath virtue to atone For man’s offence, but His alone,

Whose title is ‘The Word of God.’”

My unsaved friend, will you behold Him crucified for your sins; yea, risen and glorified and one day coming again to take His kingdom and His throne? Look to Him for eternal life, and share with Him His glory for all the endless ages.

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE LAVER OF BRASS

Christ — Our Cleanser Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8; 39:39; 40:7, 11, 30-32

IN OUR first lesson of this series we saw, in the bird's eye view of the Jewish tabernacle, that between the brazen altar and the door, just in line with the golden altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant, stood the laver of brass. Thus the brazen laver became an important link in the prophetic outline of the cross, which was made by the God-given arrangement of the six pieces of furniture, placed in the outer court and in the two rooms of the sanctuary.

The Holy Spirit has not recorded the specific details concerning the shape and size of the laver. We know only that it was made of brass, from the looking glasses of the women; that it had a foot or pedestal of brass; and that there the priests washed their hands and feet before they entered the Holy Place or returned to the brazen altar to serve God.

"Aaron and his sons" washed their feet "thereat" (Exodus 30:19).

The word "thereat" suggests that the water was taken out of the laver into a smaller vessel for this cleansing. The foot or pedestal of brass rested upon the desert sands, yet lifted the laver above the earth, suggestive of the fact that those who washed were pilgrims, "in the world," but "not of the world." They were on their way to the Promised Land, of which Canaan was but a

t[yp]e.

The significance of this brazen laver is very plain. Aaron and his sons, as we have seen, were “shadows and types” of believer-priests in this church age. They were washed all over, once for all, by Moses at the door of the tabernacle, a picture of our having been washed once for all from the penalty of sin by the blood of Jesus. But daily, for many years, the priests in Israel had to wash their hands and feet at the brazen laver, a picture of our confession and cleansing from the daily defilement of sin before we may worship God or serve Him for His glory.

As born again souls, we are “in the world,” but “not of it.” We are pilgrims here, on our journey from the godless world to the heavenly Canaan. And how much we need the daily, constant cleansing from the defilement of the desert sands of this Christ-rejecting world!

May the Holy Spirit open our eyes to discern the full and rich message which He has for us in this lesson, as we seek to see, by faith, “The Glories of Christ As Foreshadowed in the Jewish Tabernacle,” with its laver of brass for the cleansing of hands and feet.

It is a lesson of instruction, of warning, and of comfort, as we see prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ, our Cleanser from every stain of sin!

We turn to Exodus 30:17-21 to read God’s instructions to Moses for the making of the brazen laver:

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not” (Exodus 30:17-21).

THE LAVER — A TYPE OF THE WORD OF GOD AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Water, in the Scriptures, is used as a type of the Word of God and of the Holy Spirit of God. Two clear passages, from among others which might be cited, make this truth very plain:

“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:25, 26).

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified)” (John 7:37-39).

Again, in His intercessory prayer for His own, our Lord asked the Father to keep His disciples from evil, adding,

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

Those of us who love the Lord know all too well that, when we neglect the reading and study of His holy Word, our lives are barren of joy in the Lord, barren of fruitfulness in proclaiming the gospel.

- Our hands, which speak to us of service, become defiled with the pleasures of sin.

- Our feet, symbolic of our daily pilgrimage, go in the paths that lead away from a close and constant walk with God.

We are still His children; He loves us still; but, like Peter before the cross, we follow the Lord “afar off.”

Those of us who love the Lord know also, all too well, that when we “grieve the Holy Spirit of God,” we are powerless to do His will. Our efforts in so-called Christian work are futile. Our work is as “wood, hay, and stubble” in His sight.

But how often those of us who love the Lord have gone to Him, confessing our sins, letting Him speak to us through His sanctifying, cleansing Word, and have found in Him forgiveness and power through the ministry of His Holy Spirit!

The longer we travel on this pilgrimage, from Egypt to Canaan, as it were, the more we realize our helplessness, apart from the Word of God applied to our sinning hearts through the Holy Spirit of God. The older we grow in our Christian experience, the more we become conscious of our need for daily, constant cleansing from the defilement of sin through “the washing of water by

the word," made "quick and powerful" through the eternal Spirit of God.

When we examine our hands and our feet — our service and our walk — in the light of the Holy Scriptures; when we confess our sins, and by the power of the Spirit put them away; then our Lord "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"

(I John 1:9).

David knew the wretchedness of defilement, even after he was saved.

He had broken three of God's holy commandments,

- Having been impure in his life,

- Having lived a falsehood,

- Having committed murder.

God sent His prophet, Nathan, to tell him of his awful sin; whereupon David asked God's forgiveness, saying, in part:

"Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation"

(Psalm 51:2, 7, 10, 11, 12).

David lived before the cross, before the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers in Jesus.

In those days God sent the Spirit upon individual men for special service. That is why David cried unto the Lord, asking that He take not the Holy Spirit away from him. Living on this side of the cross, as we do, following the Day of Pentecost, we need not pray that prayer. Our Lord promised that His Spirit should never leave us; and He always keeps His Word! Yet it is possible for us to "grieve" the Spirit of God by our wayward, selfish lives.

David prayed that God would “restore” unto him “the joy” of God’s salvation. And surely we need to pray such a prayer every time we wander afar off!

The English poet, William Cowper, knew the meaning of this eternal truth; for he wrote:

“O for a closer walk with God,

A calm and heavenly frame,

A light to shine upon the road That leads me to the Lamb!

“The dearest idol I have known,

Whate’er that idol be,

Help me to tear it from Thy throne,

And worship only Thee.

“So shall my walk be close with God,

Calm and serene my frame;

So purer light shall mark the road That leads me to the Lamb.”

THE WORD OF GOD — A “MIRROR” TO THE SOUL

It is in Exodus 38:8 that we read of Moses’ having made the laver of brass “of looking glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

Possibly these were the women who helped to make the fine linen curtains and hangings, embroidering them with the figures of cherubim, in blue, purple, and scarlet. Possibly there were many ways in which the women could serve among the “willing-hearted” who gave of their time and gifts to make this sanctuary for God’s dwelling place among them. At any rate, these women who “ministered’ gave up their treasured mirrors, that the laver of brass might be fashioned according to God’s pattern.

And the Word of God is likened, by the Holy Spirit, to a mirror. We read of this

in James 1:2225:

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass [or mirror]: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was [forgets all about how he looked]. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty (the Word of God), and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

As we look at ourselves in our own polished mirrors, we may think we have a beauty all our own; but as we examine our hearts in the light of God’s Holy Word, like Job, we “abhor” ourselves.

Like Paul, we see that in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing. (See Job 42:6; Romans 7:18).

Our mirrors reflect our natural beauty or our deformities; but they cannot alter our appearance. Not so with God’s Word. It reveals our sins to our quickened hearts; and it can wash us “whiter than snow”!

Only the grace of God put into the hearts of the women in Israel the desire to give up the mirrors which revealed to them their natural beauty. And only the grace of God can put into our hearts the desire to give up our own self-righteousness, to kneel at the foot of the cross, asking for cleansing that will cause the beauty of the Lord to rest upon us. As we surrender our own “fancied beauty,” as we let the Holy Spirit apply the Mirror of the soul, then we learn how God can cleanse and empower for service which will honor Him and make us happy in the doing.

We have a striking illustration of the natural use of the mirror in the Pharisee of Luke 18:914, who “prayed thus with himself,”

“God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.”

Again he looked into his mirror, and added,

“I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.”

How satisfied that Pharisee was with himself!

Paul, likewise, before he was converted on the Damascus road, boasted in the heritage that he had through Abraham:

“Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Philippians 3:5, 6).

How Saul of Tarsus delighted in each feature, as he looked at himself in his own mirror! But on the road to Damascus he saw the Lord Jesus; and that vision of the sinless Saviour and Lord broke his heart. With the memory of that glory, he wrote, saying,

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung [refuse], that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:79).

Then Paul, guided by the Spirit of God, wrote one of the most beautiful of Bible prayers, saying,

“. . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death . . .” (Philippians 3:10).

Earlier in his ministry he had written to the Roman Christians, showing them the struggle between the two natures — the old nature under the law and the new nature in Christ Jesus.

Turning to the law, which condemned his sins, seeking to use it as a means to holiness, he saw himself as a struggling, despairing sinner. Forty times in the seventh chapter of Romans he used the personal pronoun — “I,” “me,” “my.”

The result was that he cried out in agony of soul,

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24).

Immediately God gave him the answer,

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:25).

Then followed the eighth chapter of Romans, filled with the Person and work of the Holy Spirit of God. It is the high point of the Epistle, the answer to all the prayers of an honest heart — God’s answer — giving life and power and blessing to the Spirit-filled and Spirit-led child of God.

Do you see the message of the brazen laver in the outer court of the Jewish tabernacle, my friend? It speaks to us of the cleansing power of the Word of God, when applied to our hearts by the Spirit of God. There is no other way to blessing and power and communion and worship. When we neglect our Bibles, we grow cold and indifferent to the things of Christ. When we let the Mirror of the soul reveal the defilement of our hands and feet — our service and our walk — then we “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18).

WASHED IN JESUS’ BLOOD “ONCE FOR ALL” — CLEANSED DAILY BY HIS WORD

There were two ceremonial washings of the priests, as we saw in our last lesson:

First Moses washed them all over at the door of the tabernacle when they were consecrated to the office of a priest.

Then they washed their own hands and feet daily before they entered the Holy Place, and as they came out to minister at the brazen altar.

Moses’ washing the priests all over was a picture of Another’s washing them once for all in His precious blood, even the Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus

Christ. Of this the altar of burnt offering speaks. But in the laver we have the picture of Christ as the believer's "Advocate with the Father," washing His disciples' hands and feet from the daily defilement of sin.

Thus He maintains fellowship between Himself and His believer-priests.

- We are first justified by His blood;

- Then we are sanctified through confession of sin and cleansing by "the washing of water through the word," as it is applied by the Spirit of God.

As Dr. W. G. Moorehead once wrote,

"There is a bath which requires no repetition!"

Once saved, always saved — by the grace of God. "Regeneration is never, never repeated!"

To all who have put their faith in the atoning work of Christ, He says,

"Ye are washed . . . ye are sanctified . . . ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11).

This is what Christ meant when He said to Peter, as He washed the disciples' feet,

"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all, For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean" (John 13:10, 11).

Let us remember that brass, in the Jewish tabernacle, speaks to us of judgment upon sin.

We saw that in our former studies concerning the brazen altar, where the sacrifice was slain — for sin; and in the pillars and sockets of brass. We saw that the brazen serpent in the wilderness was used by our Lord, in His conversation with Nicodemus, to illustrate His bearing our sins upon the accursed tree; for the serpent is the symbol of sin; brass, of judgment.

Now as the penalty of sin was judged at the brazen altar, so defilement was

confessed and judged

- put away — at the brazen laver.

We were born again at the cross; we are cleansed daily as we let Christ, our Cleanser, forgive us of all unrighteous acts and thoughts by the way. At the altar the animal sacrifice was slain; at the laver water was used to make clean the hands and feet.

- At the cross Christ was crucified; and from His wounded side there came forth “blood and water.”

- From the smitten rock in the wilderness there flowed a life-giving stream. And “that Rock was Christ” (I Corinthians 10:4).

No wonder the hymn writer sang,

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in Thee;

Let the water and the blood,

From Thy wounded side which flowed,

Be of sin the double cure,

Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

- By the blood of Christ we are justified;

- By the water of the Word we are sanctified.

The leper in Israel who was cleansed was sprinkled with blood seven times; then he washed himself and his clothes with water. Leprosy is a type of sin. “Nothing but the blood of Jesus” can take away the guilt of sin; and He has provided a living fountain of water through the Spirit and the Word, whereby the redeemed of God may keep their garments “unspotted from the world,” which thrust Him out at the point of a spear. (See James 1:27).

After the priests had washed their hands and feet at the laver of brass, they went

on into the Holy Place.

- There they walked in the light of the golden candlestick which pointed on to Christ, the Light of the World.

- There they ate the shewbread, a picture of Christ, the Bread of Life.

- There they stood before the golden altar of incense to pray for the people, prophetic of Christ, our Intercessor and "Advocate with the Father."

From this place of communion they went forth to serve God at the brazen altar, and to serve His people, as their representatives.

My Christian friend, how do we attempt to do the work of God? In the energy of the flesh? Depending upon our own supposed strength? Or in the power of the Holy Spirit alone?

Long ago the prophet gave us the secret to soul winning, when he said,

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

And again the apostle echoed the thought, saying,

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing [laver] of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

"And having an 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" (Hebrews 10:21, 22).

CLEANSED FOR SERVICE

Only the priests could wash their hands and feet at the laver of brass; and to be a priest in Israel, one had to be born into Aaron's family.

Only the born again child of God can claim the cleansing power of the Word and the Spirit of God.

Indeed, “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I

Corinthians 2:14).

To approach the inspired Word of God merely as literature, or as a source of human knowledge, is to seek blindly for something that cannot be acquired by human skill. “Ye must be born again,” our Lord said to Nicodemus many centuries ago — born again by the Spirit of God as He applies the living Word of God to the sinner’s heart. (See John 3:3-8).

Aaron and his sons had to meet God at the altar of sacrifice before they could approach the laver; and only by the way of the altar and the laver could they enter the sanctuary of God for communion and fellowship with Him. No manmade schemes for worship, no manmade schemes for service can please God. Would that all men everywhere would heed our Lord’s own Word, “Ye must be born again!”

Moreover, let us who have been regenerated by His precious blood not forget that we have been saved to serve. God has “no other plan” for making known “the unsearchable riches” of Christ. He is depending upon His own.

“As the Father sent” Him, “so sendeth he” us who have been born again by His grace. That He expects fruitfulness from our lives, we know, even as He said,

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (John 15:16).

No CLEANSING — No WORSHIP — No SERVICE

Repeatedly God said to Moses that Aaron and his sons should wash their hands and feet at the laver of brass, “lest they die.”

Without this cleansing, they dared not enter the sanctuary to worship; without it, they dared not seek to serve at the altar or in the Holy Place. There was no blood-shedding at the laver; yet the priests dared not worship without its cleansing!

Again, the lesson is plain. We cannot approach God except with clean hands and a clean heart. If we would know His quickening power, we must confess our sins, that He may cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (I John 1:8).

“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (I John 1:10).

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation” (Psalm 24:35).

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9).

Whatever the coldness of your heart, my Christian friend; whatever the lack of power and blessing in your life may have been; go to Christ in full and complete confession, and He will restore unto you the joy of your salvation. He will forgive and cleanse and empower you for worship and service. He will put a song in your heart to stay. “Though we are faithless, yet he abideth faithful!”

CHRIST — OUR CLEANSER

A perfect and beautiful picture of Christ, our Great High Priest, ministering at the laver, is seen in the thirteenth chapter of John, where He is the Girded One, washing His disciples’ feet. There He is our Advocate at work; and in this scene He gives us a glimpse of His present ministry of intercession before “the throne of grace.”

He had just partaken of the last Passover with His disciples. He Himself was soon to be offered as the Passover Lamb, the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Arising from the supper, He took a towel, and girded Himself, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, wiping them with the towel wherewith He was girded.

Peter, not understanding his Lord’s purpose, refused to let Him wash his feet; he knew his own unworthiness, and felt that the Lord Jesus should never do for him

what seemed to him as a menial task.

“Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me” (John 13:68).

In effect the Lord had said to Peter something like this: “Peter, this is a picture of the work which I shall perform for you when I return to the Father, cleansing you, restoring you to fellowship when that fellowship has been broken by sin in your life. You do not understand now, but you shall hereafter.”

Every believer is “in Christ,” and that position cannot change. But every believer also sins, as long as he is in the flesh, in this present life; and to have fellowship “with Christ,” to have “part with Him,” in comradeship and communion, he must let Christ keep him cleansed.

Still Peter did not understand. Going to the other extreme, he said,

“Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.”

And the quiet, wonderful answer of the Lord was simply, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet but is clean every whit.”

The believer, having been washed “with the washing of regeneration,” needs that washing no more. The cleansing effect of the new birth is not to be repeated. He to whom the precious blood of Christ has been applied has been set in a position of unchangeable righteousness in his standing before God.

To think of the necessity for a second application of that blood would be to dishonor it.

It is the blood of the Father’s well-beloved Son, and it has once for all redeemed and made nigh every believer. The need now is for the washing of the soiled feet — the cleansing from the daily defilement of those who have been redeemed.

“Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it,”

once for all, “that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”

- He died to make us clean.

- He lives to keep us clean.

We are made just as clean as His precious blood can make us, and that is “whiter than snow.”

We are kept just as clean as the water of His Word and the power of His Holy Spirit can keep us.

The cleansing of the blood is once for all. The cleansing from the defilement of the desert sands is just as often as there is need for it.

Bathers in the surf are often seen going to the bathing pavilion with a pail of water. This is to remove the sand with which their feet become soiled as they walk across the beach.

In the believer’s walk from the cross to the New Jerusalem, where he will be clothed in a robe of beauty like unto his Lord’s, he becomes defiled, and has constant need of the tender ministry of an “Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Our blessed Lord is there, in the presence of the Father, girded to serve our daily need, that we may “have part” with Him, in fellowship and communion and worship and service. When He shows us some evil way, some defiling spot, we may at once submit our feet to Him, and have them cleansed, fully cleansed!

Thank God! At the altar which is His cross the penalty of sin has been forever paid! And at the laver of cleansing, through His Holy Word, the Spirit of God gives us power over sin. The Lord Jesus and the Spirit of God are interceding for us at the Father’s right hand!

“WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM!”

As long as we are pilgrims, journeying from this world to heaven and home, we shall need the laver of cleansing, as it were; but in that eternal city there will be

no need for cleansing from defilement; for nothing that defileth shall enter there.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2).

“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself’ (Philippians 3:20, 21).

As someone has beautifully expressed it:

“The streets of gold will reflect the purity of the redeemed. A sea of glass will show forth the unsullied beauty of the sons of God, who shall have been glorified, transformed into the very image of the Lord!”

There shall be no more curse, no more sin, no more tears, no more night. In the presence of our crucified and risen Lord we shall worship Him throughout all the endless ages!

Until that coming day, we stand in need of Christ, our Cleanser, in a very real sense. As we wait for His appearing; as we look beyond the blood and tears of a war-torn, war-weary world; let us give our whole selves into His hands for the daily, constant cleansing that can make us ever-increasingly like Him, more and more “meet for the Master’s use.”

This we shall do only as our hearts can sing a song of William Cowper, written many years ago.

This great English poet knew the pangs of sorrow. He knew the need for the daily ministry of his omnipotent Lord.

An orphan at an early age, he fell in love with his cousin, whom he could never marry. Failing in his chosen profession of law, he knew even greater trouble in temporary fits of in sanity. Upon one occasion, in such an illness, dear friends prevented him from taking his own life.

Then, upon regaining his mental balance, he wrote those majestic lines,

“God moves in a mysterious way,

His wonders to perform;

He plants His footsteps in the sea,

And rides upon the storm.”

It was this godly man who also wrote,

“There is a fountain filled with blood,

Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;

And sinners plunged beneath that flood Lose all their guilty stains.”

But his hymn that shows his realization of constant need for cleansing by Christ, through the Word of God applied by the Holy Spirit, is this one; may we make it the song of our hearts — till Jesus comes!

“The Spirit breathes upon the Word,

And brings the truth to sight;

Precepts and promises afford A sanctifying light.

“A glory gilds the sacred page,

Majestic, like the sun:

It gives a light to every age;

It gives, but borrows none.

“My soul rejoices to pursue The steps of Him I love,

Till glory breaks upon my view In brighter worlds above”.

~ end of chapter 7 ~ http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/

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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER EIGHT THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

Christ, “The True Light” and His “Children of Light”

Exodus 25:31-40; 27:20, 21; 37:17-24; 39:37; 40:24, 25 Leviticus 24:14; Numbers 4:5, 9, 10, 15; 8:14

AS THE priests entered the Holy Place of the Jewish tabernacle, they beheld three beautiful articles of furniture, all lighted by the golden candlestick. Indeed, there was no other source of light in this sacred dwelling place of God “in the midst” of His people, Israel.

There was no window in the sanctuary, for all natural light was excluded. But as the seven lamps of the golden candlestick burned, at the left of the priest as he entered the door, they shone not only upon this beautiful article of pure gold, but also upon the golden-covered table of shewbread just opposite the candlestick on the north, and upon the golden-covered altar of incense in front of the door and before the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

As we remember that these three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place, as well as the other three, were given their positions by the Lord Himself; and that they formed important links in “the shadow of the cross,” outlined by the God-given arrangement of the six articles which made the furniture of this tent of the congregation; then their typical significance becomes overwhelming proof that they foreshadowed “The Glories of Christ As Seen in the Jewish Tabernacle.”

Not only did the light from the golden candlestick reveal the beauty of this seven branched Lampstand and that of the table and the altar; but it also cast its rays upon the beautiful gold-covered boards which formed the walls, and upon the hangings and curtains of fine twined linen embroidered with cherubim of blue, purple, and scarlet.

We hardly need to repeat here the symbolism of these precious things; but let us try to imagine for a moment the impression they must have made upon the minds and hearts of the priests as they entered this holy place to minister before the Lord.

Everything in that sacred room foreshadowed the glory and the beauty of Him

who was to come.

- The gold was symbolic of His eternal deity;

- The fine white linen, of His righteousness;

- The blue, of His heavenly character;

- The purple, of His royalty;

- The scarlet, of His sacrifice.

- The candlestick typified Him as “The True Light,” “The Light and Life of Men.”

- The table of shewbread suggested that He was “The Bread of Life.”

- The blood-sprinkled, golden altar, upon which sweet incense was burned, was a picture of His intercessory work for His own before “the throne of grace.”

Above the priests and upon the door and veil were the outstretched wings of the cherubim, reminding Aaron and his sons of the majesty and power of the God who sends His angels to execute His holy will. There was nothing in the Holy Place to mar its beauty. Everything spoke of the glories of the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world, and of His relationship to His own.

It was a high privilege which the priests enjoyed, for no one else could enter there. It is a glorious privilege which born again souls enjoy now and will enjoy throughout eternity; for “none but his loved ones” can know His beauty, His glory, and His grace!

We must enter now by faith into heaven itself by the way of His cross, if we would behold His matchless Person and know the power of His ministry for His own. And this we would do today, in the reading of His Word, as it is applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,” praising God for His “great salvation.”

Human reason is but as a natural light; it does not reflect His glory. We must walk in the light of the golden candlestick, as it were, if we would know the Lord. But we who have been born again are believer-priests; we may walk in the light that shines from Jesus, “The Light of the World.”

Would to God apostate Christendom would go to the cross and be saved!

- Then countless, blinded souls could behold the blood-sprinkled altar, the wings of the cherubim, the gold of our Lord’s deity.

- Then they could know the light of His love, the food for their souls, and the mighty intercession of the Son of God!

- Then they would be “children of light,” walking before Him, reflecting His glory; “lights in the world,” shining for Him, that sin-darkened souls might let “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” shine in their hearts. (See II Corinthians 4:6).

May the Holy Spirit help us who love the Lord to let this, His purpose and will for us, be fully realized as we “walk in the light” with Him!

Now, my friend, if you will turn to all the Scripture verses listed at the beginning of this lesson, and read them prayerfully, you will better understand our detailed study today.

As you read, you will note that the first two of these passages describe the “pattern” which God gave to Moses in the mount.

Then follow those which tell of the finished candlestick, the oil for the light, and instructions as to how this sacred article was to be covered from the gaze of men and carried on the march during the journey from Sinai to Canaan.

In the description given by the Lord to Moses, we find that from one “talent of pure gold” the candlestick was beaten out by hand in delicate and highly ornamental workmanship. The shaft, or base, upheld the one central branch, from which sprang three branches on each side, the one parallel with the other.

In the seven branches were seven lamps. The “bowls, knops, and flowers,” of course, refer to the ornaments on the branches, which were the result of the “beaten work.” The bowls were “made like unto almonds ”

As another has expressed it:

“Each side branch had three sections. Each section had spindles shaped like almonds, a knob at the upper end and a flower. The central shaft had four of these sections,” with “golden lamps . . . on the top of the flowers” (I.M. Haldeman).

What an exquisitely beautiful work of art it must have been!

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK — A TYPE OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

1. “The Light of the World ” and His “Lights in the World .”

Our Lord’s own words and the testimony of Zacharias, Simeon, and the inspired apostles leave us in no doubt as to the typical significance of the golden candlestick:

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life . . . The sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (John 8:12; Philippians 2:15).

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world . . . Ye are the light of the world”

(John 9:5; Matthew 5:14).

“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all . . . Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning” (I John 1:5; Luke 12:35).

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world . . . Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (John 1:4, 9; Ephesians 5:8).

“The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and

in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace . . . A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel . . . For God, who

commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of

God in the face of Jesus Christ" (Luke 1:78, 79; 2:32; II Corinthians 4:6).

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

When Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, addressing his own infant son, prophesied concerning "the dayspring from on high," he was bearing witness to Israel's long-promised Messiah, and quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures.

When Simeon entered the temple and saw the infant Jesus, with Joseph and Mary, who had taken Him to Jerusalem when He was eight days old, in order to fulfill the Law of Moses, he prophesied concerning the long-expected Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world, also quoting the Old Testament concerning the "light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of . . . Israel."

When John the Baptist, "a man sent from God," testified concerning Jesus, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," he "came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (John 1:68, 29).

From Genesis to Revelation, from the first promise of the Redeemer, in Genesis 3:15 to the closing scene of Revelation, with the glorious picture of the Lamb as the Light of heaven, Jesus, the Son of God, is presented to a sin-darkened world. And from Genesis to Revelation His blood-bought children are admonished to live before Him as in the light of His presence. But it is in the New Testament teaching, concerning Christ and His church, that the fulfillment of the symbolism set forth in the golden candlestick of the Jewish tabernacle is most clearly set forth.

As there was no other light in the Holy Place of the sanctuary in the wilderness, even so Christ is the only Light to a groping world in sin. And as He "hath shined in our hearts," even so He expects us to reveal Him to darkened souls.

The priests walked in the light of the golden candlestick as they ministered before the Lord and worshipped Him. Our service will be futile unless we "walk in the light as he is in the light." Our worship will not magnify Him and give

peace to our own souls unless we reflect His glory. Through His church He manifests His love, bidding us let our “light so shine” that men may see our “good works, and glorify” our “Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

The central branch of the golden candlestick speaks to us of our Lord; the six branches which sprang from it, of His church. United to Him in an eternal bond, we shall reflect and show forth His glory here on earth as we “walk in the light.” Indeed, one significant reason why God told Moses to have Aaron light the lamps of the golden candlestick was that they might “give light over against the candlestick” (Numbers 8:2). The light illuminated the delicately fashioned and marvelously beautiful Lampstand of gold.

May God give each one of us grace to say, with Paul,

“In nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death” (Philippians 1:20).

2. A Very Costly Candlestick.

The marginal note of “The Scofield Reference Bible” tells us that “a talent of pure gold”

(Exodus 25:39), from which the candlestick was fashioned, is valued at $29,085. Add to that the skilful workmanship that formed it of “beaten work”; and you get some idea, my friend, of the very great cost of this light for the Holy Place.

The “pure gold” reminds us again of our Lord’s eternal deity; the very great cost, of the price He paid to redeem the souls of men!

That He was ever eternal God, and that He became “Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us,” we have sought to show in our former lessons. And that the price He paid for our redemption was very costly — far beyond human understanding — we have also tried to make very plain.

Apart from these truths, we have no gospel. If Jesus of Nazareth was not the Son of God, then there is no hope for the sinner; and but for His atoning work on Calvary’s cross, we should still be condemned, “having no hope” in the world (Ephesians 2:12). But thank God! The words of the Apostle Paul have come down to us through the centuries, giving light and life eternal:

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (II Corinthians 8:9).

“Ye are bought with a price . . ” (I Corinthians 6:20).

We know that the price which the Son of God paid for our salvation cost Him bitter agony in Gethsemane, when, “with strong crying and tears,”

He faced the accursed tree; when He “sweat as it were great drops of blood,” so that “there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him”; when He prayed for His Father’s will, even though the fulfillment of that holy will meant separation from the hitherto unbroken fellowship His sinless soul had shared with His Father from all eternity. His forsaken cry from the cross bore witness to the fact that He suffered for us — alone! As our Sin Bearer,

He became a curse for us!

What a price to pay!

And we, having received the new birth, are “a new creature [creation]” in Christ Jesus (I Corinthians 5:17), bought with the price of His own blood. Moreover, in Him we are precious to the Father — as gold — “accepted in the beloved” Son!

3. A Candlestick of One Piece.

As the six branches which sprang from the central shaft were one candlestick, even so God sees us identified with His Son — in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into “heavenly places.” The church is forever united to Christ by the new birth. From Him she springs, and by Him she is supported, even as the outspreading branches of the golden candlestick were upheld by its central shaft. The church is united to Him and sustained by Him.

To His disciples our Lord said, in His farewell message, just prior to the cross,

“I am the vine, ye are the branches” (John 15:5).

And in His intercessory prayer, uttered shortly afterwards, He spoke those remarkable and reassuring words,

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20, 21).

Each of the seven lamps of the candlestick gave an individual light; yet all were united to the central branch, which was literally “in the midst.” Likewise, we are individual members of the one body, the church, of which Christ is the Head. Each of us has to know Him as a personal Saviour and Lord; yet we are one in Him, and He is “in the midst” of His own. He promised as much, saying,

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”

(Matthew 18:20).

And John saw the risen Lord, in the Patmos vision, “in the midst of the seven golden candle sticks,” which “are the seven churches” (Revelation 1:13, 20). Of this we shall have more to say later on in this lesson, but just here let us bear in mind that our Lord Jesus never leaves His own!

The central branch of the golden candlestick was chiefest of them all. Likewise, as the Head of His church, Christ must “in all things . . . have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18). He is “the chiefest among ten thousand . . . yea, he is altogether lovely” (Song of Solomon 5:10, 16).

Because the six branches were not artificially joined to the central branch, they could not be severed from it.

As they were beaten out of one talent of pure gold — all of one piece — even so we are eternally secure in our Lord. No man is able to pluck us out of the Father’s hand; nothing can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (John 10:29; Romans 8:38, 39)!

The almond-shaped bowl, with a knop and a flower of gold, suggest to us the resurrection. “The almond tree is the first to show its bud in the spring.” Because Christ is “risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept . . . even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I

Corinthians 15:20-22).

- Christ is the eternal Son of God; we are “sons of God” because we believe in Him for salvation.

- He is the Firstborn; we are His brethren. His Father is our Father; His God, our God.

- He is the Head of the body, which is His church; we are members one of another.

- He is the “heir of all things”; we are joint heirs with Him.

- He is the Second Adam; we are His bride.

We have been crucified with Him, buried with Him, are risen with Him, and seated with Him “in heavenly places.”

- He is one with the Spirit; our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost.

- He is forever glorified, restored to the eternal glory which He had with the Father before the world was; we shall one day behold and share His glory.

All this is our heritage in Him, because we are forever united to Him by faith in His redemptive work.

What a wonderful Saviour!

4. A Candlestick “of Beaten Gold.”

The talent of gold was ever precious in itself; but not until it was “beaten” into the thing of beauty that it became, did it typify the union between Christ and His church. He was, from all eternity, beloved of His Father, coequal and coeternal with Him; but not until He was “wounded for our transgressions . . . bruised for our iniquities,” was the church formed from His wounded side.

The talent of pure gold was beaten by hand till the beautiful candlestick was fashioned; “it pleased the Lord to bruise” His beloved Son, for the Son willingly, gladly came to die! (See Isaiah 53:5, 10).

- But for the beating, there would have been no golden candlestick to light the Holy Place of God’s sanctuary;

- But for the suffering of the cross, there would have been no bride to show forth “by the church the manifold wisdom of God,” to make known the “unsearchable riches of Christ.”

As the cruel nails were driven into the hands and feet of the Son of God, as the spear was thrust into His side, a righteous God was vindicating His holy law, and at the same time magnifying His holy name. On Calvary He was “just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”

(Romans 3:26).

It was this eternal verity, concerning our Lord’s suffering for His church, to which He referred when He said,

“Except a com of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24).

He was made for a little time “lower than the angels . . . that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:9, 10).

Ever morally perfect, absolutely holy in His being; yet He became obedient to His Father, a perfect Saviour, because of the sufferings of His cross.

If we love Him, we shall reflect His glory — because of the things which He suffered for us.

5. A Light Never to Go Out.

God was teaching us another lesson concerning our eternal security in Christ when He said to Moses:

“Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the vail of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the Lord continually: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord continually” (Leviticus 24:24).

If we would shine before God, like the candlestick we must be lighted with the holy light from Him. This life which we receive from Him is eternal. “The life,” which is “the light of men,” shall never go out!

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

6. A Light to Shine before the Lord.

Twice in the above passage from Leviticus we read that the candlestick was to shine “before the Lord.” And earlier in this lesson we were reminded that it shone upon the beautiful things in the Holy Place which speaks to us of Christ, the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the Interceding Priest — in all His deity and glory and beauty.

Beyond the veil, in the Holy of Holies, stood the Shekinah Glory, the very Presence of God “in the midst” of His people.

Verily the light from the golden candlestick did shine “before the Lord.”

Our one purpose in this life should be to live as in the Presence of God. It is possible for us to shine before men, yet not before the Lord. God said to Abraham, “Walk before me”; and He bids us walk before Him, remembering that One is our Master, even Christ. To this end we need the devoted heart and singleness of purpose, that we may say, with Paul, “This one thing I do . . .” (Philippians 3:13).

The lamps manifested the beauty of the candlestick, even as we would, by our shining, reveal His glory who loved us and gave Himself for us. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai; after having talked with the Lord. “he wist not that the skin of his face shone.” He had to put a veil over his face, in order that the children of Israel might bear to look upon him as he gave them God’s commands.

If we spend much time in His Presence, we shall, unconsciously, be “changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:18).

All the while the table of shewbread was standing in the Holy Place; but if the light had not shone upon it, the priests should never have found it.

Without the light which our Lord sheds abroad in our hearts, we should never know Him as the Bread of Life for our heart-hungry souls.

All the while the golden altar of incense was standing before the veil in the sanctuary, but is required the beams of light from the golden candlestick to show forth its beauty, and to remind the priests of the One who was to come to be the interceding Great High Priest. The power of prayer through the risen and interceding Lord, at the right hand of the Father, will be seen and felt through the life that lives and shines before Him.

THE OIL — A SYMBOL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have seen that oil, in the Scriptures, is a type of the Holy Spirit of God. The priests were anointed with the holy oil when they were consecrated to their sacred office. David was anointed with oil by the prophet; so were other kings in Israel.

Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit when He was baptized, although He was ever one with the Father and with the Spirit of God. For His High Priestly work on earth He was anointed with the Spirit; and the Father gave not “the Spirit by measure” unto Him.

In accordance with this symbolism concerning the oil, we find that the “pure oil olive” in the golden candlestick foreshadowed the Holy Spirit of God. In the verses we read a few moments ago from Leviticus, we learn that this oil was “pure,” and that it was “beaten for the light,” not obtained by being pressed from the olive.

Not only was our Lord anointed with the Holy Spirit; but He was born of the Spirit of God. He did His mighty works in the power of the Spirit, lived His sinless life, taught His profound doctrines, and walked among men, always in the power of His own Holy Spirit.

“Through the eternal Spirit” He “offered himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14).

And He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4).

No wonder God told Moses to see that the olive oil for the golden candlestick was “pure,” since it typified our sinless Saviour! And that it was “beaten” out, suggests once more His sufferings as He “offered himself without spot to God.”

But the same oil which filled the central lamp also filled the six other lamps; and the same Holy Spirit is freely bestowed upon Christ’s church. Indeed, we are urged to “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

On the Day of Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius the early church was baptized with the Spirit of God; then their flickering lamps grew suddenly bright, sending forth a steady flame. At the cross the disciples forsook the Lord, and fled; but after Pentecost they rejoiced “that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41). During our Lord’s mock trial Peter thrice denied his Lord; but on the Day of Pentecost he boldly stood up in the temple and told the unbelieving Jews that “by wicked hands” they had “crucified and slain” the Lord.

What made the difference? The indwelling Spirit of God! Peter was a new man. He lived a long life of witnessing, through bitter persecution; and was finally crucified for Jesus’ sake. (See John 21:18, 19). When the child of God is filled with the Spirit, he loses the fear of men, and becomes bold for Christ, no matter what the cost.

But why are there so many empty pews in our churches today? Why are many churches not winning souls for Christ? Are the wicks in their lamps not dry? There must be the “pure” oil of the Holy Spirit, if a testimony is to be given that will honor the Lord, even as the prophet said many centuries ago,

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

Oil, of itself, does not shine; it must be lighted by the fire. Neither does the Holy Spirit “speak of himself,” but of the Lord. But when the “light and life of men,” even Jesus, enters the heart, through the quickening power of the Spirit and the Word of God then the lamp begins to burn. The Spirit takes the things of Christ, and shows them unto the redeemed of God. (See John 16:12-15). If we but let the blessed third Person of the Holy Trinity take control of these poor, faltering lives, then we shall, indeed, “be filled with the Spirit,” letting our lights so shine before men, that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven.

“Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,

With all Thy quickening powers;

Kindle a flame of sacred love

In these cold hearts of ours.”

THE TRIMMING OF THE LAMPS

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:1, 2).

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [i. e., trial]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

“When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

These verses and many others like them give the message of the trimming of the lamps of the golden candlestick. Twice each day the high priest, with “tongs . . . and snuff dishes . . . of pure gold,” trimmed the wicks that the lamps might burn more brightly.

Who did the cutting and trimming? None but the high priest. And at the same time he poured in the pure olive oil!

When the aged John saw the risen Lord on the Isle of Patmos, he beheld Him in His long, High Priestly robe, wearing a golden girdle. He was “in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks .

. . which . . . are the seven churches” in Asia (Revelation 1:12-20).

These seven local churches, in what we call Asia Minor today, or modern Turkey, represented this entire church age. What John saw was a prophetic picture of the conditions that would prevail in professing Christendom from apostolic times until the church is translated to be with Christ. This history, written by the Holy Spirit, before it came to pass, is recorded in the second and third chapters of Revelation. And just before it is given, we get the picture of the

risen Son of Man in glory, standing in the midst of His church.

What is He doing, as, before “the throne of grace,” He intercedes for His own? He is trimming the lamps and pouring in the oil of the Holy Spirit that the gospel may be sent forth through the lamps of testimony from His redeemed. He has no other plan for the saving of souls!

The seven golden candlesticks which John saw were not in heaven, they were in Asia — in a heathen, sin-darkened world. As their Great High Priest in heaven trimmed their lamps, they shed abroad the light of His redemption to a guilty people. For some of his lamps He had praise; for others rebuke; but He was watching over them all. And He was verily “in the midst.”

Surely Aaron, the high priest in Israel, who alone could trim the lamps of the golden candlestick, was but a picture of Jesus, our Great High Priest, who uses the tongs and snuffers, that our feeble lights may burn all the more brightly. Thank God! There was no extinguisher in Aaron’s hand; and the light of our redemption shall never go out! Our Great High Priest has promised that, and His Word is forever “settled in heaven”!

- He may have to send trials and afflictions, in order to draw us closer to Him, in order that our lamps may send forth a clear, shining light.

- He may have to let sorrow or trouble teach us the sufficiency of His grace, that the world may know, from our testimony, that He is able to give “songs in the night.”

But even as He trims our lamps, He pours in the oil of His own Holy Spirit, to comfort and teach and guide us on our pilgrimage from “Egypt to Canaan,” from the wilderness of this godless world unto the New Jerusalem, which is our home.

It may be some unconfessed sin that needs cutting away; it may be some rising of self-will, some duty neglected. But whatever it is, in His loving hands the tongs and the snuffers will surely trim only the things that would mar the beauty of our shining for His glory. That is why we love to read His Word of comfort and assurance concerning trials:

“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:17).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (I

Peter 4:12, 13).

THE BEAUTY OF THE CANDLESTICK — ONLY FOR THE PRIESTS TO SEE

Not only was no one allowed in the Holy Place except the priests; but when Israel was on the march, through the wilderness, the beautiful golden candlestick was carefully protected from the gaze of men. None but the priests could behold its beauty, or walk in its light. When God wanted His people to rest, the Shekinah Glory stood still, and the tabernacle was erected by the Levites; but when He wanted Israel to resume her journey, the pillar of cloud and fire lifted from above and within the Holy of Holies, and moved on before them. Then it was that the priests and the Levites prepared to carry on the march the sacred things of the sanctuary. And this is what God told them to do concerning the golden candlestick:

“And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons . . . And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuff dishes, and all of the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it: and they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers’ skins, and shall put it upon a bar . . . after that, the sons of Kohath [Levites] shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die” (Leviticus 4:5, 9, 10, 15).

No outsider could see the beauty of this golden lampstand; nor can any but believer-priests today know the beauty of the Lord, or His union with His church.

“The natural man [i. e., the unsaved man] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Corinthians 2:14).

The outsider saw only the covering of badgers' skins, possibly like that of the tents of the people. To the unregenerate heart the Lord Jesus was just a good man — not the eternal God who became Man, that He might save sinners. The skeptic sees no beauty in Him. But the believer beholds His uncreated glory — now by faith; one day by sight.

Someone has also suggested that, insofar as the six branches of the golden candlestick represented the church, we are to be covered, as it were, during our earthly pilgrimage, with a "cloth of blue," remembering that "our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven"; and with the "badgers' skins," ever realizing that we must walk humbly with our God.

One day, many centuries ago, the Roman Emperor, Titus, destroyed Jerusalem; and with it, the temple with all its furnishings. His soldiers, in the year 70 A.D., bore away the golden candlestick, which had the same symbolism as did that article in the Jewish tabernacle. God permitted that; for "the law" of Moses was but a shadow "of good things to come" in Christ (Hebrews 10:1). Before Titus bore away the golden candlestick, the glorified Son of Man, crucified and risen from the dead, was walking "in the midst" of the seven golden lampstands, keeping watch over His own. For the lampstand in the temple He had no further use. In Him the symbolism was forever done away!

And when we get to heaven, my Christian friend, we shall see that there they need no light from the sun, moon, or stars; for "the Lamb is the light thereof' (Revelation 21:23). His face will be the glory of the New Jerusalem for all the endless ages; from Him the glory of God shall shine forth brighter than the noon day; and "there shall be no night there" (Revelation 21:25).

Is your lamp sending forth but a nickering ray of light, as you wait for that coming, eternal day?

Let your Great High Priest trim your wick. Is the trimming bringing tears and sorrow and heartache? Let Him have His way with your lamp that it may shine all the more brightly for His glory. One day you shall be like Him, forever to behold and to share His glory. Then keep on burning brightly for His name's sake. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness" (Psalm 112:4).

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect

day” (Proverbs 4:18).

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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER NINE THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

Christ — “The Bread of Life ”

Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16; 40:22, 23; Leviticus 21:22; 22:4, 10; 24:59;

Numbers 4:7, 8; John 6:27-63

AS THE Priest entered the door of the Holy Place, he beheld on his right, just opposite the golden candlestick, the golden-covered table of shewbread; for Moses “put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle north ward, without the veil” (Exodus 40:22).

With the golden altar of incense between the candlestick and the table, in line with the brazen altar and the laver of the outer court, and just before the ark of the covenant and mercy seat within the veil, the table of shewbread thus became a very important part of the “shadow of the cross” which these six pieces of furniture formed, “according to the pattern” given by the Lord God to Moses in the mount. As the light from the golden candlestick fell upon the table, the beauty and the symbolism of this article of furniture met the eye of the priest, while he walked before the Lord and ministered there on behalf of his people, Israel.

In order to enter this Holy Place of God’s sanctuary, he had gone by the way of the brazen altar before the gate. There he had been reminded of the necessity of the shed blood of the promised Redeemer for justification from sin.

From the brazen altar, he had passed by the brazen laver, where he had washed his hands and feet from the defilement of the desert sands before he dared go into the presence of God, “lest he die.”

This cleansing reminded him again that, before he could hold communion and fellowship with the Lord, his daily sins had to be confessed and put away by faith in the blood of the coming “Lamb of God.” That cleansing having been accomplished, the priest had entered through the door, that beautiful hanging of fine twined linen, embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet, significant reminder of Him who was to come to open the way to God and heaven and eternal life, even the Lord Jesus.

Once within the Holy Place, the priest saw only beauty and loveliness — gold, the fine linen embroidered in figures of the cherubim, the three beautiful pieces of furniture — all illuminated by the one light which spoke of Jesus, the “Light of the world” and His redeemed children who are “lights in the world.”

The golden altar of incense was the place of worship, and a picture of Christ, the Great High Priest, who “ever liveth to make intercession” for His own; while the table of shewbread foretold His coming to be the “Bread of life” to a heart-hungry people.

What “Glories of Christ” did the Jewish tabernacle show forth!

- The brazen altar foretold justification by faith in His shed blood;

- The brazen laver, sanctification, cleansing from the daily defilement of sin;

- The golden candlestick, union with Christ, the “True Light”;

- The table of shewbread, communion and fellowship with Him who is the “Living Bread”;

- The golden altar, worship and prayer and praise to Him who is “our Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ”

The fellowship of the Lord God with His redeemed children, foreshadowed in the golden table of shewbread of the Jewish tabernacle, and fulfilled in and through Christ and His church — believer-priests — was “according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:11).

God has ever sought the fellowship of His creatures.

In the Garden of Eden, before sin entered to mar God’s perfect creation, He talked with man, holding communion with Adam, who was made in His “image and likeness.” But sin entered; and sin put man at an awful distance from God.

It caused him to turn away from his Creator in fear, hiding himself among the trees of the garden; for the unregenerate sinner cannot bear the presence of a holy God.

Thus Adam acknowledged, by his actions, that there was no common ground for

fellowship with the Lord; that he had forfeited the right to talk with Him, holding communion with Him. And Adam tried to hide from God! He ran away from the Lord!

This is still the picture of the godless world — running away from God, having no desire for fellowship or communion with Him. But not so the church, the bride of Christ. Once "dead in trespasses and sins," walking in time past "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (even Satan himself); yet now the church has been "made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:1, 2,13).

No longer afraid of God, the blood-bought bride of Christ finds joy and fellowship in communion with Him before the table which He has "prepared," even Jesus, the "Bread of Life"

THE TABLE OVERLAID WITH GOLD — THE PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP

It is of this fellowship and communion between Christ and His church that the table of shewbread speaks; for the priests, as we have already observed, were typical of believer-priests to-day, members of the bride and body of Christ. (See I Peter 2:9; Hebrews 13:15; Romans 12:1, 2; Revelation 1:5, 6).

The table is the place of fellowship. What well-ordered family does not look forward to the times of joyous communion around the table? There the head of the house partakes of the same food as do all the members of the family. Together they talk of the things that concern one another. And there they share a common joy.

Our loving Lord has "prepared a table" before us. Of that table He Himself is the Head. And upon that table He Himself has provided the food which satisfies the soul; for He Himself is the "Bread of Life." He is the "Bread of God" (John 6:33). In Him the Father finds perfect delight; in Him He is and always was and ever will be "well pleased." And in Him we, who are members of His "household of faith," in the family of God, find our satisfaction and delight.

We feed upon the same spiritual food, even the Person and work of our blessed Lord, God's Son and our Saviour. Thus the fellowship, broken by sin in the Garden of Eden, has been for ever restored.

Our holy God comes down to hold sweet communion with us — on the ground of the perfect redemptive work of His beloved Son. He feeds His soul upon the perfections of His "only begotten Son." And we feed our souls upon the same perfections and immeasurable love of the holy Son of God. What fellowship!

To think that we feast upon the same spiritual food as docs our omnipotent God! He finds infinite satisfaction in Christ as man's redeemer and representative; and we are called to sit at His table, which He has prepared, to share His joy in Christ, to feed upon Him who is the delight of the heart of God!

This is the message of the golden-covered table of shew bread, which stood on the north side of the Holy Place of the Jewish tabernacle, just opposite the golden candlestick, by which it was illumined. As we behold God's picture of it, in our lesson today, may we let the Holy Spirit take the things of Christ, and show them unto us!

First let us see the God-given "pattern" of this beautiful table. It is given to us in Exodus 25:2330, while the description of the finished work is recorded in 37:10-16. In these and related passages, listed at the beginning of this lesson, we learn that it was made of incorruptible acacia wood, called "shittim wood" in the Authorized Version of our English Bible. This durable wood was then covered over with pure gold. It was two cubits long, one cubit wide, and one and one-half cubits high. As one cubit was about eighteen inches, the table was about thirty-six inches in length, eighteen inches in breadth, and twenty-seven inches in height.

Around the top there was a crown or rim of gold, evidently to encircle and hold securely in place the twelve loaves of shew bread, which were "continually" kept upon the table, even when Israel was on the march. Just outside this crown of gold, there was "a border of an handbreadth around about," doubtless to hold the sacred vessels. And on the outer edge of this border was another "golden crown" or rim "to the border thereof round about."

At the four corners were rings of gold, through which the staves were placed before Israel journeyed on the march; for by these staves the table was carried. They were also made of acacia wood, covered over with gold. This table, like all the other sacred pieces of furniture and vessels, was not to be exposed to the gaze of the outside world; nor was it to be handled by any other than the consecrated priests. The Levites carried it on the wilderness journey, but only

after it had been carefully covered, and after the staves had been put through the rings of gold.

The vessels to be used at the table of shewbread were all “of pure gold.”

The “dishes” were evidently to hold the shewbread, which, we are told. Moses was to “set upon the table” always before the Lord (Exodus 25:29, 30; Leviticus 24:6). The “bowls” were doubtless for the powdered frankincense, which was to be spread over the twelve loaves of shewbread. And the “covers” were flagons which must have been vessels for wine used in the drink offerings mentioned in Numbers 15:1-12.

Not only was the “bread of God” to be placed before the Lord “continually”; but the twelve loaves also represented the twelve tribes of Israel.

We shall see, as we continue to search the Scriptures in this lesson that the priests were to partake of this holy bread in the Holy Place. Now the table and the bread were one! We are not to think of them as separate the one from the other. Both speak to us of our Lord.

- The incorruptible wood once again reminds us of His sinless humanity;

- The gold, of His eternal glory and deity;

- The bread, of satisfaction for the heart of His Heavenly Father and for the hearts of His blood-bought children.

Now the twelve tribes were all represented at the table — a loaf for each tribe, and these loaves were encircled with a crown of gold. What a picture of our eternal security in Him who is the “Living Bread”!

Even as Israel journeyed on the march, the loaves were still to be upon the table “continually” (Numbers 4:7, 8). Covered by the priests with “a cloth of blue,” over which were spread “a cloth of scarlet” and “a covering of badgers’ skins,” the “continual shewbread” (II Chronicles 2:4), together with all the holy vessels, was still to “be thereon.”

But the loaves could not fall off the table; they could not be moved; because they were encircled by a crown of gold!

My Christian friend, as we journey through the wilderness of this world, from Egypt to Canaan, as it were, we cannot fall from our Father's omnipotent safekeeping! The gold of His eternal deity insures that; for He is "able to keep" us "from falling," and to present us "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24)1 We are kept by His everlasting love!

As the priests covered the holy table of shewbread, in preparation for the march, they were reminded by the cloth of blue of the heavenly character of Him, upon whom their souls were to feed. By the cloth of scarlet they could foresee the costly price of their redemption by His own precious blood. And by the covering of badgers' skins, they could tell that this heavenly One was to come down, in the form of a servant, the Man, Christ Jesus.

Just how much of this beautiful symbolism the priests in the wilderness could actually understand, we cannot tell; but living on this side of the cross, we who are members of the bride of Christ can see these things clearly. This we do know: The priests in Israel and Moses and every saved soul before the cross — all were redeemed by faith in the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world.

The shedding of blood from the time of Abel; yes, from the time when God provided "coats of skins" to clothe Adam and Eve pointed on to Jesus, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Concerning Abraham, who lived some two thousand years before Christ, our Lord said, as He was talking to the unbelieving Jews,

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56).

Abraham saw the day of Christ by faith; even as Moses did in the keeping of the Passover and in the beautiful tabernacle, the pattern for which God gave him in the mount; and even as the priests did, as they ministered before the Lord in this sanctuary for the Lord God "in the midst" of His chosen people, Israel.

THE SHEWBREAD — A TYPE OF CHRIST, "THE BREAD OF LIFE"

The word "shewbread," means, when literally translated from the Hebrew, "the bread of the face"; that is, "the bread of the presence." Therefore, it was also called "the presence bread." We have seen that, by express command of the Lord, it was "continually" before His Presence.

He looked upon it with satisfaction because it foreshadowed His beloved Son who always did those things that pleased Him. Because all twelve of the tribes of Israel were represented in the twelve loaves, “the presence bread” reminded the Lord also of His people. There they were, symbolically face to face with God, in fellowship with Him on the basis of the atoning work of God’s Son upon the cross. Had not Abraham, when returning from the deliverance of his nephew, Lot, met Melchizedek, who “brought forth bread and wine”? (See Genesis 14:18-20). This “king of Salem” and “priest of the most high God” was a marvelous type of Christ, our King-Priest. And because Abraham had faith in the promised Redeemer, he could partake of the memorials of sacrifice, the bread and the wine, in fellowship with Melchizedek, unmistakable type of the Lord Himself. (See Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1-28).

The Lord God looked upon the shewbread, and was satisfied in His Son, of whom the loaves spoke. And He saw us, the bride of Christ, “accepted in the beloved” Son. For “the presence bread’ foreshadowed our Lord Jesus, the true Bread, who sustains us in our new life, satisfies our heart-hungry souls, and fills us with the joy of His never-failing Presence.

“Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (I John 1:3).

“Jesus said unto them . . . My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world . . . I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:32-35).

When our Lord died upon the cross and rose again, He who was “the Bread of God” became also the believer’s “Bread of Life.” Ever well pleasing “before the Lord,” His believer-priests feed their souls upon Him; and thus the fellowship which was broken by sin has been restored between the Lord and His believing children.

Now if we turn to the Holy Spirit’s description of this shewbread, we shall find some striking and significant details, which unmistakably remind us of our Lord.

- This holy bread was to be made of fine flour, without leaven.

- It was to be baked with fire.

- Then the loaves were to be placed in two parallel rows upon the table, within the encircling crown of gold.

- Upon the twelve loaves powdered frankincense was sprinkled.

- And there the shewbread stood “before the Lord” for seven days.

On each Sabbath day the priests placed this sweet frank incense in one of the golden bowls, which belonged to the service of the table; and burned it as “an offering made by fire unto the Lord” (Leviticus 24:7). These loaves were then food for the priests, fresh loaves being put in their place “before the Lord.” Aaron and his sons were to eat this holy bread, but only within the Holy Place (Leviticus 24:9).

Seven is the number of perfection.

- God gave us seven days in the week.

- He placed seven colors in the rainbow.

- Seven, we believe, is the divine number of periods, during which He has dealt with man and will yet deal with him, even unto the eternal state.

- For seven days the holy bread, which prefigured the sinless Bread of Life, stood “before the Lord” on the gold-covered table in the Holy Place, just another symbol of the divine perfection of Him who is the True Bread.

But let us examine more closely the ingredients which went into this holy bread, as well as the one which was expressly excluded by the Lord God:

1. The Fine Flour — A Type of Christ’s Perfect Humanity.

How soft and white is fine flour! Did you ever hold it between your fingers, just to feel its smooth texture? You felt no roughness, no unevenness, only a soft, smooth, even substance. As someone has expressed it, “Fine flour is bread corn which has been bruised until it is smooth and even. Christ is the bread corn bruised, and in Him is no roughness or unevenness” (Rodgers).

His spotless humanity had nothing in it to mar it, because it was flawless, absolutely without sin. That is why His Father in heaven was always well

pleased with His Son. That is why even His enemies could find no fault with Him.

That is why He Himself could challenge those who sought to kill Him to "convict him of sin." He was "holy, harmless [i.e., 'guileless'], undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26).

No wonder He was rightly called "the Bread of God"!

2. The Absence of Leaven — A Type of Christ's Sinlessness.

As if to emphasize the sinless nature of His Son, of whom the shewbread spoke, the Lord expressly commanded that no leaven be put into the holy bread.

Now some people teach that leaven is a symbol of the gospel, and that the church will convert the world. Just a few days ago I heard one of the leaders of rationalistic teaching say as much over the radio — and over a nationwide hookup, too!

But this man who preaches in so-called evangelical pulpits does not believe in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, the virgin birth of our Lord, His vicarious atonement for sin, His bodily resurrection, or His coming again in glory — personally, visibly, bodily. Not all who teach that leaven is a type of the gospel are skeptical concerning the way of salvation; thank God for that! But practically all, if indeed not all of them, deny the bodily, imminent, visible return of Christ in glory, to bring in His own kingdom. They try to spiritualize His second coming; and in this we believe they pervert this "blessed hope" of the Christian. Moreover, every single reference in the Bible to leaven suggests evil.

This holy bread was to be made without leaven.

During the feast of unleavened bread all leaven was to be put out of every house in Israel. Our Lord warned His disciples against the "leaven of the scribes and Pharisees," by which they understood Him to mean their "doctrine," or teaching. The apostles wrote of "the leaven of malice and wickedness," and exhorted Christians to "purge out the old leaven."

And the whole of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, where the woman is pictured as hiding leaven in three measures of meal, presents the course of this church age.

All seven of our Lord's parables recorded in this remarkable chapter tell the same story — that the church began with a few believers, and that it would grow into a great system, in which would be found the true and the false, the wheat and the tares, the good fish and the bad, true believers on the Lord Jesus and hypocrites who bear His name, yet deny the blood of His cross.

In this very chapter, which, we believe, is misinterpreted by those who make the leaven symbolize the gospel, the woman hides the leaven in the meal until the whole is leavened. What a picture of the insidious, permeating influence of apostasy in professing Christendom today!

Yes; invariably the Word of God pictures leaven as a symbol of sin. (See Matthew 16:6-12; I Corinthians 5:6-8; Galatians 5:9; Matthew 13:33; Mark. 8:15; Luke 12:1).

Surely we need not quote further Scripture to prove that our Lord Himself was ever, always, without sin!

In His Person there was only light without darkness. In Him was only good, without evil. That is why the Father could delight in the Son. And that is why He expressly commanded Moses not to put leaven in the holy bread that stood "before the Lord," for leaven is the symbol of sin.

3. The Baking with Fire — A Type of Christ's Suffering for Sinners.

Even as the twelve loaves of the shewbread were baked with fire, so also our Lord stood the fires of testing and suffering, that we might be saved. The fire of God's holiness searched and tested Him, and found Him absolutely holy. That is why He could die upon the cross as the perfect substitute for sinful man. Into the agony of His sinless soul we cannot fully enter, for we are sinful by nature. But we can thank Him for His love and grace!

4. The Frankincense — A Type of Christ's Fragrant Life.

Frankincense is a sweet gum; and when it was burned upon the altar, as "an offering made by fire unto the Lord," it went up before Him as a sweetsmelling savour.

What a picture of the loveliness and beauty and fragrance of His matchless life! His very name is precious to the Father! Is it the most precious name in heaven

or on earth to you, my friend? The wicked Jews of His day called Him "Beelzebub," the prince of demons, even Satan himself. What blasphemy! Do you know Him as your Saviour and Lord and Friend? One day men, angels, and demons will have to acknowledge what the born again child of God delights to proclaim today, that "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). The Father calls Him His "beloved Son"!

This is the God-given description of the holy bread which was placed by the priests each Sabbath day upon the golden-covered table in the Holy Place of the sanctuary; and this, we believe, is the scriptural interpretation of its beautiful symbolism.

There was satisfaction for the representatives of all God's people; for no tribe was overlooked. There is satisfaction in Christ for all the world!

As the table and the bread were one; and as the "Bread of God" became food for the priests, even so we are complete in Christ Jesus.

The fragrant frankincense of His life is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, if we let Him fill our very being; and the Father sees us "accepted" in Him, complete in Him. We are united to Him; one body, of which He is the Head; His bride, of whom He is the heavenly Bridegroom. In Him we find daily nourishment for our souls, constant fellowship at His table, because He was "the corn of wheat" which was "ground in the mill of suffering and brought into the fire of judgment" to take our place on Calvary's cross (ScofieldReference Bible, page 102). Truly we can say, with the Apostle Paul,

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

To believe His Word, and to accept Him personally as Saviour and Lord, is to "eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood" (John 6:63; cf. 6:51-63). To appropriate His gift of eternal life is to feed our souls upon the Living Bread, which came down from heaven. But how starved we are spiritually!

Many of God's people who would never think of missing a meal of physical food three times a day, let whole weeks and months pass without more than a cursory reading of the living Word of God which speaks of the Bread of Life.

How can Christians “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” unless they feed upon His Word? (See II Peter 3:18).

May God help us not to starve our souls! The more we read the Bible, the more we love it. The more we love it, the more wonderful it becomes to our hearts. Why do we neglect it so? Only because we let Satan crowd other things in its place. That should not be so — if we truly love the Lord.

“THE BREAD OF GOD” — FOOD FOR THE PRIESTS

We have seen from our study today that this holy bread became food for the priests, and that they were to eat it in the Holy Place. Thus it becomes a beautiful symbol of the “table” which the Lord has “prepared” for us in memory of His broken body and shed blood — “till He come.” It is the “Lord’s Table,” not ours. We are His invited guests; He has provided the bounty. We sit at His table to hold sweet fellowship and communion with Him. It is “a pure table”; the bread is “holy.” Moreover, it is to be eaten only in the Holy Place, as it were.

Accordingly, God expressly commanded that certain persons could not partake of the shewbread:

- No stranger,

- No sojourner,

- No hired servant,

- No priest with a running sore could eat the holy bread.

What a picture for us, as Christians!

No stranger, no one who denies the blood of our Lord Jesus, should dare go to the Lord’s Table to partake of the Lord’s Supper; yet our own country is filled with many professing Christians who do this very thing — belong to churches and sit at the Lord’s Table, yet deny the Lord who bought them!

God does not honor such wickedness.

No sojourner, no passing friend, could partake; neither should any guest or member of a believer’s household go to the Lord’s Table except by personal faith

in Him of whom it speaks.

No hired servant in Israel could eat the holy bread; neither can we appreciate the meaning of the Lord's Supper if we are trying to work\ for our salvation. We are saved by grace through faith, not by our own paltry works.

No priest with a running sore could eat the holy bread; and God tells us in the epistles that we must approach the Lord's Table in full confession of all defilement of sin; we must put all sin under the blood of Christ, or else we eat "unworthily." The priest with a running sore was a priest still; once saved, we are always saved. But it is possible for us to be saved, yet miss God's richest blessing by unconfessed sin in our lives.

Let us read prayerfully Leviticus 22: 4, 10 to see God's commands concerning this vital matter; then let us examine our own souls as we apply the message to our own hearts.

The Church at Corinth had sinned in going to the Lord's Table to eat and drink (I Corinthians 11:20-22); and for this gross iniquity Paul severely rebuked them. Then he went on to explain to them the true meaning of this sacred memorial, saying, in part,

"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come"

(I Corinthians 11:26).

Thank God! This memorial feast will one day be done away; for we shall not need these emblems to remind us of the broken body and shed blood of the Son of God! We shall see Him as He is, look upon His face — and be like Him — for all the endless ages! But meanwhile, let us sacredly guard the significance of this blessed memorial, lest we bring reproach upon the holy name we bear.

The shewbread cost the priests nothing; nor did our salvation cost us anything! It cost the Father an awful price! It cost the Son of God a terrible price! But the Bread of Life is free to all the world, "without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1)!

Only the priests could eat the holy bread; and they had to go by the way of the

brazen altar of sacrifice and the brazen laver, in order to enter the Holy Place, where they partook of this sacred thing. But, while no priest with a running sore could partake; yet it is beautiful to note that the priest who was lame or blind or deformed in any way was not excluded from the table. He could not serve God there, but he could eat the holy bread. (See Leviticus 21:22; cf. 21:17-23).

I wonder if our spiritual lameness is hindering our service for the Lord? Yet, however faltering, however weak, however stumbling, our testimony is for Christ; if we are truly born again by faith in His shed blood, we are invited to sit at His Table, “prepared” by Him for His own. Moreover, we are exhorted to encourage the weak, to strengthen them in the faith, that they may grow more and more like our Lord. (See Romans 14:1; I Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 12:12,

13).

Israel’s priests partook of the holy bread as they journeyed in “the howling wilderness.”

We, too, are in a godless world; the tempests and storms of life would discourage us and lead us to despair. Our own lameness and sinfulness would drag us down; but our Lord invites us to His Table — to remember Him in His sufferings for us, “till He come.” Meeting Him there, we take fresh courage; we see His almighty power, and His never dying love — all exercised for us.

Then we “thank God, and take courage.” He is a wonderful Saviour!

Many centuries ago there lived a lame man who sat at a king’s table. His name was Mephibosheth; his father, Jonathan, the devoted friend of David, the king. When Saul and Jonathan were killed in the battle on Mount Gilboa, tidings of their death reached the nurse of little Mephibosheth, who was just five years old. She picked him up and fled, fearing lest he should be killed because he was of Saul’s household; and when she fled, she dropped the child, and he became lame for the rest of his life.

The years passed. David’s wars were over for a time. He remembered his covenant with Jonathan, and asked, “Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”

And he was told of Mephibosheth. He sent for the young man, who in turn was

afraid, lest the king should kill him. He had been in hiding, dwelling in Lodebar, “the place of no pasture.” Tremblingly he went before the king, and from David himself heard the reassuring words of welcome to the king’s own table. And at the king’s table he sat “as one of the king’s sons.” Yet he was “lame on both his feet.” But as he sat at the king’s table, his lame feet were hidden from view. Was he not counted as one of the king’s sons? (See II Samuel 4:4; 9:1-13).

Nearly two thousand years ago, God looked for some to whom He might show kindness for the sake of Another. For Jesus’ sake He loved us with an everlasting love. He sought us out when we were lame, helpless to fight against the enemy of our souls, hiding from His holy Presence in fear and dread. He brought us into His “banqueting house,” and “his banner over” us “was love” (Song of Solomon 2:4).

He invited us to the King’s Table, bidding us become the “sons of God,” by believing in the name of His well-beloved Son. And as we are seated at His Table, all our imperfections, all our lameness, all our frailties are hidden, covered by the precious blood of the Son of God, who is Himself the King. What love! What grace!

Shall we not show our love for Him by going out into the highways and byways, to tell the millions of others of His gracious invitation to sit at the King’s Table? We shall as His never dying love fills our souls, as the Living Bread satisfies and strengthens our hearts, enabling us to heed His great commission,

“As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you . . .”

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (John 20:21; Mark 16:15).

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Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

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CHAPTER TEN

THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE Christ — Our “Advocate with the Father ”

Exodus 30:1-10, 34-38; 37:25-28; 40:5, 26, 27; Numbers 4:5, 11, 15, 20

NOWHERE in all the Jewish tabernacle do “The Glories of Christ” shine forth with more radiance and beauty than in the golden altar of incense, which stood before the veil in the Holy Place. It was directly in front of the Ark of the Covenant and mercy seat, which stood within the veil in the Holy of Holies, only this beautiful hanging of fine twined linen, embroidered with cherubim of blue, purple, and scarlet, separating it from the Shekinah Glory, which rested in a pillar of cloud and fire above the mercy seat.

On the left of the golden altar of incense the candlestick shed its light upon everything in the Holy Place; while to the right, just opposite the candlestick, stood the table of shewbread. Thus the altar, before which Aaron offered sweet incense to God, as he prayed for the people, became another important link in “the shadow of the cross,” formed by the six pieces of furniture in the Jewish tabernacle and in the outer court.

For the description given by the Holy Spirit concerning the golden altar, we turn to the passages of Scripture listed at the beginning of this lesson.

According to the God-given “pattern,” it was made of the same incorruptible acacia wood, from which other articles in the tabernacle were fashioned. This durable wood, ever reminding us of the sinless humanity of our Lord, was covered over with pure gold, which once more speaks to us of His eternal deity; for the golden altar prefigured our Great High Priest and “Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

This altar was two cubits high, one cubit long, and one cubit wide. Around its “foursquare” top was “a crown of gold.” And at each of the four corners was a “horn,” or projection, covered over with gold.

Under the crown, at the four corners, were rings of gold, through which the staves were passed when the altar was to be carried on the march through the wilderness. These staves, like those for the other pieces of furniture, were made of acacia wood, covered over with gold.

Coals taken from the brazen altar in the outer court were placed upon this golden altar; and upon these coals sweet incense was burned “before the Lord” morning and evening by Aaron himself. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, some of these burning coals were taken by the high priest, in the golden censer, into the Most Holy Place, where the incense was offered to God.

When the Shekinah Glory lifted from off the tabernacle, indicating God’s will that His people should resume their journey through the wilderness, the priests went into the Holy Place, and covered the golden altar, first with “a cloth of blue,” then with “a covering of badgers’ skins,” placing the staves through the rings of gold. Then the Kohathites, one of the three families of the Levites, carried it on the march. But these Kohathites were not to “go in to see when the holy things” were “covered, lest they die” (Numbers 4:20).

Thus we find that much of the symbolism connected with this golden altar was like unto that which had to do with the other articles in the Holy Place — all of which foreshadowed the Person and work of our Lord.

The precious materials of which these sacred things were made speak to us of His matchless Person, as both God and Man; whereas the fact that none could view them save the priests teaches us that only the born again believer-priests can enter by faith, into the Holy Place, even heaven itself, there to behold the One “altogether lovely,” as He ministers for His own before “the throne of grace.”

- “The cloth of blue,” with which the priests covered the golden altar before the Levites could carry it through the wilderness, once more reminds us of the heavenly character of our Lord;

- The “covering of badgers’ skins,” of the fact that the world looks upon Him as only a good man.

But underneath these two coverings, hidden from the gaze of men were the incorruptible wood and the precious gold. The priests alone could look upon this holy thing; and only the believer-priests, redeemed children of God, can know

Him as the sinless Son of Man, who was ever the eternal Son of God!

With this mental picture of the golden altar in mind, let us look at some of the details concerning the worship and ministry of Aaron as he stood before this place of prayer. That Christ is our Altar and that Christ is our Priest, there can be no doubt. And this we shall see as the Holy Spirit teaches us these precious truths.

THE GOLDEN ALTAR — THE PLACE OF WORSHIP ON THE GROUND OF SACRIFICE

Without the brazen altar with its fire, there could have been no worship at the golden altar of incense. In our study of the brazen altar in the outer court, we saw that brass speaks of judgment upon sin; and that the death of the victim foreshadowed the vicarious sufferings of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Now these two altars were linked together by the command of God.

- Without the fire from off the brazen altar, there could be no burning of the sweet incense.

- Without the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God, there could be no Intercessor for us at the “throne of grace.”

His priestly work began at the cross — that priestly work which He still continues to do for us as our “Advocate with the Father.” This fundamental truth is clearly set forth in the story of the great sin of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s sons, who took their censers and “put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord” (Leviticus 10:1, 2).

The verse immediately preceding this quotation throws a flood of light upon this sin of Aaron’s sons and their consequent punishment. The priests had just begun their ministry. The offerings had been laid upon the brazen altar.

“And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces” (Leviticus 9:23, 24).

Immediately after these words we read of the sin of Nadab and Abihu. God had told Moses previously that the fire upon the brazen altar should “ever be burning,” that it should “never go out” (Leviticus 6:13). God sent the fire; and He commanded His priests to keep it burning. Moreover, fire from that brazen altar was to be placed upon the golden altar in the Holy Place to burn the sweet incense “before the Lord.” It was all according to God’s perfect plan — a plan which prefigured the ministry of Jesus, our Great High Priest, in prayer for us only after He had offered Himself upon the altar of Calvary, and had risen in glory.

Just as the fire was ever to be kept burning upon the brazen altar so also there was to be “perpetual incense” upon the golden altar.

Listen to the command of God:

“And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps, at even, he shall burn incense upon it, as perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations”

(Exodus 30:7, 8).

Throughout the day and throughout the night the smoke of the sweet incense went up before the Lord, filling the sanctuary with its fragrance; and all the while the fire was burning upon the brazen altar; all the while blood was being shed for the sins of God’s people.

Yes; the two altars were linked together by the express command of God.

- On the cross our Lord paid the penalty for our sins; at the golden altar in heaven He ever lives to intercede.

- At Calvary He bought us with His own precious blood; at the throne of God He keeps us from falling, maintains our fellowship and communion with Him.

When we put our faith in His shed blood, we were “accepted” in Him; as we keep “looking unto Jesus,” we see Him seated at “the right hand of the Majesty on high,” praying for us.

- At the cross we see Him crowned with thorns; at the right hand of the Father

we see Him “crowned with glory and honour.”

- On Golgotha’s hill we see only blood and ashes, as it were; at the golden altar in heaven we see the eternal God, who is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8).

And although He bears the marks of Calvary; yet He is the Light of heaven — no longer the suffering Saviour, but the triumphant Lord and King. His shed blood makes His prayers avail before His righteous Father; and our faith in His shed blood makes our prayers avail before the “throne of grace.”

To attempt to pray to God, apart from faith in the cross of Jesus, is to offer “strange fire,” as it were, upon the golden altar.

- The pagan prays, but to a false god;

- The Mohammedan prays, but to a man;

- The Buddhist prays, but to yet another man;

- The rationalist prays, but not in the name of the Lord Jesus.

God has promised to answer only the prayers of those who go to Him in the all-prevailing name of “the Lamb of Calvary.” Make no mistake about it, my friend.

“There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”

(Acts 4:12).

“He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him [note well the words, ‘by him’], seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34).

Not only was the fire from the brazen altar to be used to burn incense; but once a year, on the Day of Atonement, Aaron was also to take the blood from the altar

of burnt offering, and put it on the horns of the golden altar. That was the high day of the year. It was the only day when Aaron could enter the Most Holy Place to sprinkle the blood on and before the mercy seat.

And even as he sprinkled the blood, he also took in his hand the golden censer, with its fire, and with sweet incense in his hand to burn it there, “lest he die.”

Having shed the blood of the innocent victim, he — a living priest — sprinkled the blood and burned the incense before the Shekinah Glory.

Our Lord Jesus shed His precious blood “once for all.” On the morning of His resurrection, as the ever-living Priest, He ascended into heaven to present His atoning blood before His righteous Father — within the veil! (See John 20:17). In His resurrection He is our unchanging Priest, presenting our prayers to the Father, praying for us Himself. Because He Himself bore “our sins in his own body on the tree,” He has the right to plead our cause in the court of heaven, because “he hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”

He has every right “now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:26, 24). Did not the prophets foretell the “sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow”? (See I Peter 1:11). No wonder the hosts of heaven bow down before Him, saying,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing”! (Revelation 5:12).

THE INCENSE — A SYMBOL OF PRAYER

That the incense was a symbol of prayer is clearly seen from Scripture:

“Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands, as the evening sacrifice” (Psalm 141:2).

“The four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours [i. e., ‘incense’], which are the prayers of saints” (Revelation 5:8).

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” (Revelation 8:3).

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Hebrews 13:15).

From Luke 1:8-10 it seems clear that the time of the burning of incense was the time of prayer. Zacharias was a priest; and as he ministered before the golden altar, the angel Gabriel appeared to him to tell him that he and Elizabeth were to be the parents of John, whom we know as John the Baptist.

“And it came to pass, that while he executed the priests office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into die temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.”

Certain it is that God delights to have His people pray to Him. Every devout Christian is familiar with many New Testament passages which bid us pray, and with many verses which link prayer with praise. We quote just two here:

“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands” (I Timothy 2:8).

“Be careful [i. e., ‘anxious’] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6, 7).

As the sweet incense that went up “before the Lord” was fragrant unto Him, even so the prayers and praise of His saints are sweet to His ear. Accepted and answered on the basis of the atoning work of our Great High Priest, they become a vital part of our worship.

“Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalm 107:8).

THE ANGEL BEFORE THE GOLDEN ALTAR IN HEAVEN IS CHRIST —

OUR INTERCESSOR BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD

A few moments ago, in giving Scripture to show that incense is a symbol of prayer, we quoted Revelation 8:3, where an angel in heaven is seen with “much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar

which was before the throne."

We read on, and in the following verse we note these added words,

"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (Revelation 8:4).

The Angel here is none other than our Lord Jesus, the Great High Priest, presenting the prayers of His saints to the Father, prayers made acceptable on the basis of faith in His shed blood. The "much incense" of verse three can be nothing other than Christ's own intercession; and it is offered "with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar" before the throne. He himself added to the prayers of all saints by His own merit.

It was only Aaron who offered the sweet incense; and he was a type of Christ, our ministering Priest. The sanctuary in the wilderness was the appointed place of worship; and to heaven itself we go in prayer and praise, through the merit of our Great High Priest. There was a thick veil between Aaron and the Shekinah Glory as he stood before the altar of incense; but there is no veil between our Lord and us, as we meet Him at "the throne of grace." At any time, anywhere, as we work or rest or play, we enter into His presence instantly, by faith, through prayer — possibly for a fleeting moment in the hustle and bustle of the day, possibly for an hour alone with Him "in the secret place." We need no earthly priest to represent us before the golden altar in heaven; for the veil of the temple has been rent in twain, "the way into the holiest" forever opened through "his flesh," which was bruised for our sins. And because He suffered, He is our sympathetic Saviour! Because He is God, He is our all-powerful Lord!

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18).

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

"And his name shall be called . . . The mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6).

On earth He was hungry and weary; despised and rejected; betrayed and forsaken; mocked and crucified. He knows the agony of suffering such as we can never understand. And He knows when we are troubled and perplexed and tested

and tried. “He knows; He loves; He cares!”

Not only so; but He is the Omnipotent God, “the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). He is our ever-living, unchanging Priest before the golden altar which is in heaven! Then why do we worry? Why do we fear? We do not honor Him through worry and fear.

Let us, rather, listen to His reassuring words, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

“Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? . . . It is I myself” (Luke 24:38, 39).

- When the storms come, He is with us in the ship.

- When death enters the home, He, the Resurrection and the Life, is with us.

- Even as He said to Israel of old, He is saying to us today, “Fear not: for I have redeemed thee . . . Fear not: for I am with thee” (Isaiah 43:1, 5).

Dear, troubled Christian, would you like to know what prayer He utters even now before “the throne of grace” for you? Then read the seventeenth chapter of John.

Hear Him ask the Father:

- To keep you from the evil one,

- To cleanse you through His Word,

- To give you His own joy,

- To make you a soul winner — “that the world may believe” that the Father sent His Son to die;

- To give you the exalted position of union with Him,

- To receive you unto Himself, to “behold”

- To share His glory which He had with the Father “before the world was”!

That is our Lord's High Priestly prayer; and that is the kind of prayer He ever prays on our behalf.

- When we go astray, He prays for us, and brings us near to Himself.

- When we need encouragement and strength, He gives it by His Holy Spirit.

Let us spend more and more time with Him and with His Word; and we shall become ever-increasingly conscious of His abiding Presence, and of His prevailing prayer for us before our Father in heaven. What more could we want in respect to eternal security?

"We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"! (I John 2:1).

As another has expressed it, He may give us the desires of our hearts immediately. He may say, "No," to us, because He has something better to give. Or He may say, "Wait a while — wait till you are strengthened and tested; wait till the dross is consumed, even as gold is refined by fire." But whatever His answer, whatever He sends, whether earthly joys or "a thorn in the flesh," He is getting us ready for service now and for heaven throughout eternity. Shall we not trust Him — utterly?

THE INCENSE — A TYPE OF THE FRAGRANT LIFE OF THE SON OF GOD BEFORE THE FATHER

"NO strange incense" was allowed on the golden altar that stood before the veil in the Holy Place (Exodus 30:9). The holy incense was made according to the God-given instructions. None of it was to be used for any other purpose, lest the man who disobeyed this command be "cut off from his people" (Exodus 30:38). The penalty was death. The incense was holy, "unto the Lord." Three sweet spices and frankincense went into the making of this holy incense, "a perfume . . . tempered together, pure and holy." It was to be beaten "very small," then put upon the fire on the golden altar. (See Exodus 30:34-38).

Because this was "perpetual incense," offered morning and evening, the sanctuary was ever filled with the fragrant smoke, the sweet perfume that arose

from the golden altar. Nor was its sweetness known to the priests until the fires burned it upon the altar.

What a picture of our Lord's fragrant life, tested by the fires of suffering, which only served to show forth His excellencies! The fragrance of His sinless life, His gracious words, His loving deeds went up before His Father in heaven, a "perpetual" delight. Scourged and "beaten," tried by the very fires of anguish and sorrow, yet His beauties and perfections were revealed before men, angels, and demons. And the Father in heaven was "well pleased" in His Son!

As we find our delight in the sweet incense of our Lord's fragrant life, in His "altogether lovely" Person — this is worship. And such worship is not to be imitated. For it there is no substitute. No outward ceremonies, however beautiful to the natural man; no burning of candles, no prayers to angels or virgin or saint can be called true worship. No outward fervor nor emotional excitement in the name of Christianity can be worship in the scriptural sense. Only as we meditate upon Christ, thank Him for His "great salvation," praise Him for His matchless Person — only this can be called worship that honors God. It is the Lamb who is "worthy," and He alone!

NO VEIL BETWEEN "MY SOUL AND THE SAVIOUR!"

Now that the veil of the temple has been rent in twain; now that the earthly priesthood has been done away; now that there is "nothing between" our souls and the Saviour,

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

"Let us draw near . . ." (Hebrews 10:22).

Prayer brings us into the closest possible communion with our Father in heaven. Christ Himself is our Golden Altar; He is our Priest! We have nothing to fear. "He sweetens our prayers with the frankincense" of His fragrant life. And "He never gets done thinking about us!"

"How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee" (Psalm 139:17, 18).

Satan will put doubts and fears in our way. He will seek to mar our testimony, and rob us of our joy in the Lord. But Satan “desired . . . Peter,” that he might “sift” him “as wheat.”

Peter’s Lord knew all this, before it came to pass; and knowing it, He said to Peter, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:31, 32). Peter’s Lord is our Lord and our God. He knows our weakness, even before we stumble; and He is praying for us, ever living to be our “Advocate with the Father.”

What more could we ask? Till Jesus comes to take us home to heaven, forever to be with Himself, He will continue to intercede for us. As we thank Him for His grace, we worship Him, in the words of the Apostle Paul, written many centuries ago,

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! . . . Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Romans 11:33-36).

~ end of chapter 10 ~

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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT AND THE MERCY SEAT

Christ — Our God at “The Throne of Grace ”

Exodus 25:10-22; 37:19; 40:3, 20, 21; Numbers 4:5, 6

THE ARK of the covenant was a chest made of acacia wood, covered inside and out with gold, over which was a lid or covering of pure gold, called the mercy seat.

We must think of the ark and the mercy seat as one; for together they made the only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish tabernacle. Above the mercy seat God dwelt in the pillar of cloud and fire, “in the midst” of His people, Israel.

Into the Holy of Holies the high priest went only once a year, there to represent his people in communion with God; but into that Most Holy Place Aaron dared not go without blood, which he sprinkled on and before the mercy seat; for he could commune with a holy God only on the basis of the shed blood, a foreshadowing of the Saviour who was to come, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a wonderful lesson which we have before us, a lesson in which the glories of our Lord Jesus shine forth in unspeakable beauty. He Himself is the ark; and He is the mercy seat; for He is our God before “the throne of grace.”

Within the golden-covered ark of the covenant were the Ten Commandments, the golden pot of manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded — graphic pictures of

Christ's keeping God's law unbroken within His heart; Christ, the pilgrim's daily Bread of Life; and Christ, our Great High Priest, "called of God, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

All of these rich and meaningful truths we shall consider in our study today; but even before we begin to read the Scripture in the lesson before us, let us realize that we are entering, by faith, into the Holy of Holies, even heaven itself, there to behold our risen and glorified Lord.

And as we enter there, we recall God's words to Moses at the burning bush,

"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground"

(Exodus 3:5).

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT AND THE MERCY SEAT IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES

1. The Holy of Holies — A Room Foursquare.

In an earlier lesson we found that the Holy Place was twice as long as it was wide; and that the Holy of Holies was a perfect cube, as wide as it was long as it was high. It was a foursquare room; and in it was only the one article — the Ark of the Covenant with its mercy seat of gold.

As Aaron entered this, God's dwelling place among His people, he beheld a scene of aweinspiring beauty.

- He saw the Shekinah Glory between the cherubim of gold that formed a part of the mercy seat.

- He saw upon the mercy seat the sprinkled blood.

- He looked around him, and saw the walls of gold; for the boards which made the walls were covered over with gold.

- He looked above him and at the beautiful veil,

- He beheld the figures of cherubim embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet

upon the fine twined linen.

All was glory and beauty. And there, on the great Day of Atonement, he communed with God. In his hand he held the golden censer, while above the mercy seat the fragrant incense went up before the Lord in a cloud of smoke.

It is not mere fancy or speculation that prompts us to say that this foursquare room, called the Holy of Holies, was a type of heaven itself, that "city foursquare." Repeatedly in the Epistle to the Hebrews we read the Holy Spirit's clear interpretation of its typical significance.

Here are a few of the passages that are unmistakable:

"We . . . have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec" (Hebrews 6:18-20).

"We have such an high priest . . . a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:1, 2).

"The first tabernacle was . . . a figure for the time then present . . . But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:8-12).

"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens [the Most Holy Place was a 'pattern' of heaven itself] should be purified with these [i. e., with the blood sacrifices], but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy Places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; ut into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world [age] hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself' (Hebrews 9:23-26).

This is the Holy Spirit's commentary upon the typical significance of the Most

Holy Place, into which the high priest in Israel could enter but once a year, not without blood. It is a clear, irrefutable explanation which the Spirit of God gives us in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Holy of Holies was a type of heaven itself; the high priest who ministered there, a prophetic picture of Christ, our Great High Priest before "the throne of grace." All was glory and beauty in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish tabernacle. All is glory and beauty in that "city . . . foursquare," that city "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Revelation 21:16; Hebrews 11:10).

"The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal . . . The wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones . . . And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Revelation 21:16-21).

Dear Christian friend, there is a real place called heaven. Jesus, our Great High Priest, is there to intercede for us before "the throne of grace," His own blood having paid the price of our redemption "once for all."

And today, as we look into the Most Holy Place of the Jewish tabernacle, verily we are treading upon holy ground; for that sanctuary was but a "pattern" of the New Jerusalem, of which the much loved hymn speaks:

"In the land of fadeless day Lies 'the city foursquare';

It shall never pass away,

And there is 'no night there.'"

2. The Shekinah Glory — "The Light Thereof."

There was no window in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish tabernacle; the Shekinah Glory, even the pillar of cloud and fire, was "the light thereof." There was no candlestick, as in the Holy Place. Only "the God of glory," above the mercy seat and between the cherubim of gold, shone forth in His uncreated beauty.

As the aged John saw the vision of the celestial city many centuries ago, he wrote, saying,

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof . . . there shall be no night there.”

There was no artificial light in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish tabernacle; and there will be no artificial light in heaven. When Peter, James, and John saw the face of our Lord transfigured on the mountain, they bore witness that it “did shine as the sun” (Matthew 17:2). When John saw the risen Lord on the Isle of Patmos, he also testified saying that, “His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength” (Revelation 1:16). The “eternal glory” which He had with the Father “before the world was” shines from within His very Being, and fills heaven with its light. By His grace, we shall one day behold and share His glory; and “we shall be like him”!

He has gone “to prepare a place” for us — and what a glorious place it is, and will be for all eternity!

“There they need no sunshine bright,

In that ‘city foursquare’;

For the Lamb is all the light,

And there is ‘no night there.’”

3. “A Shadow of the Cross.”

The Ark of the Covenant and the blood-sprinkled mercy seat formed the sixth and last piece of furniture to complete the “shadow of the cross,” made by the God-given arrangement of the sacred things in the Jewish tabernacle and in the outer court.

Within the ark was the holy law of God, broken already by Israel, but ever kept unbroken by the Son of God. Upon the mercy seat was the sprinkled blood; otherwise, this “throne of grace” would have been a judgment throne; for it was, indeed, God’s throne. But for Calvary, no sinner could stand in the presence of a holy God; but because of Calvary, we shall stand before Him forever, unashamed

and unafraid, because we shall be clothed in His righteousness, made fit to live before Him by faith in His shed blood.

In that heavenly city, of which the Most Holy Place was but a shadow, we shall ever behold the print of the nails in the hands and feet of the Lamb upon the throne. We shall see the wounded side. But the Lamb of God is also the righteous King, the “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

No more does He have to suffer shame and humiliation and sorrow. He is the glorified Lord Jesus. Never again will He be the “Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” “He is risen!”

He ever liveth in power and great glory, yet He will ever bear the marks of Calvary, blessed reminder of the awful price He paid for our redemption. He has forever satisfied the righteous demands of a holy God. That is the message of the sprinkled blood on and before the mercy seat.

Those were wonderful lessons which the Lord God was teaching His ancient people, Israel, in the wilderness, as they saw the shadow of the cross, not only in each piece of furniture, and in all the materials which went into the making of the Jewish tabernacle; but also in the very arrangement of the articles in the “pattern” which God gave to Moses in Mount Sinai.

As we take a backward glance, over the path we travelled in our studies of these sacred things, we see the whole, beautiful picture, doubtless with a much clearer vision than did Israel some fifteen hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem; for we have the Holy Spirit’s exposition of these things in the New Testament.

Now let us take once more a bird’s eye view of these six pieces of furniture, which were placed by Moses in the tabernacle and in the outer court:

As the sinner entered the gate of the outer court, he brought his animal sacrifice, which pointed on to Christ, “the Lamb of God”. As the priest went on toward the Holy Place, he washed his hands and feet at the brazen laver, prophetic of Christ’s cleansing, His believer-priests before they might minister for Him or have fellowship with Him.

Once inside the sanctuary, the priest saw on his left the beautiful golden

candlestick, eloquent picture of the union between Christ, the Light of the world, and His believer-priests, “lights in the world” for His name’s sake. On the right, the priest saw the golden-covered table of shewbread, prophetic of Christ, the “Bread of Life,” upon whom the believer-priest feeds, and upon whom the Father always feasts His righteous soul.

Before him, just in front of the veil, the priest saw the golden altar; there Aaron burned the fragrant incense, beautiful picture of Christ, our Intercessor and “Advocate with the Father.” And within the veil, the high priest beheld the glory of God above the mercy seat, between the cherubim of gold. God’s holiness was satisfied because upon the throne, which hid from view the law, was the sprinkled blood.

When Christ was crucified, God’s righteous law was vindicated and magnified; His justice was satisfied; His holiness and His mercy were reconciled; He was glorified; and the sinner was justified — all by His own grace. What “a shadow of good things to come”!

What “Glories of Christ As Foreshadowed in the Jewish Tabernacle”!

4. The Sacredness of the Ark and the Mercy Seat.

Some thing of God’s estimate of the sacredness of the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat is seen in the following facts concerning them:

(1) They were the first articles — yet one piece of furniture — which God described in the Exodus record.

(2) Only the high priest could see them — and that but once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

(3) Before the Kohathites, one of the three families of the Levites, could carry the ark on the march, Aaron covered it with the beautiful veil, over which he placed another covering of badgers’ skins, or seal skins; and above that, a “cloth wholly of blue” (Numbers 4:46, 15, 20). Of course, it was carried by the gold-covered staves, as were other articles of furniture.

(4) The ark, with its mercy seat, was the only article from the Jewish tabernacle to be placed in Solomon’s temple some 480 years after the tabernacle in the wilderness was finished. Vessels of greater beauty and glory took the place

of the other pieces of furniture; but the ark was put in the Holy of Holies of the beautiful temple built by Solomon, the king.

For very significant reasons, which we shall consider a bit later, the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded were not in the ark when it was put in the temple; they had served their purpose during the wilderness wanderings. Neither were the staves left in the golden rings when the ark was put in Solomon's temple; the pilgrimage was over.

But the two tables of stone, upon which the Ten Commandments were written "with the finger of God," were kept in the ark, beneath the mercy seat, beneath the sprinkled blood, in the Most Holy Place of Solomon's temple, as in the tabernacle in the wilderness.

Tragic, historic incidents, brought about by sin, were connected with the ark during Israel's later history. These, too, we shall consider briefly in this lesson; for they illustrate God's value of this sacred chest with its mercy seat of pure gold. It was not to be handled carelessly; it was not to be gazed upon by curious eyes; it was holy unto the Lord. It foreshadowed Christ, our God at "the throne of grace."

In order to get the clearest picture of the ark and the mercy seat, together with their typical teaching, we need to consider each one separately and in some detail.

Yet we must be careful not to think of them as two separate articles; they were one, with one perfect message — the golden-covered chest with its mercy seat of pure gold.

THE ARK — A TYPE OF CHRIST — BOTH HUMAN AND DIVINE

The two materials that went into the making of the Ark of the Covenant foreshadowed our Lord's twofold nature — both human and divine. This we have seen repeatedly in our study of the boards of the tabernacle, in the table of shewbread, and in the golden altar of incense.

- The incorruptible wood speaks to us of His sinless humanity;

- The gold, of His eternal deity.

The wood was overlaid with gold “within” and “without,” while the acacia wood gave form to the ark. The human eye could see only the gold; no wood was visible. Thus our Lord’s humanity gave Him the form in which He lived upon earth, is now, and ever shall be — the “Man Christ Jesus.”

He was the Creator; “by him all things were made”; but He, “being in the form of God, thought it not robbery [i. e., ‘a thing to be grasped after’] to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:68). For all eternity He will be the “Man Christ Jesus.”

And yet we observe how sacredly our Lord guards us from having a low view of this Most Holy One. The gold covers all. Just as the ark was overlaid, within and without, with gold; so also every act and every characteristic of the Son of Man reflects His divine glory.

Behold Him; gaze upon His majesty — as far as finite minds and hearts can gaze; all is divine. His deity is displayed over “the form of a servant.” And wherever the all-seeing eye of His Father rests, within that pure and holy mind of the “only begotten Son,” within His secret thoughts and affections and will — all is holy and perfect and divine.

The thoughts and intents of the heart of the Son of God; as well as His blameless walk among men, His meekness and obedience to His Father’s will show forth His deity in terms that men, angels, or demons cannot refute. The Father acknowledged Him as His equal, coeternal Son.

With all the realities of human nature, sin apart; with all His dependence upon His Father’s will; the gold was ever there, pure, untarnished gold.

Although He was both human and divine; yet He was and is and ever will be one Person; for “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself’ (II Corinthians 5:19).

- He was weary; yet He is our Refuge and Rest.

- He was thirsty at Jacob’s well; yet He freely gives the living water.

- He was asleep on a pillow in the bottom of the boat; yet He arose to still the storm.

- He was hungry; yet He is the Bread of Life.

- He wept at the tomb of Lazarus, over His beloved city, and in Gethsemane's garden; yet He alone can dry our tears.

- He alone can raise the dead.

- Because "he suffered being tempted," He is our sympathetic Saviour.

- Because He is "the mighty God," He has "all power in heaven and in earth."

And of this blessed truth the incorruptible wood and the gold in the ark of the covenant speak.

As the Scriptures listed at the beginning of this lesson tell us, the ark of the covenant was two and one-half cubits long, one-half cubit wide, and one-half cubit high. There was "upon it a crown of gold round about." And four rings of gold held the staves, which were made of acacia wood, covered with gold. These staves were "in the four feet" of the ark. As long as Israel journeyed in the wilderness, the staves were not to be removed from the rings. By these the ark was carried, and they indicated that the pilgrim walk was not over.

Within the ark was "the testimony" which God gave Moses on Mount Sinai, written on two tables of stone.

There also were the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded and bore almond blossoms over night. (See Exodus 25:10-16; 16:32-36; Numbers 17:1-12; cf. Numbers 16:150; Hebrews 9:3, 4).

Such is the Holy Spirit's description of the Ark of the Covenant, prophetic of our Lord Jesus Himself. In His heart He kept God's holy law unbroken. He is, indeed, Manna to our souls. And He is God's chosen Priest, ever living to intercede for His own before "the throne of grace." He could be and do all of this because He was and is both human and divine.

As we have often said, God cannot die; and in order to bear "our sins in his own body on the tree," He had to become a Man. That is why He said to the Father,

as recorded by David a thousand years before He was born in Bethlehem, “A body hast thou prepared me” (Hebrews 10:57; cf. Psalm 40:68). In that “prepared body” He came to do His Father’s will, as this same passage tells us:

“Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) To do thy will, O God.”

Because He delighted to do His Father’s will, because He could not sin, He was worthy to be a perfect Sacrifice, the sinner’s Substitute upon the altar, which is Calvary’s cross. Thus He became the heavenly Manna to our heart-hungry souls; and thus He became in His death and resurrection our ever-living Priest.

This is the message of the golden-covered Ark of the Covenant.

THE MERCY SEAT —

A TYPE OF CHRIST, OUR “THRONE OF GRACE”

The mercy seat was made of “pure gold,” two and one-half cubits long and one and one-half cubits wide — just to fit the top of the ark of the covenant.

“In the two ends of the mercy seat” were two cherubim of gold, “one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end.” These angelic figures of gold were “beaten out of one piece,” from the mercy seat itself; indeed, they were a part of this precious covering for the Ark of the Covenant. (See Exodus 25:17-22; 37: 69).

Thus the cherubim were not separate from, or attached to, the mercy seat in an artificial union; they were “beaten out of one piece,” even out of the mercy seat itself. All was one piece of pure gold.

The cherubim faced each other; and, with their wings stretched forth “on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings,” they were looking down upon the sprinkled blood; for we read the God-given instructions concerning them:

“Their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be” (Exodus 25:20).

Moreover, God said to Moses,

“There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” (Exodus 25:22).

From this and related passages of Scripture, it is clear that the mercy seat was God’s throne, the place where He met with the representative of His people, and communed with him. This truth becomes increasingly clear to us as we examine, in some detail, the significance of this mercy seat of pure gold. It was:

1. The Only Seat in the Jewish Tabernacle.

There was no chair for the priests. Their work was never done. They continued to stand “daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which” could “never take away sins” (Hebrews 10:11).

The only seat in the tabernacle was God’s throne, where “mercy reigned.” It reigned because our holy God had planned, from all eternity, to offer Himself a perfect Sacrifice for sin “once for all.” “When the fulness of the time was come,” He let wicked men crucify Him on the cross. Having paid the penalty for sin, He cried out in triumph, “It is finished.” Then He yielded His Spirit up to the Father.

Three days and three nights He lay in Joseph’s new tomb, but His “flesh” saw “no corruption.” And then He arose, victorious over death and the grave. For forty days He showed Himself alive to those who loved Him, “by many infallible proofs” convincing His disciples that He was alive forevermore. He ascended into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

That is why the Holy Spirit wrote of Him,

“This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12).

His redemptive work was forever finished; therefore, He sat down, to wait until His enemies should be made His “footstool.”

2. Not a Throne of Judgment, but a “Throne of Grace.”

“Mercy reigned” in the Holy of Holies, and “mercy” signifies grace bestowed upon the unworthy and the undeserving. It is unmerited favor. Man had sinned.

He had broken God’s holy law.

Even while Moses was in the mount, Israel was dancing, naked, around a golden calf, in gross idolatry — all this in spite of the fact that it had been only a little while since God had miraculously redeemed His people from Egyptian bondage! Israel had broken the very first commandment, to say nothing of the others.

Beneath the mercy seat were the tables of stone. Above it was the Shekinah glory. God’s righteousness demanded death of the guilty sinner; for “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). But, because of the sprinkled blood, His judgment throne had become a “throne of grace,” a veritable mercy seat; for the sprinkled blood was but a foreshadowing of the cleansing blood of Jesus, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

3. Christ — Our “Mercy Seat.”

That Christ Himself is the true Mercy Seat, is found in the fact that the very term means “place of propitiation'” (Hebrews 9:5). And in Romans 3:24, 25 (cf. Romans 3:2126) we read that we have been —

“. . . justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

Christ Himself was our propitiatory Sacrifice on Calvary’s cross.

We deserved the death penalty, everlasting separation from God. But, by His grace, He kept the law unbroken for us, and died in our place, bearing “the iniquity of us all” in His “own body on the tree.” The blood of the animal sacrifice, sprinkled upon the mercy seat, was a mere shadow or type of His own precious blood. And Israel’s faith in the promised Redeemer enabled God to forgive their sins — as it were, on a credit, looking forward to the one perfect, all-sufficient Sacrifice.

The Scofield Reference Bible has a helpful footnote on this matter, in connection with the verse we have just read in Romans 3:25; we quote a part of it here:

“In fulfillment of the type, Christ is Himself . . . ‘that which propitiates’ . . . and ‘the place of propitiation’ — the mercy seat sprinkled with His own blood — the

token that in our stead He so honored the law by enduring its righteous sentence that God, who ever foresaw the cross, is vindicated in having ‘passed over’ sins from Adam to Moses (Romans 5:13) and the sins of believers under the old covenant . . . and just in justifying sinners under the new covenant. There is no thought in propitiation of placating a vengeful God, but of doing right by His holy law and so making it possible for Him righteously to show mercy.”

Because the mercy seat was of pure gold, it was a further type of our Lord; for the “pure gold” of His deity and glory shines forth from His very Being, as well as from His mighty works and profound teachings. It is to Him that we go with our prayers — before the very “throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

4. The Mercy Seat — The Throne of a Holy God.

God told Moses to make the two cherubim of gold upon the mercy seat to symbolize, we believe, His holiness and majesty. Cherubim, in the Scriptures, seem to be “angelic beings,” who “have to do with the vindication of the holiness of God as against the presumptuous pride of sinful man.”

The golden cherubim upon the mercy seat could not be separated from that “throne of grace”; for, as we have seen, they were “beaten out” from truth that God’s mercy cannot be separated from His holiness and justice. Reverently speaking, He could not save the sinner at the cost of His own righteousness and holiness. That is why, in the Person of His Son, He had to die in the sinner’s place, as the sinner’s Substitute. That is why the Psalmist could say, as he looked forward to Calvary’s cross,

“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other”

(Psalm 85:10).

The cherubim of gold stood above the holy law of God; the Shekinah glory stood between the cherubim, above the law, which Israel had broken; but beneath the cherubim and the Shekinah glory was the sprinkled blood — upon the mercy seat! God did not set aside His holiness and His justice in redeeming sinful man; He Himself took the sinner’s place. Thus His holiness and His righteousness were fully satisfied.

Our first glimpse of the cherubim, in the Scriptures, is that of their being placed by the Lord “at the east of the garden of Eden” with a “flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the

way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24). Man had sinned. God, in judgment, had to drive him out of Eden, lest he eat “the tree of life” while yet in his sinful state, and live forever in wretchedness and misery, unredeemed.

It was mercy, as well as judgment, that drove man out of Eden; let us not forget that!

And at the east of the garden God placed the cherubim, to guard His holiness and majesty and righteousness. The sword of vengeance against sin kept “the way of the tree of life.” Every avenue of approach to the original, happy state that Adam had enjoyed was closed. The Word and majesty of God had been trifled with and despised. Therefore, the cherubim took their stand as the avengers of God’s unsullied holiness, as the stern proof that man was an outcast, banished by God from the happy place called Eden. Humanly speaking, there was no way to return to the tree of life.

This significant place of the cherubim, of itself, manifests the hopelessness of any attempt on the part of man to regain life by his own efforts. Unless the glory of God is met; unless the flaming sword of vengeance and holiness is satisfied; it is vain for man to hope for “Paradise Regained ”

The cherubim of the Holy Place teach us the same solemn lesson. They guarded the way to God while the veil was unrent.

The law demanded the death of the offender; but above the law stood the cherubim, no longer barring man’s approach to life, but with outstretched wings above the place of mercy. The sprinkled blood prefigured the sword of justice which was to do its work as it was to be sheathed in the side of the Son of God!

The blood upon the mercy seat satisfied the holiness of God. That is why the cherubim were no longer connected with the flaming sword; their faces were now intently turned toward the “throne of grace.” Their eyes looked down upon the blood which foreshadowed the death of the Substitute who was to come.

Well, indeed, it is for the world that the faces of the cherubim are turned to the place of mercy. It will not always be so. One day their faces will once more turn

toward the earth. They will look upon a world where the majesty and glory and truth of God have been despised, where even His grace and mercy have been rejected, where “the God of all grace” was thrust out at the point of a spear.

In that coming day the power and glory of our Lord will be manifest to all God’s universe. Christ will come to “avenge His elect,” to tread “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” against Satan and sin and rebellious man. (See Revelation 19:15).

Then the mercy seat will be taken from the ark of the covenant, as it were; and the law will demand the death of every Christ-rejecting sinner, of every soul which has spurned the love and grace of a holy, but merciful God. Then the Lord, who dwelleth “between the cherubims” will put down all unrighteousness and sin. (See Psalm 80:1; 99:1; Isaiah 37:16; II Samuel 6:2; II Kings 19:15).

5. A Blood-Sprinkled Mercy Seat.

Aaron could see the mercy seat only after he had offered the sacrifice upon the brazen altar, even as our holy God can let us approach His Presence only upon the basis of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Without the shed blood of the Son of God, there could be no communion, no fellowship, between God and His sinning creatures. But Christ has “entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12).

Many Bible students believe that this is what the risen Lord meant when He said to Mary Magdalene upon the morning of His resurrection,

“Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father . . .” (John 20:17).

Later in the same day He told the disciples to “handle” Him and see that His resurrection body was real, that it was of “flesh and bones”; to behold His pierced hands and feet. (See Luke 24:39, 40).

It seems that, between His appearance first to Mary and later to His disciples, He must have ascended unto His Father, to present the blood before the “throne of grace.”

Certainly this interpretation is in accordance with the type, set forth in the great

Day of Atonement in Israel. That is why God's judgment throne could become a "throne of grace."

The atoning blood of Christ covers all our guilt! What a mercy seat!

Little wonder the hymn writer gave us those immortal lines:

"From every stormy wind that blows,

From every swelling tide of woes,

There is a calm, a sure retreat;

'Tis found beneath the mercy seat.

"There is a place where Jesus sheds The oil or gladness on our heads,

A place than all beside more sweet;

It is the blood-bought mercy seat.

"There is a scene where spirits blend,

Where friend holds fellowship with friend;

Though sundered far, by faith they meet Around one common mercy seat.

"Ah! whither could we flee for aid,

When tempted, desolate, dismayed?

Or how the hosts of hell defeat,

Had suffering saints no mercy seat?

"There, there, on eagle wings we soar;

And sin and sense seem all no more;

And heaven comes down, our souls to meet;

And glory crowns the mercy seat.”

THE LAW WITHIN THE ARK A TYPE OF GOD’S LAW IN THE HEART OF CHRIST

In our study today we have referred, from time to time, to the very important fact that in the ark Israel’s treasures were hidden: the covenant of their relationship with God, the golden pot of manna, and Aaron’s rod.

All these treasures were laid up before the Lord in the Ark of the Covenant. The realities, which these priceless possessions foreshadowed, are found in our Lord Jesus Christ, for in Him “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3). In Him unsearchable riches are kept against all the cunning of Satan, and against all the weakness of the believer.

Now Israel’s treasures so definitely foreshadowed our Lord, in His Person and work, that we want to give further emphasis to their importance by a special glance at each one separately.

First of all, it was in the ark that the law was hidden, its mouth stopped, its demands silenced by the payment of the sinner’s debt; for in Christ is hid our complete justification from all things before a holy God, from which we “could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

1. The Law Was Kept Unbroken in the Ark.

To understand better the significance of Christ’s keeping the holy law of God unbroken, let us go back to Israel’s earlier history. God had dealt with Abraham upon the ground of unconditional grace; for His promises and His grace go together. Promise is the simple expression of God’s own will and intentions, and its accomplishment rests solely upon His power and unchangeableness. That is why justification before God requires nothing on man’s part, but simple faith. Abraham had taken the ground of a guilty sinner before a gracious God.

Up to the time of Israel’s arrival at Mount Sinai, God had dealt with His people upon the ground of unconditional grace.

- He fed them with manna.

- He sent the quail for them to eat.

- He gave them water out of the rock

To say nothing of His previous deliverance from the cruel lash of the Egyptian task master and from the waters of the Red Sea. Though, from the beginning, the Israelites were a stiff-necked and murmuring people; yet God could bless them, because they were standing in simple dependence upon His grace.

Then at Sinai Israel presumptuously asked for the law in ignorance and spiritual pride, she said she would do all the law required — in ignorance of her sin, in spiritual pride, unmindful of her guilt and weakness. Once the covenant was made, no one could annul it.

It was a covenant which bound Israel to perfect obedience, and which bound God to punish disobedience. It was a covenant which rested, for the performance of its terms, upon Israel's own faithfulness and strength; a covenant in which God had nothing to do, so to speak, but to watch the results of their actions and to deal with them accordingly.

And what was Israel? They were a nation of poor, lost sinners at the very outset, who could act only in the way of sin. Doubtless it sounded well in the ears of men when they uttered the resolutions to obey God, and to make their relationship to Him depend upon their own efforts. Yet what was it in reality but the expression of their ignorance of God's righteousness and of their own helplessness and ruined condition?

What was it but a proof that sin had so blinded their eyes that they were unable to discern their own hopeless state? They supposed themselves able to obey, whereas they were in the helplessness of death. And does not many a good resolution, even at this present day, my friend, manifest the same ignorance of self, the same dream of strength, the same disregard for God's holiness and man's helplessness?

Though Israel was ignorant of her own lost condition, yet God knew it well. That is why He commanded the golden depository, which was the Ark of the Covenant, to be made, in order that it might shut out of sight the very "ministration of death" (II Corinthians 3:7), to which His people had so eagerly bound themselves.

In this God also foreshadowed the necessity of removing the curse of the law, in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, even as the Holy Spirit tells us,

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Galatians 3:13).

In the death of the Son of God, and in that death alone, could God remove the law, at the same time vindicating His righteousness.

He could not lower His standard. Man had no power to attain it. Neither God nor man could set it aside. The penalty for breaking it was death; and every Israelite had broken it. What, then, could be done? How could the sinner be redeemed from the curse of the law, and at the same time the law be magnified? Only by the grace of God, who Himself bore the curse for the guilty sinner.

God foreknew and foreordained the way of deliverance.

Let One be found, a Man “made under the law,” who should fulfill all of its requirements:

- Who, placing Himself in the sphere of the guilty, should walk with unwavering perfectness along the peculiar path of strict, unerring righteousness;

- Who among the disobedient should prove Himself obedient;

- Who among the unholy should prove Himself holy;

- Who among the rebellious should prove Himself humble, patient, dependent upon His heavenly Father.

Let such a one be found, who should “fulfill all righteousness,” both as to the letter and as to the spirit of the law. Let Him be the sinner’s Substitute in the place of death; and the debt of sin would be forever paid.

Israel was not only impotent to fulfill human righteousness; she had also broken the law, and had incurred its fearful curse. Before the very tables of the testimony were brought down from God, Israel was reveling in sin around the golden calf. Moses seems to have felt the uselessness, as well as the danger, of

bringing the tables of the covenant into the camp. He dashed them to pieces at the foot of the mount. The curse of the broken law, therefore, had to be borne. There was no provision of mercy; there could not be; the law called for death. God foreknew all this; and He foreshadowed it in the hiding of the tables of stone beneath the mercy seat. Then —

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption

of sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5).

In His death our Lord magnified His holy law, made it honor able, and ushered in the day of grace.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4).

“Free from the law — Oh, happy condition!

Jesus hath died, and there is remission:

Cursed by the law, and bruised by the fall,

Christ hath redeemed us once for all!”

2. The Law Was Hidden beneath the Sprinkled Blood.

We hardly need dwell longer here upon the all-important significance of the sprinkled blood upon the mercy seat — above the law! We have sought, throughout this lesson, to keep this truth ever before us. We repeat it here, however, for emphasis. We are living in a day when the atoning blood of the Son of God is being “trampled under foot.” And we must earnestly “contend for the faith.” We must never lose sight of Calvary.

Do you not see, my Christian friend, the typical significance of the ark and the mercy seat?

God planned it, and gave Moses the pattern for it, in order to point the sinner on to Christ. In Him the law was carefully preserved — out of sight; removed by His matchless grace.

He came to do His Father's will; He delighted in doing it; and having died in the fulfillment of that will, He now stands before the Father as the witness of vindicated justice. He has forever removed the stern barrier that had prevented man's approach to God; namely, the demands against him of an unfulfilled law; so that now righteousness, which was the very hindrance, now becomes the ground of our full and free communion with God. Christ, not the law, is the "way . . . unto the Father." God meets us in Him!

As another has expressed it, "How foolish for men to think that, by observing fragments of a broken law, they can satisfy God or justify themselves!" We cannot "mingle law and grace"; else "grace is no more grace."

THE GOLDEN POT OF MANNA WITHIN THE ARK A TYPE OF CHRIST, THE BREAD OF LIFE FOR OUR EARTHLY PILGRIMAGE

When God fed Israel in the wilderness with the manna from heaven, He told Moses to put some of it in a golden pot, to be placed in the Ark of the Covenant. (See Exodus 16:3236; Hebrews 9:4). The manna, like the shewbread, was a type of Christ, the Bread of Life; the golden vessel, in which it was kept, reminds us once more of His deity and glory. We need only read the sixth chapter of John to see the repeated statement of our Lord, showing that He Himself is the Heavenly Manna, the "bread sent down from heaven." As the manna was Israel's daily food in the wilderness, so Christ is Food for our daily pilgrimage, as we journey from Egypt to Canaan, from the Christless world to the Promised Land.

The manna is a beautiful type of Christ. It came down from heaven; so did our Lord and Saviour. It came in the night, while Israel slept; even as Christ came into the world in the night of sin, as men were sleeping the sleep of spiritual death. The manna was white; our Lord was spotless in His character, absolutely holy. The manna was sweet to the taste — "like wafers made with honey" (Exodus 16:31); our Lord Jesus ever bore witness to His gentle, compassionate, sympathetic love for the lost. The manna in the wilderness was seen upon the ground in the morning when the dew had disappeared; the Holy Spirit, suggested by the dew, does not manifest Himself, but presents Christ. Before Jesus died on the cross, He said to His disciples concerning the Spirit of God,

“He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:13, 14).

But there is also “the hidden manna” of Revelation 2:17, which the risen Lord will give “to him that overcometh.” This seems to refer to our Saviour as the Food for our souls in the eternity that we shall spend in His Presence. We shall find our satisfaction, our delight, our glory in feasting upon the Heavenly Manna throughout the endless ages. Now we know Him only “in part”; then we shall look upon His face. “We shall see him as he is” (I John 3:2).

When Israel’s wilderness journey was over, the golden pot of manna was not placed in Solomon’s temple, as we have already observed earlier in this lesson. When we get to heave when we see “the greater than Solomon” in all His uncreated glory, then the manna will no longer be hidden in the ark, as it were. His radiance and beauty shall shine in the New Jerusalem, filling it with His light and glory. His wonderful Person will prove to be the chiefest of the marvels, of which the apostle wrote, saying,

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Corinthians 2:9). AARON’S ROD WITHIN THE ARK A TYPE OF CHRIST IN HIS RESURRECTION

The sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of Numbers tell the sad story of rebellion in Israel against Aaron, God’s chosen priest, and of God’s vindication of the priestly family that came through Aaron’s line.

The sons of Korah were not content with being Levites; they wanted to be priests also; and God had specifically taught His people that none could be a priest except he be “called of God, as was Aaron” (Cf. Hebrews 5:4).

As a result of this gross sin, God had to send judgment upon the rebels.

“The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up.”

“And there came out a fire from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense” contrary to God’s express command. (See Numbers 16:31-35).

When Israel murmured against God for this righteous judgment, He sent yet further chastisement, to teach them a needed lesson; and “they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah” (Numbers 16:49).

Then it was that God told Moses to take twelve almond rods, one for each tribe; to write every man’s name upon his rod, “of all their princes according to the house of their fathers”; and to write “Aaron’s name upon the rod of Levi” (Numbers 17:13).

These twelve rods the Lord told Moses to lay up “in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony,” even in the Holy of Holies. And God said,

“It shall come to pass, that the man’s rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you” (Numbers 17:5).

Moses obeyed the Lord’s instructions; “and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.”

“And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness. And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod. And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron’s rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not. And Moses did so: as the Lord commanded him, so did he” (Numbers 17:7-11).

In our study of the golden candlestick, we saw that the almond tree, the first to bud in the spring, speaks to us of resurrection. And we have seen abundant proof, from the Scriptures, that Aaron was a type of our Lord in His priestly ministry for His own.

In the story from Numbers, we find God's vindication of Aaron as His chosen priest; and, in type, His vindication of Him of whom Aaron was but a "shadow." The dry almond rod, severed from the tree, the source of life, budded and bore blossoms and fruit.

What a picture of our Lord's resurrection from the grave, of His risen fruitfulness and glory! He was "the corn of wheat," which fell into the ground and died, that it might yield much fruit — a harvest of millions upon millions of human souls! (See John 12:24).

None but the Lord God looked upon the almond rod which Moses laid up in the Holy of Holies throughout the night; none but the all-seeing eye of the Lord saw life and fruit and beauty spring into being.

The all-seeing eye of the Father in heaven witnessed Calvary's cruel cross. It beheld as the well-beloved Son was laid in Joseph's new tomb. And it witnessed the resurrection from the dead of the eternal Son of God, "the Holy One," whose body could see "no corruption" because He Himself was God.

Moses was told to place the rod in the Ark of the Covenant as "a token against the rebels."

Israel's crucified and risen Messiah is now hidden from her view, but He will one day be revealed to His chosen people. In that glorious day all of Israel's murmurings will forever cease, All her rebellion and unbelief will be done away; and she will receive her King.

This seems to be the reason why, in Solomon's temple, the rod that budded was excluded from the Ark of the Covenant. The glory of Solomon's reign was but a shadow of the yet future glory of the "Greater than Solomon." And in that coming day Israel's Messiah will be fully and universally owned as Israel's chosen Priest, "called of God, a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec."

Because Israel's Messiah and the Saviour of the world could not "be holden of death," He became also "the firstfruits of them that slept," the pledge of a greater harvest in the resurrection of His saints.

- That is why the grave holds no terror for the child of God.

- That is why we "sorrow not as others who have no hope."

- That is why, in hours of sorrow and bereavement, we look up into the face of the Son of God, and know that one day He will raise our loved ones from the grave.

That is why we are able to say,

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 15:55-57).

Concerning Israel’s sin in rebelling against Aaron, as God’s chosen priest; a word of warning needs to be sounded. In the Epistle of Jude the Holy Spirit likens apostates of the last days to those who have “perished in the gainsaying of Core” (Jude 11). (“Core” is the Greek spelling of the Hebrew “Korah”).

The reference is to the rebellion and self-will of those in the day of Moses who wanted to establish their manmade priesthood. And the warning of the Holy Spirit, through Jude is unmistakable.

Any manmade priesthood today is contrary to the express will of God, as revealed in the inspired Scriptures. To go to any earthly priest in this church age, this day of grace, is to fall into the “gainsaying of Korah.” And besides, earthly priests today, who do not even pretend to have come from Aaron’s family, set themselves up as God’s representatives.

What inconsistency! What an insult to the Lord! The law of Moses (including the Levitical priesthood) was but “a shadow of good things to come” in Christ Jesus, our Lord. The Levitical order, the Jewish ritual, the animal sacrifices, the burning of incense — all these shadows of the cross were done away in Christ — forever done away!

God rent the temple veil in twain; and He did not intend that man should sew it together! He opened “the way into the holiest” by the blood of His cross. What mockery to seek a miserable imitation of something which God has forever set aside! The Lord Jesus is our Priest. We need none other! Let us beware — and warn others — of “the gainsaying of Korah.”

THE ARK IN ISRAEL’S LATER HISTORY

Over a long period of Israel’s history the Ark of the Covenant was closely linked

with the spiritual life of the nation. To understand something of the significance God placed upon this sacred, gold-covered chest, we need to know many details in the later history of His chosen people.

We shall take only a brief glance at six important incidents, any one of which would be a lesson all by itself. There are other Old Testament references to the ark; but we mention only these here, in passing, because no study of the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat of gold would be complete without them:

1. Deliverance through Jordan.

In the third and fourth chapters of Joshua we read about the miraculous deliverance of Israel through the waters of Jordan, as the ark of the covenant went before them, to show them “the way” by which they should go (Joshua 3:4). Moses was dead, and God wanted to “magnify” Joshua “in the sight of all Israel,” so the people would know that he had been commissioned by the Lord to lead His people into the land of Canaan. As the feet of the priests, who bore the Ark of the Covenant, rested in Jordan, the waters stood “upon an heap,” while the people “passed over on dry ground” into the Promised Land.

The ark was the symbol of God’s power and guidance for He said,

“Ye have not passed this way heretofore” (Joshua 3:4).

That is why He went before them to show them the path He had chosen for them. The “priests’ feet stood firm” in “the midst of Jordan” “until all the people were passed clean over Jordan” (Joshua 3:17; 4:3). Through the waters of death a redeemed nation entered into the land of covenant promise.

Now the very name “Jordan” signifies “river of judgment.” It separated Canaan from the wilderness. There was no bridge above it. Israel had to go down into the river with the ark. Even so our Lord Himself went into the place of death, going before us, tasting “death for every man.”

By faith in His cross, we, too, are identified with Him in His death and resurrection. The ark went before Israel to show the way; our Lord is Himself “the way . . . unto the Father.” He went into Jordan for us.

Therefore, we can say, with David,

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me” (Psalm 23:4).

Therefore, we can sing the song of faith,

“On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand,

And cast a wishful eye To Canaan’s fair and happy land,

Where my possessions lie.

“I am bound for the Promised Land;

I am bound for the Promised Land.

O who will come and go with me?

I am bound for the Promised Land.”

As one has beautifully expressed it, “An ark carried the elect over the water of judgment; an ark preserved an elect child from the waters of death; the Ark of the Covenant kept the law, which was ‘the ministration of death’ (II Corinthians 3:7)” (Rodgers).

And the Ark of the Covenant went down into Jordan before Israel. Our Lord Jesus is Himself the Ark of God. He is our Ark of Safety from the waters of judgment, the only One who could keep the law unbroken in His heart; the only “Way” into the Promised Land, which we call heaven.

2. Victory at Jericho.

When Joshua led Israel into the land of Canaan, the first city they entered was Jericho; and that city they did not conquer in their own strength. God gave it to them in a miraculous way. We read the story in the sixth chapter of Joshua, although the first seven chapters of this book are related to this historic event in the life of God’s chosen people.

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Hebrews 11:30, 31).

It was faith in the “unseen captain” of “the host of the Lord” that led Joshua and Israel on to victory; and it was the mighty power of God which won the victory for Israel that day.

His Presence in the midst of His people was symbolized by the “ark of the Lord,” which “compassed the city” of Jericho, as the priests went before that sacred gold-covered chest.

Moreover, it was in accordance with God’s direct command that the ark was carried by the priests, as His people marched around Jericho once a day for six days; and seven times on the seventh day. Thus God gave to all who witnessed the strange performance an object lesson to prove to them that He Himself was with His people.

By the Presence and power of our crucified and risen Lord we may win the victory over sin and Satan and death; and by His presence and power alone. “With God all things are possible.” For our Lord Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.”

3. Judgment upon the Philistines.

In chapters four, five, and six of I Samuel we read of how Israel took the ark into battle against the Philistines; how the enemy captured it, and placed it in the temple of their idol, Dagon, bringing a curse upon the Philistines; and how they returned it to Israel. The Lord God was not to be placed along with heathen gods, as if He were just another god! The ark symbolizes His Presence; the idol was miraculously thrown down and broken; and the ark supernaturally returned to the camp of Israel.

Our Lord is the only true God! Nor can He deal other than in judgment upon all who reject His Son as the only Saviour!

4. Death for the Men of Bethshemesh.

When the ark was miraculously returned to Israel, the men of Bethshemesh did a very wicked thing. They “looked into the ark of the Lord”; and 50,070 men died because of this sin. (See I Samuel 6:19). They put aside the mercy seat! Legalists always put aside the mercy seat, a most dangerous thing to do!

“Do not uncover that which God has covered up!”

Another illustration of careless handling of the sacred Ark of the Covenant is seen in the sixth chapter of II Samuel. David wanted to take the ark to Jerusalem; that was not displeasing to God. But he did a good thing in the wrong way; for, instead of having the sacred ark carried by the priests, he put it "upon a new cart." Then when the oxen shook it, and when Uzzah put forth his hand to touch it, he was smitten dead for presuming to touch this sacred Ark of the Covenant.

"The way into the holiest" had not yet been opened by the blood of Jesus; and the ark was the symbol of God's Presence. For man to treat it lightly was to sin against God, to disobey His commands. Even service for the Lord must be done in the Lord's way, if He is to be honored.

5. Glory in Solomon's Temple.

When the ark of the covenant was placed in the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple, the staves were drawn out; only the ten commandments were left within; and "the glory of the Lord . . . filled the house of God" (II Chronicles 5:14).

As long as Israel had wandered in the wilderness, the staves were needed; yea, even until the beautiful temple was built for the ark of the Lord. But the wanderings over, the ark was placed upon the golden floor of the Most Holy Place. And Solomon's temple was just a prophetic picture of the glory of heaven itself.

When our pilgrimage is over, we shall no longer need the staves, as it were; we shall "hunger no more," for we shall be in the very Presence of Him who is the Heavenly Manna; we shall not need a Mediator any more, for our risen Priest is our coming King.

That, it seems, is why the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod were not left in the ark when it was put in Solomon's temple. Only the tables of stone were there; and in heaven God's holy law will forever be unbroken!

- Instead of the desert sands, there will be the streets of gold.

- Instead of sorrow and heartaches, there will be "no more tears."

All heaven will be "filled with the glory of the Lord"; and "the Lamb is the light thereof"

6. Desecration in Nebuchadnezzar's Hands.

The time came when Israel went into gross idolatry, when she persecuted the prophets who warned her of the Babylonian captivity that was surely to come in judgment upon her wickedness.

Then the time came when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, took Judah into captivity, and "carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said" (II Kings 24:11-13).

Just what became of the Ark of the Covenant is not clear.

Several passages of Scripture refer to the "vessels" from the house of the Lord. Nebuchadnezzar put them in the temple of his heathen god in Babylon (Daniel 1:2). Belshazzar and his heathen revelers drank wine from them, insulting the God of heaven (Daniel 5:14).

According to Jeremiah's prophecy, recorded in Jeremiah 27:18-22, Cyrus sent back to Jerusalem, under Zerubbabel, at least some of the vessels of the house of the Lord which Nebuchadnezzar had put in the house of his god (See Ezra 1:7-11; 7:19). But the Ark of the Covenant is not specifically mentioned in Ezra or Nehemiah.

Just what became of it, only God knows. Possibly He allowed it to be destroyed, rather then have it put in a heathen temple; for He cannot be placed along with other gods.

He is the only true God!

"THE ARK OF HIS COVENANT" IN "THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE"

AND ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE

When John saw the vision of "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" on the Isle of Patmos, he saw "the temple of God . . . opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament [covenant]: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (Revelation 11:19).

This verse introduces a section of the Revelation which tells of “the great tribulation,” called also “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” And the reference to “the ark of his testament” is a token of God’s faithfulness in His covenant-relationship with Israel. He will guard His people through that darkest period of her history; and He will take the faithful remnant safely through this time of suffering and sorrow. He cannot break His Word!

“HE IS FAITHFUL THAT PROMISED”

God never breaks His Word! Nor will He fail to meet every need of His blood-bought children, as they approach Him before the mercy seat!

The wilderness journey may seem long and weary. Thorns may be in our paths. The desert sands may burn our tired and aching feet. But glory awaits us in the New Jerusalem. And, meanwhile, we have “the throne of grace”!

There our risen Lord ministers to our needs. There He watches over His own.

Dear Christian friend in trouble, look up to your Mediator, your Saviour and Lord. His judgment throne has become for you a veritable mercy seat, a throne of grace, indeed. Look up, even “unto Jesus”; and hear Him saying unto you:

“Come, ye disconsolate, where’er ye languish;

Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel;

Here bring your wounded heart; here tell your anguish;

Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal.”

~ end of chapter 11 ~ http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/

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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER TWELVE

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Another Shadow of the Cross and of Christ's Return in Glory Leviticus 16:1-34; 23:26-32

AGAIN and again, throughout this series of studies, we have referred to the one great day in the year when Aaron entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of "the whole congregation" of Israel.

The very heart of the gospel message was foreshadowed in the God-given ritual for this Day of Atonement; and no study of the Jewish tabernacle would be complete without some consideration of God's law concerning it. In the ceremony of this day, "The Glories of Christ" shone forth in unmistakable type and shadow — from His cross even unto His return in power and majesty as Israel's Messiah and the world's righteous King.

The entire sixteenth chapter of Leviticus is devoted to the ritual for this greatest day in Israel's year. But, if we would learn the lessons God has for us here, we should first get the message of the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus, where the Day of Atonement is placed in its chronological order, in its relation to all of the seven "feasts of the Lord," observed annually by devout Jews under the Law of Moses; for the Day of Atonement was one of the seven.

Whole volumes have been written on these "feasts of the Lord." For our purpose here, however, we shall merely outline them briefly, adding a word about the typical significance of each one.

This much is necessary, if we are to catch a glimpse of “The Glories of Christ As Foreshadowed in the Jewish Tabernacle,” in the God-given ceremony of the great Day of Atonement.

THE SEVEN FEASTS OF THE LORD

“These are the feasts of the Lord,” which set forth, in type, God’s great plan of the ages, from Calvary’s cross to our Lord’s millennial reign on earth:

- The Feast of the Passover;
- The Feast of Unleavened Bread;
- The Feast of the Firstfruits;
- The Feast of Pentecost;
- The Feast of Trumpets;
- The Day of Atonement;
- The Feast of Tabernacles.

These Jewish feasts were times of worship, to be observed annually, at certain stated times. Israel was thus continually reminded, year after year, century after century, of the lessons God was teaching her concerning her coming Messiah.

Again, these “holy convocations” began with the Sabbath and closed with the Sabbath. This is an important truth for us to grasp.

The Sabbath before the feasts of the Lord points back to God’s eternal rest which He had before sin entered the world to break that rest. The Sabbath following the feasts points on to God’s eternal rest which He will share with the redeemed forever. And between these two Sabbaths there came the feasts of the Lord — a picture of God’s purpose for man throughout the ages, in redeeming him and leading him on, even unto his eternal rest in heaven. By faith we “enter into” that rest in this present life; but in its full and complete enjoyment “there remaineth . . . a rest [or 'keeping of a Sabbath’] to the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9).

There were seven of these feasts; and seven is the number that speaks of

completion. Some of them were to be observed in one day each, whereas the others covered a period of seven days each. The one day feasts represented definite acts of God, accomplished in a day; whereas the seven day feasts represented His dealings with His people over a period of time. They pointed on to the outcome of these one day acts.

Again we turn to the inspired record and read, “These are the feasts of the Lord” (Leviticus 23:4):

1. The Feast of the Passover, which finds its fulfillment in the death of “Christ our Passover’” (I Corinthians 5:7), was to be observed “in the fourteenth day of the first month at even” (Leviticus 23:5). It was not by accident that our Lord was crucified on the Feast of the Passover, as all four of the evangelists are careful to tell us. He was the Paschal Lamb, “without blemish and without spot.”

2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately followed the Passover, and was closely linked with it.

It began “on the fifteenth day of the same month,” and was to be observed for seven days (Leviticus 23:6).

This finds its fulfillment in the holy walk of the believer as he feeds upon Christ, “the bread of life.” Leaven is a type of sin, and all leaven was to be put out of the house during this week.

Even so, we must confess and for sake our sins, if we would have fellowship with Christ, “the bread of life.”

3. The Feast of the Firstfruits, observed “on the morrow after the sabbath" (Leviticus 23:11); that is, three days after the Passover, on the first day of the week, is a remarkable type of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, on the first day of the week, “when the sabbath was fully past,” three days after He offered Himself as the Paschal Lamb on Calvary’s cross. He is, indeed, “the firstfruits of them that slept” (I Corinthians 15:20).

4. The Feast of Pentecost, so called because it came fifty days after the feast of the firstfruits (“Pentecost” is a Greek word meaning “fiftieth”), finds its fulfillment in the descent of the Holy Spirit “when the day of Pentecost was fully come” (Acts 2:1), exactly fifty days after the resurrection of Christ. The Day of Pentecost marks the birthday of the church.

Between the feasts of Pentecost and trumpets there was a long interval of several months, during which time Israel was to glean in the harvest field (Leviticus 23:22) — a striking type of this present church age, from Pentecost to the translation of the church, while the harvest is being gathered into the garner of the Lord. Then in the seventh month the three remaining feasts were observed, the fulfillment of which is yet future.

5. The Feast of Trumpets, “a memorial of blowing of trumpets” (Leviticus 23:24), gathered the people together to worship the Lord. Before Christ returns in glory to be worshipped as King of kings and Lord of lords, Israel will have been fully regathered to her own land of Palestine; and then the Feast of Trumpets will find its fulfillment.

6. The Day of Atonement was a time of mourning, and points on to the time when Israel shall “look upon” Him “whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son” (Zechariah 12:10). The details of the ritualism of the Day of Atonement are highly significant, as we shall see in our lesson today.

7. The Feast of Tabernacles, observed for seven days (Leviticus 23:34), was a time of rejoicing, and points on to the millennial reign of Christ, the Son of David, over regathered and redeemed Israel and over the whole world.

“These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their

seasons,” God said to Moses as He “called unto” him, and “spake unto him out of the

tabernacle of the congregation” many centuries ago at the foot of Mount Sinai.

“And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord” (Leviticus 23:44), even as God had commanded him to do. They picture to us a holy God inviting His redeemed people to share with Him the things which delight His heart. The wisest of men once wrote, saying, “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love” (Song of Solomon 2:4).

The Psalmist also said, “Thou preparest a table before me.” The Lord Jesus is the Bread of God. At His baptism and again at His transfiguration the Father’s voice spoke from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased."

The feasts which delight the heart of the Father are those feasts which proclaim the glories and the excellencies of the "beloved Son."

Is He the Bread of Life to you, my friend? "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8).

The Father invites you to share with Him His delight in the One "altogether lovely." Is He the object of your affections? Is He the One whom you delight to please? Then for you the feasts of the Lord hold mines of wealth untold!

And not least of these seven was the Day of Atonement.

Indeed, it was possibly the greatest day of the year, although it would have been meaningless without the other six; for example, there could have been no Day of Atonement without the Feast of the Passover. All seven feasts dovetailed into the prophetic picture of the Person and work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

THE MEANING OF "ATONEMENT"

For a better understanding of the significance of the Day of Atonement, let us consider the meaning of the word "atonement." It is not a literal translation from the Hebrew; but is, rather, the expression of "apurely theological concept." The Hebrew word translated "atonement" in our English Bible means "covering"; "to atonefor" means "to cover."

"It is used seventy-seven times in the Old Testament; yet the thought it expresses is not a part of the Old Testament doctrine; whereas, in the New Testament, where the doctrine is taught, the word is not used once" (Lewis Sperry Chafer).

In our English Old Testament "atonement" suggests "at one ment" with God for the guilty sinner who brought the sacrifice in anticipation of Calvary's cross. On the merit of the one perfect sacrifice of the promised Redeemer, God "covered' or "passed over" the "sins done aforetime" — from Adam to Christ. (See Romans 3:25).

In other words, the Old Testament saints were saved by faith in the Christ of prophecy; whereas the New Testament saints are saved by faith in the Christ of history, who has fulfilled — or will yet fulfill — every Old Testament prophecy

concerning Him. It is the cross of the Lord Jesus, and that alone, which can save the guilty sinner in any age!

Sin was never actually "put away" until Christ died; yet, in His mercy, God "covered" the sins of Old Testament believers for the time being, even as He saw in their hearts faith in the coming Lamb of God. Then when our Lord Jesus died, as the sinner's Substitute, He forever "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself' (Hebrews 9:26).

Now on the Day of Atonement Israel's sins, hitherto unconfessed or even unknown perhaps to any save God, were "covered" by the ministry of the high priest, highly typical of the sacrificial work of Christ.

Throughout the year, day after day, month after month, the sacrifices were continually offered; yet God decreed that, on this one day every year, atonement should be made for Aaron and his house, for the Holy Place and the tabernacle, for the altar and the outer court, and for the whole congregation of Israel. (See Leviticus 16:6, 15-33). It was a prophetic object lesson, by which Jehovah taught His people the need of "a Saviour to come."

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Let us turn now to the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, and read it — not once, or twice, but repeatedly. Let us note the details set forth, that we may see how they foreshadowed the glories of Christ in His redemptive work for guilty sinner.

It is not necessary for us to repeat all these details here; yet, for emphasis, we call attention to some of them:

1. The penalty for entrance into the Holy of Holies was death, except as ordained of God for the high priest on the Day of Atonement (v. 2).

2. On this day the sin offering and the burnt offering had to be sacrificed (v. 3). (For the teaching concerning these, we may turn back to Chapter Six of this series of studies, where they are discussed in some detail).

3. Aaron had to lay aside his garments "for glory and for beauty" before he could minister on the Day of Atonement, a very significant fact, as we shall see. Instead of his beautiful garments, he put on "the holy linen coat," "the linen breeches," the "linen girdle," and "the linen mitre"

— all pure white (v. 4).

4. Two kids of the goats were taken “for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.”

The two goats were presented “before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle.” Lots were cast, “one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.” The one was slain; the other was led away into the wilderness “unto a land not inhabited.” But before it was led away, Aaron placed both his hands upon the scapegoat’s head, confessing Israel’s sins, figuratively laying them upon the head of the sinless Substitute who was to come, even Jesus. (See vv. 5-10, 21, 21).

5. Aaron took the blood of the bullock and of the slain goat into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled it “upon the mercy seat eastward, and before the mercy seat . . . with his finger seven times” (vv. 11, 14, 15).

6. In his hands Aaron also took the golden censer, “full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small.” The smoke of the incense went up before the Lord, covering the mercy scat with its fragrance (vv. 12, 13).

7. Aaron was alone in the tabernacle when he ministered before the Lord on this sacred day (v. 17).

8. As he came out of the tabernacle, after having entered into the Most Holy Place, he sprinkled the blood upon the horns of the altar.

9. Then it was that the scapegoat was sent away into the wilderness, symbolically bearing afar off the sins of all Israel. Afterwards the man who led the scapegoat away had to go through ceremonial cleansing (vv. 21, 22, 26).

10. Aaron, while in the tabernacle, took off the holy, linen garments and left them there; washed his flesh; and put on once more the beautiful garments (vv. 23, 24).

11. Then he sacrificed the burnt offering, as “a sweet savour unto the Lord” (v. 24).

12. The fat of the sin offering was burned upon the altar; the remainder was carried without the camp, and burned with fire (vv. 25, 27).

13. This was a day of mourning for sin (v. 29).

14. It was a day of rest (v. 29).

15. It was to be observed “once a year” (v. 34).

If you are not clear on all the symbolism of these different offerings, my friend, let me urge you once more to turn back to Chapter Six of these studies, to refresh your memory. Otherwise, you will miss much of the blessing God has for you in the teachings concerning Christ, our Sin Offering; and Christ, our Burnt Offering, upon the altar which is Calvary’s cross.

For some of the other highly typical teaching concerning the ritual of the Day of Atonement, we want to consider a few of these details now:

A DAY OF MOURNING FOR SIN “THEY SHALL MOURN FOR HIM” WHOM THEY CRUCIFIED

The feast of atonement was possibly the most solemn of all the feasts of the Lord. Three times in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus and twice in the sixteenth chapter we read God’s commandment to Moses,

“Ye shall afflict your souls . . . whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.”

It was time of weeping and mourning in Israel, a time of sorrow for their sins.

Israel’s grief on the Day of Atonement was but a shadow of the still future affliction of their souls when “they shall look upon” Him “whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10).

“His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives” (Zechariah 14:4).

“And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends”

(Zechariah 13:6).

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall sec him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him” (Revelation 1:7).

In that coming day, of which the Feast of Atonement was a type, Israel’s Great High Priest, even Jesus, will come out of the Holy of Holies, which is heaven itself, to deliver His people from the terrible persecution of the Antichrist. In great tribulation they will cry unto God, and their God will come down to deliver them. When they see the nail prints in His hands and feet and the print of the wounded side, they will remember the mocking, angry mob who cried out, saying,

“Crucify him, crucify him . . . his blood be on us, and on our children.”

And their penitential prayer will be the fifty-third chapter Isaiah, a marvelous prophecy of the sufferings of their Messiah and the Saviour of the world. In the affliction of their souls, His ancient people will say:

“We hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:3-6).

But Israel’s mourning will be turned into joy when Jesus comes; for He will deliver His people, and usher in His long-promised kingdom of peace and righteousness!

A DAY OF REST — A FINISHED REDEMPTION

The Feast of Atonement was “a sabbath of rest,” for God said to Moses,

“Ye shall do no work in that same day . . . And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people” (Leviticus 23:28, 30).

Wherever the atoning work of Christ is referred to in the Word of God, it is always plainly set forth as a work of grace. Man can only remain passive, and accept the finished work of Christ. Likewise, on the Day of Atonement, it was the high priest who ministered for Israel; the people did no work!

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

You cannot do one thing to save yourself, my friend; you must accept what Christ has done for you in His death and resurrection. You must rest in His finished work of redemption. You and I must sing, from hearts of thanksgiving,

“Jesus paid it all;

All to Him I owe:

Sin had left a crimson stain;

He washed it white as snow!”

“ONCE A YEAR” — “ONCE FOR ALL”

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat . . . And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year” (Leviticus 16:2, 34).

Let us turn now to the ninth chapter of Hebrews, and read the first fourteen verses. These words explain “the shadow” of the Old Testament ritual:

“When these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle [i.e., the Holy Place], accomplishing the service of God. But into the second [the Holy of Holies] went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors [sins of ignorance] of the people. The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the

holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present . . . But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:6-9, 11, 12).

In quoting the book of Hebrews in this connection, it is difficult to know where to stop; for the whole epistle is a marvelous explanation of the meaning of the ritualism of Judaism and of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. But the passage quoted above is one of the priceless gems from this portion of the Word of God. (Read the entire Epistle carefully, prayerfully, repeatedly, if you would understand the books of Moses).

In these unmistakable words from the New Testament, the Holy Spirit throws a flood of light upon the Old Testament ritual of the Day of Atonement.

Day after day the morning and evening sacrifices were made in Israel, but only on this one day in the year could the high priest enter the Holy of Holies where God dwelt in the pillar of cloud and fire.

Now a year is a full period of time; and typically the Day of Atonement covers all human history. Christ died "once for all," in fulfillment of the types and shadows set forth in every animal sacrifice of Old Testament days. What a mighty grandeur this gives to the cross of our Lord! There all the ages meet! Every other day of the past and future is pressed into that one atoning day. The cross links the past eternity with the future eternity. Verily, Calvary's cross does tower —

". . . o'er the wrecks of time;

All the light of sacred story Gathers 'round its head sublime!"

"Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself' (Hebrews 7:26, 27).

"Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself . . . Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many"

(Hebrews 9:26, 28).

“This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God . . . Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin” (Hebrews 10:12, 18).

The sweet incense, which Aaron burned above the mercy seat, speaks to us of the fragrance of our Lord’s sinless character. On the merit of His atoning death, we are “accepted” before God.

THE AFFLICTION AND HUMILIATION OF THE HIGH PRIEST A PICTURE OF THE SUFFERING OF “THE MAN OF SORROWS”

Seven days prior to the Feast of Atonement the high priest in Israel had to be separated from family and home; and on the day of the feast he had to divest himself of his robes of “glory and beauty,” putting on a white linen robe. How marvelously this speaks to us of how our Great High Priest was for thirty-three and one-half years separated from His Father and Home — a self-denying Servant! He laid aside His garments of glory and beauty — not His deity — and was “fashioned” like unto His brethren, “that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17).

“Being in the form of God,” He “thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:68).

“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (II Corinthians 8:9).

Yet He was still God, the spotless, sinless God-Man. Of His holy nature, the white linen coat of Aaron speaks.

For us He wore the crown of thorns and the purple robe, put upon Him in derision and mockery by wicked men. The affliction and humiliation of the high priest in Israel on the Day of Atonement was but a faint “shadow” of the affliction and humiliation of Jesus, our Great High Priest, when He made

atonement for our sins upon the cross!

“THE HIGH PRIEST ALONE” ENTERED THE HOLY OF HOLIES CHRIST SUFFERED ALONE!

God said to Moses,

“There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel” (Leviticus 16:17).

When Christ drank the bitter “cup,” He drank it alone! There was none to help! His disciples “forsook him, and fled.” Even His Father in heaven had to turn His face away in that dark moment; for a holy God cannot look upon sin — and in His death the holy Son of God took upon Himself the sins of the whole world!

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” He cried.

And yet, knowing beforehand that this would be, still He had prayed,

“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

He willingly went to Gethsemane and to Calvary alone.

THE TWO GOATS — A TYPE OF “ETERNAL REDEMPTION”

In Chapter Six of these studies we considered the significance of the burnt offering and sin offering, both of which were made on the Day of Atonement. There was a Godward and there was a man-ward aspect of Calvary.

There was the sweet savour offering, when the Son presented Himself without spot or blemish to the Father as the whole burnt offering, delighting to do His will. And there was the non-sweet savour offering, when, as the sin offering, the holy Son of God became the sinner’s Substitute. We shall not dwell further on these offerings here. But the ritual concerning the two goats was observed only on the Day of Atonement; and it is highly significant.

The two goats were to be taken from “the congregation of the children of Israel”

(v. 5); that is, they were to be purchased from the public treasury.

In other words, they represented the people. Aaron, the high priest, presented them “before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,” and “cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat” (vv. 7, 8).

The one was slain, and the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.

The other was led into the wilderness, “unto a land not in habited.”

But before the scapegoat was led away, Aaron laid his hands upon the head of the animal and confessed the sins of the people, symbolically transferring them to their Substitute, even Jesus, of whom the animal sacrifices were a type. This is made very clear in the commandment concerning the scapegoat:

“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness” (Leviticus 16:21, 22).

How significant is all this ritual! The two goats represent Christ dying for our sins, and bearing them away, to remember them no more forever. Even as the animals were purchased from the public treasury, so the thirty pieces of silver, given to Judas for selling the Lord Jesus, came out of the public treasury, from the officials of the Jews. For the sins of “the whole congregation” He died!

Again, the casting of the lots, to determine which goat was to die and which was to be the scapegoat, reminds us that it was God who made this decision.

Likewise, Christ was not the victim of circumstances; He came into the world to die, “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23).

“I lay down my life, that I might take it again,” He said. “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself’ (John 10:17, 18).

The blood of the goat which was slain was brought by the high priest “within the veil,” into the Holy of Holies sprinkled “upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat” (Leviticus 16:15).

So also was the blood of the bullock for a sin offering. Thus the blood was sprinkled where God rested, and where man stood. God rests in the finished work of Christ, and man can stand before Him, resting also in Him, only on the merit of His finished redemption.

“Christ being come an high priest of good things to come . . . by his own blood . . . entered in once into the holy place [even heaven itself], having obtained eternal redemption for us”

(Hebrews 9:11, 12).

This is the heart of the message of the Gospel, my friend. It explains to us the meaning of the rent veil. Until Christ died, no man except the high priest dared enter the Holy of Holies where God dwelt in the Shekinah Glory; and even he went in only once a year, “not without blood.”

The veil shut the sinner out from the presence of God.

Why? Because a full atonement had not been made for sin. The animal sacrifices were only “shadows of good things to come”; and sinful man could not stand in the presence of a holy God until the full atonement was made.

But Christ came; He died; He shed His own precious blood; He rose again, and entered into heaven itself, bearing in His glorified body the marks of Calvary. He presented His own blood before the mercy seat, which is the throne of God. He changed the judgment throne into the mercy seat, on the ground of the sprinkled blood!

That is why the veil of the temple was rent in twain when He died on the cross; “the way into the holiest” was forever opened; and the weakest sinner was invited to “come boldly unto the throne of grace” (Hebrews 10:19-22; cf. 9:8; 4:16).

That is why we no longer need an earthly priest, before whom to confess our sins. We have an all-sufficient Great High Priest, and to Him we go in prayer!

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:19-22).

In shedding His blood for our sins, the Lord Jesus bore them away into “the wilderness,” as it were, “unto a land not inhabited.” The place of no habitation is the grave.

“The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

And in His death He has taken away our sins.

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us”

(Psalm 103:12).

And His promise is sure,

“Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:17).

God not only forgives; He forgets!

“What a wonderful Saviour!”

THE HIGH PRIEST’S COMING FORTH FROM THE HOLY OF HOLIES A TYPE OF CHRIST’S RETURN IN GLORY

After Aaron came out from the presence of God, and before he appeared again unto the people, he took off the linen clothes of humiliation, and put on once more his robes of “glory and beauty.” And when our Lord returns, when He appears once more to His people, Israel, He will come in all His glory, His “eternal glory” which He had with the Father, “before the world was” (John 17:5).

He laid aside that glory, in order to become a merciful and a faithful High Priest; but He took it up again, after He had made a full atonement for sin. When He rose from the grave, He put on His robes of glory. And very soon perhaps He will come out of the Holy of Holies!

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him” (Revelation 1:7).

Then the work which He did on that Feast of the Passover nearly two thousand years ago will find its complete fruition. At the first Feast of the Passover the Israelites sprinkled the shed blood upon their own lintels and door posts, but then there was no Holy of Holies; there was no sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat.

The Passover set forth the man-ward aspect of Calvary.

Each sinner must, by his own volition, allow the Holy Spirit to apply the shed blood of the Lamb of God to his sinful heart. On the Day of Atonement, however, it was the high priest who sprinkled the shed blood in the presence of the Shekinah Glory. This is the Godward aspect of Calvary, and shows us in a faint picture what Christ has done for the sinner.

Thus the feasts of the Passover and atonement dovetail perfectly, setting forth also Israel’s special relation to the Lord God, in that Christ will appear on the Day of Atonement, as it were, to establish His promised kingdom over the house of Jacob. On the basis of the shed blood of the Paschal Lamb “all Israel shall be saved.”

Just as God heard the cry of His people in Egyptian bondage, so also He will hear the cry of Israel during the great tribulation. As He sent Moses to deliver them long ago, so He Himself will arise from “the marriage supper of the Lamb,” and will come out of the Holy of Holies to deliver His people in their hour of great affliction. Then Israel will receive Him as her Great High Priest and King of kings!

Then there will be no more “wars and rumours of wars.” Thorns will no more infest the ground. The animal kingdom will live in peace and quietness. And “the desert shall blossom as the rose.”

Are you ready for the Lord’s return, my friend? He has died for you; He will bear all your sins away, and remember them no more forever, if you will only trust Him. He has opened the way into Heaven, into His glorious Presence, by His own shed blood.

But you must accept His great salvation. It is a free gift; but you must take it if you want access before “the throne of grace” — now and throughout the endless

ages.

OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST “WITHIN THE VEIL”

For some fifteen hundred years, from the days of Moses until our Lord was crucified, Israel observed the Day of Atonement, with more or less devotion.

- Part of that time the nation as a whole was in gross idolatry.

- Part of that time the northern kingdom was in the Assyrian captivity.

- Part of that time Judah was in Babylon, with no temple, with no Holy of Holies, with no manifestation of the Shekinah Glory.

But throughout the centuries, godly Jews, of whom there was always a faithful remnant, honored that sacred day every year — from Moses to Christ.

Then the Lord Jesus came to offer Himself, the whole Burnt Offering, well pleasing unto the Father; the perfect Sin Offering, as the sinner’s Substitute. Having suffered “without the camp,” outside the gate of Jerusalem, He entered into heaven itself, “within the veil,” there to present His shed blood, offered after the sweet incense of His sinless life had proved Him to be the Holy One of God.

In His death and resurrection He became our Great High Priest. During this church age He is still “within the veil,” but one day He will come forth to be acknowledged by all the world as “The mighty God . . . The Prince of Peace.”

Meanwhile, the veil of the temple has been “rent in twain.” Our “Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,” bids us “draw near” unto His “throne of grace.”

It seems to us, in the light of the prophetic Scriptures, that we must be living in the evening of the great Day of Atonement, as it were. Soon, we believe and pray, our Great High Priest will come forth, wearing His robes of beauty and glory, to be honored by all His universe. The time for winning souls may be very short. Shall we not rededicate our lives to telling the lost of “such an high priest,” who longs to be their Saviour? When He comes as the “Judge of all the earth,” the wicked will find that “the day of salvation” is past. “The night cometh, when no man can work.”

Let us, with renewed zeal, point never-dying souls to Him who has forever “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself”

~ end of chapter 12 ~

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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

President of The Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN THE SHEKINAH GLORY UPON THE FINISHED TABERNACLE “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.”

Exodus 33:14; 40:33-38; Numbers 9:15-23; 10:33-36

NOT ONLY did the Shekinah Glory dwell between the cherubim upon the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies; but, in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, the Lord of glory dwelt “in the midst” of His people upon the finished tabernacle.

With the tents of the families of Moses, Aaron, and the priests pitched on the east; with the three families of the Levites on the north, south, and west; and with four tribes on each side of the tabernacle, their tents pitched by families be yond those of the priests and Levites, the tabernacle was literally “in the midst” of the camp.

And all Israel was conscious of God’s Presence among them throughout their wilderness wanderings.

Not only so; but the Shekinah Glory was a Guide, “a sun and shield,” a searcher of rest for Israel, and a visible manifestation of the glory of God — from Egypt to Canaan. What a picture of our crucified and risen Lord! Before He ascended into Heaven, He said to those who loved Him,

“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [aged]” (Matthew 28:20).

He is our Guide throughout the wilderness pilgrimage of this godless world. He is verily “a sun and shield,” our resting place. One day we shall behold and share His glory, the glory which He had with the Father “before the world was.”

As today we consider “The Glories of Christ As Foreshadowed in the Jewish Tabernacle”; as we look back, through the centuries, and see the Shekinah Glory “in the midst” of His ancient people, upon the sanctuary, in which He dwelt among them — as we think upon these things, and how they prefigured our blessed Lord, we can only praise Him for His grace, even as we look forward to

that yet future day when “we shall see him as he is.”

GOD’S PRESENCE “IN THE MIDST” OF HIS PEOPLE

Moses was very discouraged when God spoke to him in those reassuring words, saying,

“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Exodus 33:14).

Israel had broken God’s holy law by worshipping the golden calf.

Moses realized something of the awful responsibility of leading a stiff-necked and rebellious people; and in his intercession on their behalf he also implored the Lord’s presence and power. God honored his trust, and spoke “unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (Exodus 33:11).

And in answer to Moses’ prayer, the Lord reassured him, saying,

“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.”

Dear, troubled Christian, let God’s answer to Moses’ prayer encourage your heart; for He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” And His promise is sure:

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20).

“THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE”

It had been a wonderful manifestation of the glory of God when, upon and within the finished tabernacle, the Shekinah Glory had descended.

We read the Holy Spirit’s own record of this miraculous story in Exodus 40:33-38:

“So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory

of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."

In the beginning of these studies we saw that the glory of God upon and within the Jewish tabernacle was a type of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the church; for the Lord said to Moses,

"Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

In this church age the believer's body is "the temple of the Holy Ghost" (I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). The church is "the house hold of God . . . an habitation of God through the Spirit"

(Ephesians 2:19-22).

And the Holy Spirit is, in very truth, the Christian's guide and power, even as the pillar of cloud and fire was Israel's unfailing guide and power throughout the wilderness journey from Egypt to Canaan.

Even on the march, the Ark of the Covenant was the symbol of God's Presence, literally "in the midst" of the camp. With minute detail God told Moses in what order the tribes were to journey, as the Shekinah Glory led the way.

We turn to the second and third chapters of Numbers for these instructions. Six tribes went forward on the march, three tribes in one rank. Then the tabernacle followed. And finally the remaining six tribes, also by their ranks, completed the army of 600,000 soldiers, to say nothing of women and children and aged men.

Wagons and oxen were provided for the Gershonites and Merarites (Levites), whose duty it was to take care of the tabernacle, with all its pillars and sockets and boards and hangings and cords. But the Kohathites carried the sacred pieces of furniture on their shoulders, after the priests had carefully covered them from the gaze of men.

All of this detail speaks to us of the sacredness of this "sanctuary," in which the Lord dwelt among His people. Often we wonder if the church of our crucified and risen Lord is conscious of His will for her separation from the godless

world.

We fail so many times in living as before Him who dwells within these bodies of ours. We dishonor His holy name by careless and unconfessed sin.

May He give us grace to remember at all times that our bodies do not belong to us, to do with as we please; that we have been “bought with a price,” even His own precious blood. Then only shall we keep “our garments unspotted from the world” which thrust the Son of God out at the point of a spear. Then only shall “the glory of the Lord” shine through the testimony of our lives, even unto the salvation of never-dying souls, and to our Lord’s own honor and glory.

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE

1. A Guide.

In Numbers 9:17 we read,

“When the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.”

For forty years the Shekinah Glory led the people of God. Through the burning sands of the desert, in the enemies’ country, through “the howling wilderness,” God led His ancient people, Israel. It is always true that the Lord is a guide to those who trust Him. No matter what the danger or trial or sorrow, He still leads on, even as He said to David many centuries ago,

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye” (Psalm 32:8).

2. “A Sun and Shield

The Psalmist must have been thinking of the Shekinah Glory when he wrote, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, saying, in another place,

“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God . . . For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand . . . For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he

withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:1, 2, 10, 11).

The Lord is a sun for the dark day, a shield from “the fiery darts of the wicked.” Israel had experienced the meaning of this truth. On the night when the nation had left Egypt, the cruel Pharaoh and his hosts pursued God’s people. With the Red Sea before them, with the mountains and the wilderness beside them, and with the enemy behind them, Israel was afraid.

But God spoke His reassuring, “Fear not”; and the pillar of cloud and fire moved from before Israel and stood between His people and the enemy. Moreover, the Shekinah Glory gave light unto Israel, but darkness and confusion to the Egyptians. “The Lord God” was “a sun and shield” to His redeemed people. And so He is to His blood-bought children in every age. So He is to us today!

3. “Rest."

In words of unspeakable comfort and beauty, God wrote of His purpose in going before Israel throughout the wilderness journey,

“And they departed from the mount of the Lord [Mount Sinai] three days’ journey: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days’ journey, to search out a resting place for them” (Numbers 10:33).

In words of unspeakable comfort and beauty, our Lord Jesus said to a heart-hungry and sin-weary people nearly two thousand years ago:

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

It was the Shekinah Glory that led Israel for forty years from Egypt to Canaan. And it is the vision of the glory of God, now seen by faith, one day to become sight, that encourages the Christian to press on in the pilgrimage toward that “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

In His intercessory prayer, uttered before He went to the cross, our Lord said unto His Father on behalf of His own: “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one . . . Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may

behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:22, 24).

When the Levites exchanged their burdens for the rest and worship and praise in Solomon's temple, with all the splendor and glory of his kingdom, their wilderness wanderings were over. And when the Christian beholds and shares the uncreated glory of the Lord Jesus, then his wilderness journey will be past. With no more perplexities and tears and heartaches, with no more sin, with no more curse, he "shall be like him" who many centuries ago appeared to Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire — to give them a glimpse of His glory.

In that yet future day the words of the risen Lord, spoken to the aged John on the Isle of Patmos, will come to pass,

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21: 3, 4).

Until then, may we let "the God of Glory" be our guide, "even unto death," or "till he come." Then we shall know Him as "a sun and shield," and as "rest" unto our souls, as we look forward to seeing Him throughout eternity in all His glory.

Our bodies are His blood-bought temple. He is our Priest. He has entered "within the veil," there to be our "Advocate with the Father." He is coming again to receive us unto Himself, and to be given His rightful kingdom and throne. As we seek to serve the God of Israel, and "to wait for his Son from heaven," this is our fervent, believing prayer,

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

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