

People on the Move The Book of Numbers Lesson 8 4Q 2009

Priests and Levites

Several weeks back, a question came up regarding the tent of meeting and it was suggested that Moses had a separate tent called the tent of meeting that was outside the camp and was not the Tabernacle. And therefore, Moses did not meet with God in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle after Aaron was High Priest. This is referenced in Exodus 33. I said I would check it out and this is what I discovered.

There was a smaller temporary tent used by Moses prior to the completion of the larger tabernacle, but both were called the tent of meeting. The smaller temporary tent was initially in the center of the camp but was moved outside the camp after Israel's rebellion to demonstrate they had removed themselves from God's presence.

Regardless of which tent one considers, the point I was making remains when we read numbers 7:89:

"When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony. And he spoke with him."

It is clear this is the Most Holy Place where the ark was kept. Therefore, my question how is it that Moses could enter after Aaron was anointed High Priest? Because in the theater of the Jewish economy, Moses represented Christ before His incarnation when Christ and God counseled together to enact the plan of salvation. The Lamb represented Christ during His incarnation as our sacrificial Savior. And the High Priest represented Christ after His ascension.

SABBATH

Memory Text – Numbers 18:20 Read – thoughts? What does it mean God is their inheritance? Why did the other 12 tribes get an inheritance that was something other than God? Was God not their inheritance?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “In Numbers 18:1...” thoughts? What do you think it being taught by the idea that non-priests approaching the sanctuary would defile it?

What do we understand the sanctuary to be? Was the sanctuary in the OT the literal reality of God’s truth or an object lesson, a teaching tool? Could any ceremony associated with the OT sanctuary service save a sinner or cleanse a sinner from sin? Or were the ceremonies designed to teach God’s method for restoration?

What was the OT sanctuary constructed after? Or upon what was the construction of the OT sanctuary based? Was it modeled after a building in heaven? Where do we get such an idea?

They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” Heb 8:5

“See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” Exodus 25:40

What was Moses shown on the mountain the actual sanctuary in heaven or a “pattern” a “drawing” a “blueprint” a “template”?

Moses did not see the actual heavenly sanctuary but only a pattern. When someone sees a “pattern” for a dress is that the same as seeing the dress? If someone looks at the blueprints of a house is that the same as seeing the house?

Moses was given a pattern, blueprint, template upon which to make the earthly sanctuary and the blueprint was designed to have Moses build a physical building which would teach things about the heavenly reality. Does that mean the reality in heaven is a building that looks like the earthly? Does that mean the reality of the heavenly sanctuary is built out of heavenly brick and mortar?

What is the heavenly sanctuary? From what is it constructed?

Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. ¹³ It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two. Zech 6:12,13

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” John 2:19

Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness^a is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:3,4

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's HOUSE [sanctuary/temple], built on the

^a Some manuscripts *sin*

foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building [sanctuary/temple] is joined together and rises to become a HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord. And in him YOU too [you all] are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22.

And Peter says, “As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--YOU also, like LIVING STONES [building blocks of the Temple], are being built into a SPIRITUAL HOUSE [Temple] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet 2:4,5.

What picture do you get from Scripture regarding the sanctuary of God? When we read in Daniel 8:14 until 2300 days then shall the sanctuary be cleansed, what might this be referring to? Could it be the actual restoration of Godliness into people on earth, i.e. cleansing us from sin?

One of the founders of our church recognized this and speaks of it in multiple places:

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was **God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.** Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the **heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One.** But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. **God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every**

soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. **In cleansing the temple** from the world's buyers and sellers, **Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,**--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Mal. 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

The first tabernacle, built according to God's directions, was indeed blessed of Him. The people thus were preparing themselves to worship in the temple not made with hands--a temple in the heavens. The stones of the Temple built by Solomon were all prepared at the quarry and then brought to the Temple site. They came together without the sound of ax or hammer. The timbers were also fitted in the forest. The furniture was likewise brought to this house all prepared for use. {3MR 231.3}

Even so, the mighty cleaver of truth has **taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple.** We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us. **We are taken from the quarry of the world. The material must not be a dead substance but living souls, and these souls must be brought out of the quarry of the world, where the hand of God can fit them for the temple in heaven.** We are here as probationers, and we must pass under

the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed and **we must be stones fitted for the building.** We are brought into church capacity with defects of character, but we must not retain them. **We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "laborers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building."** In view of this we must see that our temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth. {3MR 231.4}

If we recognize that the OT sanctuary was a metaphor of the place where God dwells by His Spirit, the heart and minds of His creatures then how do we understand what was being taught in the OT service if a non-priest should approach inside the curtain it would defile the sanctuary?

If we let ungodly things or people into our hearts they defile us, they will turn our hearts from God and His path – consider Samson and Delilah, Solomon and his wives. Allowing, someone who is not a “priest of God” into our hearts allows them the ability to influence our internal world, our thinking, our motives, attitudes, beliefs and can defile our sanctuary.

Does this have implication on who teaches our children? On whom we choose as friends, as marriage partners? Does this have any implication for counseling? Does it mean only a Christian counselor can be helpful?

If we look at the model – did Moses get counsel from Jethro? Was Jethro part of the system or outside it? Yet, Jethro was the priest of Midian. He was not a priest in God’s Jewish economy, yet was a priest of God. What does this mean?

That the issue is not about what church you belong to, but who dwells in your heart - are you a follower of God and His methods or are you a follower of Satan and His methods. Could someone be a priest, even High Priest in the Jewish

system and still be a follower of Satan? Those who crucified Christ – therefore, just because someone advertises as a Christian doesn't mean they are a friend of God's or would necessarily be the best person from whom to receive counsel. Just because someone is a Christian pastor doesn't mean they are the best person from whom to receive counseling. Conversely, just because someone doesn't yet recognize Christ as Savior doesn't mean they are outside of God's kingdom or the Holy Spirit isn't working with them.

We must “guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Prov 4:23. We must be careful who we allow into our “sanctuary.”

What do you think about this idea as the lesson being taught by not allowing a non-priest into the sanctuary?

Any other lessons?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph “When we read...” thoughts? Do you think God had reasons for what He did? Do parents, when talking to children, ever say “because I said so, period”? Why? Is it because the parents are power-mongers, have no reasons for what they do, or because the children either cannot or do not want to understand and the parent still wants to protect them?

Read second paragraph, “Notice, too...”

Underline the last sentence of that paragraph – excellent! “The whole plan of salvation, from start to finish, reveals the Lord's desire to redeem sinful fallen beings from the destruction that sin otherwise brings.” This is extremely well stated and helps us understand the meaning of the first part of the paragraph. What is wrath?

Romans 1:18-32 – Paul tells us three times that the wrath of God is “letting go” to reap the consequences of unremedied sin. But what about the OT?

- In Deuteronomy God’s wrath is threatened: “For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below. It will devour the earth and its harvests and set afire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap calamities upon them and spend my arrows against them” (32:22, 23). But God says the wise will understand what His wrath really is: “If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be! How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, *unless the LORD had given them up?*” (Deuteronomy 32:29, 30, emphasis added).
- “When that happens, I will become angry with them; *I will abandon them*, and they will be destroyed. Many terrible disasters will come upon them, and then they will realize that these things are happening to them because *I, their God, am no longer with them*”¹ (Deuteronomy 31:17, emphasis added).

If we understand God’s wrath is not God striking out to hurt, but God giving people up to reap what their separation from Him incurs, then what is being taught by the idea that through the Levites God’s wrath won’t burn against the people?

What were the priests and Levites to do? Take the truth about God and His methods to the people, which would dispel the lies that separate them and would open their hearts to trust Him and thus reconcile them to God. In other words, ministering the truth about God prevents people from acting on the lies and separating themselves from Him and

¹American Bible Society: *The Holy Bible : The Good News Translation*. 2nd ed. New York : American Bible Society, 1992, S. Dt 31:17

experience “wrath” – God’s letting them go to experience their own free will choice.

Read third paragraph, “When you think...” thoughts? What ideas are being suggested? Does it sound like God arbitrarily uses His sovereign right to call people and that’s it? Do you think it could have anything to do with the responsiveness of the people called?

- God called Abraham – did Abraham have the responsibility to respond? Could Abraham’s responsive heart had anything to do with why he was called?
- Is every pastor who says they are “called” by God actually “called” by God? Yes and no – has God called all humanity to salvation? Has all humanity responded to God’s call? Have some instead chosen the path of self-exaltation (Caiaphas) yet claim to be called by God?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

When we think of the talents or abilities we have or don’t have, we know God has the ability to directly bless people with talents, skills, gifts and abilities (Samson’s strength, Solomon’s wisdom, Bezalel son of Uri (Exodus 31)) with craftsmanship, does that mean that all talent is directly and divinely instilled in a supernatural way by a divine act of God? In other words, does God determine for every human being which set of talents we receive?

What is being taught in the parable of the talents when those who invested received more but the one who buried his talent had it taken away? Is this God directly using supernatural powers to cause such transformation in ability? Or is it part of God’s design that we are created for adaptation and development and as we apply ourselves in harmony with God’s methods we develop our abilities and gain more abilities, but if we neglect our talents, don’t invest them, and instead bury them with laziness, drugs, etc. what happens?

What is the problem if we globally apply the idea that all talents we have or don't have are a direct action on God's part?

TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about tithing and offering to support the function of the sanctuary. What lesson do we learn from this? How does it apply to our lives? What is the purpose of the tithe? To promote the gospel – for what purpose? To heal people or cleanse the sanctuary? Where are we to give our tithe?

Here is what one of the founders of our church did:

- “There are ministers' wives--Sisters Starr, Haskell, Wilson, and Robinson--who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giving Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Luke 10:7. When any such decision as this is made, I will, in the name of the Lord, protest. I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls.{DG 106.1}
- I know that the faithful women should be paid wages as it is considered proportionate to the pay received by ministers. They carry the burden of souls and should not be treated unjustly. These sisters are giving their time to educating those newly come to the faith and hire their own work done and pay those who work for them. All these things must be adjusted and set in order and justice be done to all. Proofreaders in the office receive

their wages; those who are working at housework receive their wages, two dollars and a half and three dollars a week. This I have had to pay and others have to pay. But ministers' wives, who carry a tremendous responsibility, devoting their entire time, have nothing for their labor.”-- 12MR 160 (1898).{DG 106.2}

- My brother, I wish to say to you, Be careful how you move. You are not moving wisely. The least you have to speak about the tithe that has been appropriated to the most needy and the most discouraging field in the world, the more sensible you will be. {2MR 99.2}

It has been presented to me for years that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient properly to support their families. When my attention was called to aged ministers, white or black, it was my special duty to investigate into their necessities and supply their needs. This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases. No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in that way. {2MR 99.3}

In regard to the colored work in the South, that field has been and is still being robbed of the means that should come to the workers in that field. If there have been cases where our sisters have appropriated their tithe to the support of the ministers working for the colored people in the South, let every man, if he is wise, hold his peace. {2MR 99.4}

I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this, and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, it is not a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best. {2MR 99.5}

Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me,

Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and I have done so. I commend those sisters who have placed their tithe where it is most needed to help to do a work that is being left undone. If this matter is given publicity, it will create a knowledge which would better be left as it is. I do not care to give publicity to this work which the Lord has appointed me to do, and others to do. {2MR 100.1} I send this matter to you so that you shall not make a mistake. Circumstances alter cases. I would not advise that anyone should make a practice of gathering up tithe money. But for years there have now and then been persons who have lost confidence in the appropriation of the tithe, who have placed their tithe in my hands, and said that if I did not take it they would themselves appropriate it to the families of the most needy ministers they could find. I have taken the money, given a receipt for it, and told them how it was appropriated. {2MR 100.2}

I write this to you so that you shall keep cool and not become stirred up and give publicity to this matter, lest many more shall follow their example. --Letter 267, 1905, pp. 1, 2. (To Elder Watson, Jan. 22, 1905.) {2MR 100.3}

Thoughts?

Third paragraph "At the same time..."

What lesson is being taught by this? The best was given to the priests because when we serve others in love we always receive more than we give.

THURSDAY

Read third paragraph "After slaying..." thoughts?

First let's appreciate the lesson being taught – the priest slew the heifer – what does this symbolize? Not the high priest, but

the daily priest – what does it symbolize? It was because of our need, our condition, our terminal state that Christ died.

The blood taken by the priest and sprinkled seven times toward the sanctuary represents what? What does the animal's blood represent? The life of Christ, which is perfectly applied to the sanctuary – what does the sanctuary represent?

What about the idea of Christ is in heaven using His blood to reconcile God to man?

This is pagan pure and simple – it is not Biblical, it is a hangover from the Dark Ages when paganism infected Christianity. Sadly, it has still not been rooted out of our church, yet needs to be!

The Bible teaches that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (2Cor 5:19). It does not teach that Christ is reconciling the Father to us, the Father does not need to change, appeased, have an attitude adjustment etc. There is nothing wrong with God, there is something wrong with man and Christ's mission was to fix mankind, not God.

Christ is the Father's thoughts, heart, attitude, made audible and visible to mankind. They are one!

FRIDAY

Questions 1 and 2 read and discuss