

Worship Lesson 4 3Q 2011

Rejoicing Before the Lord: The Sanctuary and Worship

SABBATH

Read first and second paragraph, “Russian writer...” thoughts?

Is this the only, or even the most significant, danger of mere ritual, that one will leave religion and a belief in God?

What other dangers are there in mere ritual?

- That one can enforce ritual upon others, if you are baptized in a certain way you are shunned, ostracized, executed
- That one can conform without thinking and over time lose their individuality and ability to think

Which is worse to reject the idea of God or to adhere to a ritualistic belief system in which one loses the ability to think, reason and make informed choices without someone telling them what to do?

Which is most likely to undermine development of character and godliness, the rejection of a ritualistic god, or the worship of a ritualistic god?

"All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, **exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus.** Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . **We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We**

cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures." *Review and Herald*, March 8, 1887 (2RH 117:1:1 - 2:0); *The Medical Missionary*, May 1, 1892

If we mistake the wisdom of man for the wisdom of God we are led astray by the foolishness of man's wisdom. Here is the great danger of many in ----- . They have not an experience for themselves. **They have not been in the habit of prayerfully considering for themselves, with unprejudiced, unbiased judgment, questions and subjects that are new and that are ever liable to arise.** They wait to see what others will think. If these dissent, that is all that is needed to convince them that the subject under consideration is of no account whatever. Although this class is large, it does not change the fact that they are **inexperienced and weak-minded through long yielding to the enemy, and will always be as sickly as babes, walking by others' light, living on others' experience, feeling as others feel, and acting as others act. They act as though they had not an individuality. Their identity is submerged in others; they are merely shadows** of those whom they think about right. **Unless these become sensible of their wavering character and correct it, they will all fail of everlasting life;** they will be unable to cope with the perils of the last days. They will possess no stamina to resist the devil, for they do not know that it is he. Someone must be at their side to inform them whether a foe or a friend is approaching. They are not spiritual, therefore spiritual things are not discerned. They are not wise in those things which relate to the kingdom of God. Neither young nor old are excusable in trusting to another to have an experience for them. Said the angel: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." A noble self-reliance is needed in the Christian experience and warfare. {2T 129.2}

SUNDAY

Read Exodus 25:1-9 – thoughts? What are the high points of this passage?

What was the purpose of the sanctuary? The lesson reminds us it was so God could dwell amongst them? Why was the sanctuary needed for this?

How did God dwell among Abraham? Or what about the burning bush? Or on Sinai? Why the sanctuary?

- Did God need the building?
- Did the Israelites need a building? For what?
- To help focus their attention?
- Did they need rituals to help stimulate their thinking?
- Did they need routines to help order the lives?
- Did they need to come with a lamb they raised and kill it with their own hands to get some sense of how awful sin is?
- Did they need to be participants in the building to help awaken their minds to a larger reality?

God wants to dwell with His people – the Sanctuary teaches this. What prevents Him from dwelling amongst us?

Is the problem we just don't have accommodations to His liking?

If we were to build a tent with all the specification listed in the Bible would God come by for a visit? Would He dwell in the tent?

Was it God's original plan to have such a tent system, or did God go to this because the people wouldn't respond to a different plan, a more direct plan?

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by

Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}

Exodus 20 the people say, after the Commandments are given, "Don't let God talk to us lest we die, Moses let God talk to you and then you talk to us."

So God wanted to dwell among His creatures, but they were afraid to have Him close. So what did God do? He instructed them to build a Sanctuary, to bring them into the process of moving closer to Him.

What about today? What does God want in relation to us? What prevents Him from dwelling amongst us today? Would it be our condition?

Is the Old Testament Sanctuary/Temple a reality or an illustration of something larger and more significant?

What did it represent?

- Christ
- The believer
- The church
- The collection of all intelligent beings in the universe loyal to God in a unity of relationship with Him

What was Moses shown on the mountain? Was he shown the sanctuary in heaven or was he shown a "pattern"?

What is this picture?



This is a pattern, diagram, depiction of DNA. Is this DNA? If, from this two dimensional pattern, we construct, with beads and rods, a three dimensional object, which exactly follows the pattern on this picture, will we now have DNA? Will we now have anything that is actually close to DNA in substance, function, ability, similarity? No! We will only have a model which teaches us something about DNA but isn't DNA nor even close to DNA.

Would it be wise to begin making medical decisions that are concretely tied to this model?

The earthly sanctuary is not a miniature of the heavenly, but a pattern of the heavenly – i.e. an illustration, a model, an object lesson, a symbolic representation, but not a direct literal concrete miniature. Would it be wise to make salvation decisions that are tied to concrete applications of the model?

Here is what one of the founders of our church said about the model:

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." Malachi 3:1-3. {DA 161.1}

Thoughts? If we fail to understand the reality the model is trying to teach us might we misunderstand God's plan to heal and save?

MONDAY

Willing Hearts:

Why were gifts to build the sanctuary only to be from those who had a willing heart – why?

What does the sanctuary represent? Can the victory over sin be accomplished by force? Does the victory over sin require the willing heart participation of those involved?

So the willing bringing of gifts represents:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*.
Romans 12:1 NKJV

Why is this reasonable? And does this take a willing heart? What brings us to the point we are willing to present ourselves completely to God?

Will such willingness be brought about by threat or fear? What about by the truth about God's character?

What does God want to accomplish when we surrender ourselves to Him? Is it not, what we read earlier, the cleansing our minds and transformation of character?

Can Godly character be created by a divine edict from God?

Christ was to suffer in our behalf, standing at the head of humanity as representative of the race. **He was to work out the character which every follower of His is to work out, through the provision He has made,**--His

infinite sacrifice, His life and death on earth. {The Gospel Herald, March 1, 1901 par. 4}

- A spotless character is as precious as the gold of Ophir. Without pure, unsullied virtue, none can ever rise to any honorable eminence. **But noble aspirations and the love of righteousness are not inherited. Character cannot be bought; it must be formed by stern efforts to resist temptation.** .. {Fundamentals of Christian Education 87.2}
- **The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Is a Christlike character necessary for salvation? Must we receive the mind of Christ? Must we experience the law written on the heart and mind? And is this another way of saying having the character of Christ reproduced within?

If Christlike character is a requirement for salvation, and character cannot be "bought" why do we say Christ died to purchase our salvation? What does this mean and what does it not mean?

It means it cost God/Christ dearly for Christ to become human and in His human brain overcome Satan and develop a

perfect human character! It means Christ paid a “high price” of personal sacrifice, suffering, humility, subordination, diminishment of being, loss of abilities, in order to become human and create the remedy for our sinful condition.

It does not mean that God’s government has a sin payment department and Christ shed His blood so in heaven a blood fine can be paid, collected, recorded and applied to a legal account of a sinner.

Jesus said the “blood” was to be applied into the believer, John 6. The price was the achievement of victory over sinfulness and restoration of God’s law/development of perfect character into humanity.

Read bottom paragraph, “We often...” thoughts? Do you consider helping others worship?

Have you ever heard, “Imitation is the greatest compliment?”

Then wouldn’t the greatest form of worship be to imitate Christ?

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Matthew 24:34-40

Then where to religious rituals, ordinances, ceremonies come into worship?

- Hear the word of the LORD,
 you rulers of Sodom;
 listen to the law of our God,
 you people of Gomorrah!
- 11 “The multitude of your sacrifices—
 what are they to me?” says the LORD.
 “I have more than enough of burnt offerings,
 of rams and the fat of fattened animals;
 I have no pleasure
 in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.
- 12 When you come to appear before me,
 who has asked this of you,
 this trampling of my courts?
- 13 **Stop bringing meaningless offerings!**
 Your incense is detestable to me.
 New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—
 I cannot bear your evil assemblies.
- 14 Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts
 my soul hates.
 They have become a burden to me;
 I am weary of bearing them.
- 15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,
 I will hide my eyes from you;
 even if you offer many prayers,
 I will not listen.
 Your hands are full of blood;
- 16 wash and make yourselves clean.
 Take your evil deeds
 out of my sight!
 Stop doing wrong,
- 17 learn to do right!
Seek justice,
encourage the oppressed.
Defend the cause of the fatherless,
plead the case of the widow.

18 **“Come now, let us reason together,”**
says the LORD.
“Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool. Isa 1:10-18

What was God tired of? Was it not religious rituals? What did He want? People to have character like His to love others more than self!

What about today? Do we still struggle with rituals over living like Christ?

TUESDAY

The morning and evening sacrifice – what was its purpose?

Were people saved by the blood of the animals sacrificed?

What was being symbolized by the shedding of the blood?

The lesson states, “Their faith was to grasp the promises of a Savior to come, the true Lamb of God who would spill His blood for the sins of the whole world.”

What does this mean? What is being cleansed by the blood?

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, **cleanse our consciences** from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!... let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having **our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience...** Heb 10:13,14,22

Do we understand the morning and evening sacrifice related to the cleansing of sinners?

WENDESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Above the sacred ark..." thoughts

What is being represented by this symbolism?

What does the smoke represent? The prayers of the saints, and the incense represents what? The righteous character of Christ.

How does the righteous character of Christ get into the prayers of the saints? Is it added at the end when we say, "In Jesus name amen"?

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. The Saviour's promise is given on condition. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments." He saves men, not in sin, but from sin; and those who love Him will show their love by obedience. {DA 668.2}

So, how does the righteousness of Christ get into our prayers? Isn't by having Christ in the heart of the one praying?

Then where is Christ "interceding" with God to be patient and kind with us, or in our hearts to soften us to be like Him?

God's people, rescued from the fire by Jesus Christ, have a sense of their sin, feel humbled and ashamed. God sees and recognizes their repentance, and notes their sorrow for sin, which they cannot remove or cancel themselves. But as they pray their prayers are heard, and this is the reason that Satan stands by to resist Christ; because He hears their prayers, **He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. He regenerates**

the sinner, and pardon is written off against his name. This stirs Satan up to resistance. He steps in between the repenting, believing soul and Christ. He seeks to cast his hellish shadow before that soul, to dampen faith, and to make of none effect the words of God. . . . {UL 20.3}

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “A substantial...” thoughts? What do you think of the idea, “it was the place where Israel came to be forgiven and cleansed of sin...”

Was it the only place? Was it a required place? If one didn’t come to this place could one be forgiven and cleansed of sin?

Any examples of Jews forgiven and cleansed away from the sanctuary? What about the 70 years of captivity? Any forgiving and cleansing going on then?

Then was the sanctuary the place one went to get forgiven and cleansed of sin, or was it the place one went when one wanted to *symbolically act out* the process of getting forgiven and cleansed of sin? Is there a difference?

Read last paragraph, “An important point...” thoughts?

Who determines what is the truth? “Each person must be fully persuaded in his own mind.” Romans 14:5.

Does that mean anything goes or there are multiple truths? Or does it mean it does no good in the heart until an individual is convinced in his own mind of the truth?

What would you say are the core teaching points the sanctuary was designed to teach?

What is the key that helps us unlock the mysteries of the sanctuary service?

Jesus is the key – we look to Jesus first and His life and then understand the sanctuary, we err if we look to the sanctuary first and then try to make Jesus fit into our understanding of the sanctuary.

The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. **The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries.** Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding. Far more than we do, it is our privilege to understand these wonderful themes. We are to comprehend the deep things of God. Angels desire to look into the truths that are revealed to the people who with contrite hearts are searching the word of God, and praying for greater lengths and breadths and depths and heights of the knowledge which He alone can give. {COL 133.1}

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions