PART 4 / Eschatology ~ Last Day Events

Lesson 20 - The Sanctuary



During the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt to Canaan, God gave Israel instructions to build a visual aid of the plan of salvation called the sanctuary. This sanctuary model was God's master plan of redemption, demonstrating from beginning to end the total plan of salvation for the human race in Christ.

After the death of the apostles, the leadership of the church fell into the hands of Gentile believers, commonly referred to as the "Church Fathers." These men felt that the sanctuary truth belonged to the Jewish nation and had no relevance to New Testament Christianity. Therefore, the sanctuary doctrine became somewhat obsolete, that is, until the mid-nineteenth century when it was reintroduced to the Christian church.

When examining the New Testament we find that much of the truth it presents about Christ's redeeming work is expressed in sanctuary language. The reason for this is obvious, because the sanctuary is God's visual aid of the total plan of redemption. Through it, God reveals to mankind the various stages of our redemption in Christ - His earthly mission as well as His heavenly ministry. The sanctuary may therefore be described as God's Show and Tell.

God's primary purpose in giving the sanctuary model was to reveal Jesus Christ and His saving grace through symbols. Everything about the sanctuary - its buildings, its furniture, as well as its rituals - points to Christ's earthly mission as the Savior of mankind and His heavenly ministry as the great High Priest of all believers.

Since the sanctuary model reveals the full plan of salvation, from beginning to end, its study becomes meaningful especially to us Christians. Through the sanctuary doctrine, we get a clear picture of the

whole plan of salvation. Welcome, therefore, to an introduction to the sanctuary message. After the study, you are invited to "walk through the sanctuary" in this lesson's supplement.

1. Why did God instruct Moses to build a sanctuary? Exodus 25:8

Sin had separated a holy God from sinful man (Isaiah 59:2). What God was revealing through the sanctuary was the plan of redemption that would bridge that gulf, reconciling God and mankind once again.

2. Who fulfilled the plan of salvation revealed by the sanctuary model? John 1:14

Christ is the reality of the sanctuary message. Everything about the sanctuary pointed to Christ and salvation through Him. That is why David declared, "Your way (of salvation), O God, is in the sanctuary" (Psalm 77:13).

3. What statement did Jesus make to the Jews of His day? John 2:19

The temple of which Jesus spoke was the permanent structure that had replaced the wilderness sanctuary of the Exodus.

4. What did Jesus mean when He made the above statement? John 2:20, 21

5. When did Jesus' disciples discover the true meaning of the temple? John 2:22

Like the Jews, the disciples of Christ had also failed to see the true meaning of the temple, God's visual aid of the plan of salvation in Christ. It was only after His resurrection that they saw the light.

6. What replaced the sacrificial system of the sanctuary? Hebrews 10:5

The whole purpose of the sacrificial system of the sanctuary was to point to Christ crucified. The sacrifice of animals had no saving merit of itself. Thus, God had no pleasure in these rituals (Hebrews 10:6).

7. Why did God prepare a body for Christ? Hebrews 10:7

It was through the human body of Christ that the world was to be redeemed. This was the will of God (see John 3:17). Through His humanity, which represented mankind, Christ obtained salvation full and complete for the entire human race. It is for this reason that the humanity of Christ is everything to us.

8. What did the coming of Christ and His earthly mission replace? Hebrews 10:9

The sanctuary and its services were never given by God to be the means of salvation but pointed to Christ as the One who would save mankind. Therefore, Christ replaced the first system with the second. While we no longer practice the rituals of the sanctuary today, the sanctuary model continues to point us to the consummation, the ultimate end of God's plan of salvation in Christ.

9. What sanctuary symbol did John use to point to Christ as the Messiah? John 1:29

10. What sanctuary symbolism did Christ use to describe His mission? John 8:12

11. How did Christ describe Himself in this text? John 6:51

In the holy place of the earthly sanctuary, the two main pieces of furniture were the seven-branch lampstand (candlestick - KJV) and the table of showbread. The lampstand pointed to Christ as the light of the world, while the table of showbread pointed to Christ as the living bread of life.

12. What has God “set forth” Christ to be through faith in His blood? Romans 3:25

The word “propitiation” (NKJV) or the phrase “sacrifice of atonement” (NIV) is translated from the same word used in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint, or LXX) for the mercy seat that rested on the top of the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary. This mercy seat, which represents Christ and Him crucified, is the means by which God can legally forgive our sins.

13. Of what is Christ the end to all who believe in Him? Romans 10:4

The sanctuary pointed to Christ as fulfilling all the demands of the law on behalf of fallen humanity. Therefore, all who receive Him as their personal Savior are looked upon by God as meeting all the requirements of the law for righteousness. This is what bridges the gulf between a holy God and sinful man.

14. Since His resurrection, what is Christ doing in the heavenly sanctuary? Romans 8:34

Even though as Christians we stand justified by faith in Christ, we are still sinners in ourselves and Satan accuses us before God day and night (see Revelation 12:10). As our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, Christ is continually interceding for us.

15. To what extent can Christ save those who put their full trust in Him? Hebrews 7:25

In His earthly mission, represented by the eastern square of the sanctuary courtyard, Christ obtained salvation full and complete for the entire human race. The western square reveals Christ's priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Thus, through the sanctuary and its services God has revealed the whole plan of redemption. The supplement to this lesson discusses this in further detail.

Lesson 20, Supplement - Walking Through the Sanctuary

Original supplement page 1

Walking Through the Sanctuary

The Old Testament sanctuary was God's creative way of communicating the gospel to the Hebrews of the Exodus (Hebrews 4:2). God gave Moses a pattern (Exodus 25:9) for building the sanctuary, and He prescribed ceremonial services that Levitical priests would perform. Everything associated with the sanctuary, from its furniture to its ceremonial services, was given to illustrate God's plan of salvation from beginning to end.

Rightly understood, the ceremonial services of the sanctuary were to prepare God's children to receive their Deliverer, the Messiah. Unfortunately, the symbols and services, in and of themselves, became intrinsically significant to most of the Jews. The truth of the sanctuary was largely forgotten, and when Jesus came to earth as the reality of the sanctuary, His saving mission was either misunderstood or rejected.

Many believe that there is no longer any value in studying God's miniature model plan of salvation, the sanctuary. After all, Christ has come to fulfill the ceremonies associated with the sanctuary, so why should we study about shadows, or figures, when we can look at the "real thing"?

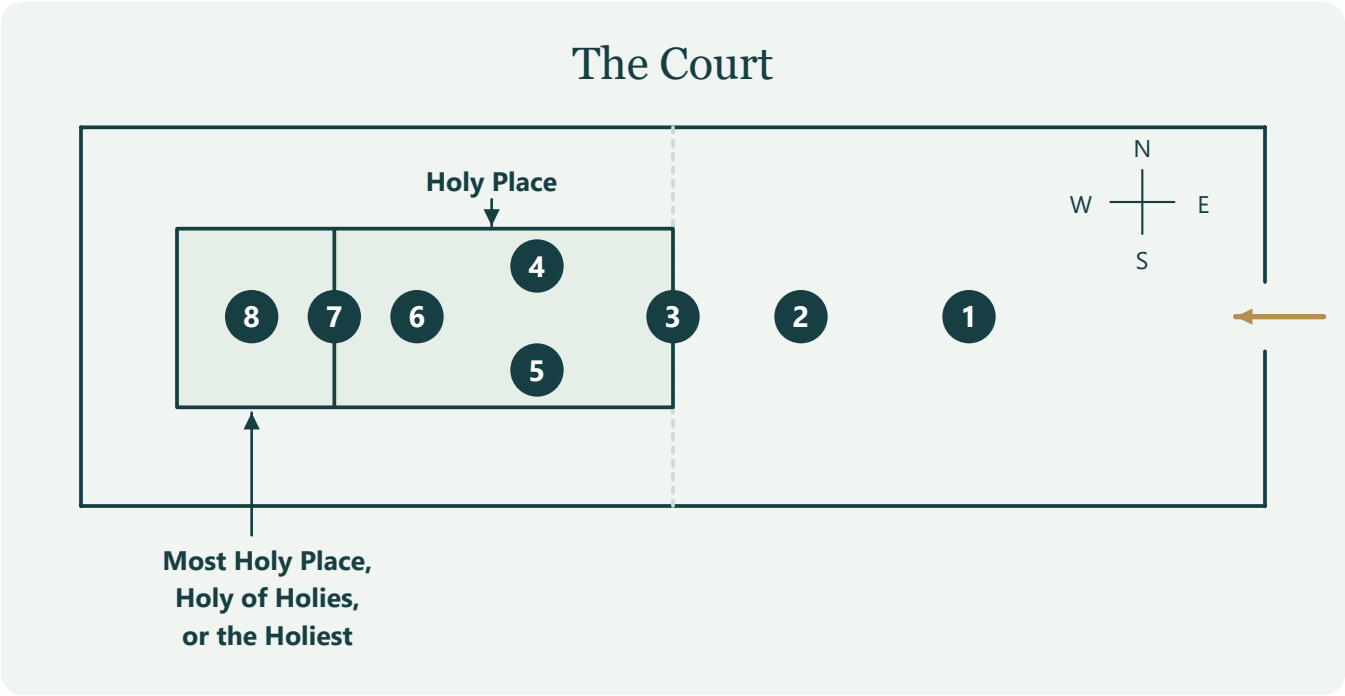
It is true that we ought not to get caught up with ancient articles of furniture, clothing, or ceremonial services. If this study is to be productive, it will only be as we gain insight as to how each important aspect of the earthly sanctuary is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. That said, let's proceed with open minds and a penchant for receiving Biblical gems that illuminate the plan of salvation through the sanctuary model.

Aerial Layout of the Sanctuary

To begin, an aerial diagram of the sanctuary is provided to illustrate the key elements of the sanctuary and its surrounding courtyard. It has been carefully drawn to scale, as the location of certain items is important in establishing the meaning of the symbols. The criss-crossing lines have been superimposed for illustrative purposes only. You'll see why briefly…

Original supplement page 2

Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary - Psalm 77:13



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Significance of Color Coding

The following color coding distinguishes between the gospel:

• in type (i.e., via the sanctuary model - Hebrews 4:2);

• realized in the humanity of Jesus Christ; and

• applied in the lives of believers.

New Testament quotes of Jesus are not shown in red, but in the color of their respective applications. General explanations are provided in black.

High Level Overview

The earthly temple was the most important place to the literal children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The temple was where God dwelt among sinners (Exodus 25:8); met them through a human priest (Exodus 25:22); revealed Himself to them (Exodus 29:46); and accepted them (Leviticus 1:4).

Jesus Christ, in His humanity, is the true temple of God (not discounting the fact that there is a heavenly sanctuary). In Christ, God dwelt among us (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14); revealed Himself to us (John 14:9); meets us today (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 10:19, 20); and accepts us (Ephesians 1:6). Jesus affirmed this in referring to His body (or humanity) as the temple (John 2:19-21).

Finally, believers subjectively become temples of the Holy Spirit upon receiving Jesus as their Savior personally (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19). As God's temple, it is our privilege to witness the gospel, or live the life of Christ, through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20).

This represents a very high level explanation of the sanctuary in type, antitype, and subjective application. We now turn to significant aspects of the sanctuary, relating key articles of furniture and services to their fulfillment in Christ and in the

Original supplement page 3

lives of believers.

The Courtyard

All activities related to atonement for sin took place within the confines of the court, or courtyard, which was surrounded by a linen wall that was five cubits high (Exodus 27:18). Thus, the wall was about nine feet high, based upon the size of a sanctuary cubit (which was an ordinary cubit and a handbreadth - Ezekiel 43:13)1. The moment anyone entered that courtyard, he was hidden from view.

When Christ assumed humanity (Hebrews 10:5) at the incarnation, He became the reality of the sanctuary message (see Lesson 20, Questions 3-5). Everything that took place regarding mankind's reconcilement to God and His holy law took place within the humanity of Christ. We studied this in Lesson 3, where the in Christ motif was introduced. See especially Lesson 3, Questions 1 and 5-7.

When we enter into Christ by faith, we are clothed with His righteousness (see Lesson 3, Question 17, including related note).

In the Parable of the Wedding Feast, the king sent out his servants "into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests" . (Matthew 22:10). All who wore wedding garments2, which represented the righteousness of Christ, were accepted at the wedding feast. So it is with all who enter into Christ by faith, and who are found to be worthy by His merits in the Pre-Advent Judgment (see Lesson 21, especially Questions 20-22).

1 A cubit was the measure from a man's elbow to his fingertip, approximately 17.5 inches. However, during the time of the Exodus when the wilderness sanctuary was built, it is assumed that the Hebrews, due to their extended stay in Egypt, used the Egyptian cubit. This measured about 20.5 inches. The referenced text indicates that the sanctuary cubit was also larger than the ordinary cubit in Ezekiel's time.

2 Note that the wedding garment represents Christ's righteousness imputed and imparted to believers. The righteousness that qualifies the believer for heaven is the imputed righteousness of Christ, because in that righteousness we stand perfect (Colossians 1:28, 2:10; Hebrews 10:14). In Christ,

we stand perfect in nature, in character, and in relation to the law (see the Lesson 3 Supplement, Items 5 and 8, as well as Romans 10:4).

The evidence that we are actually wearing the garment is the imparted righteousness of Christ, or righteousness of Christ →

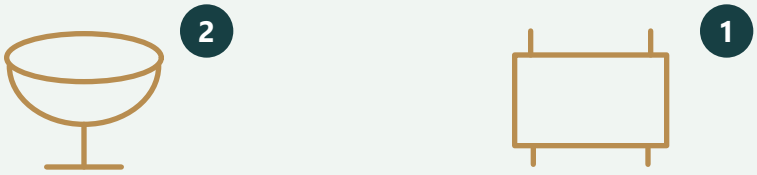
Original supplement page 4

The court itself was 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide (Exodus



27:9-13). The measurement of the court can be further broken down into two equally-sized parts, consisting of an eastern and a western square.

The most important structure in the eastern square (50 cubits x 50 cubits) was the altar of burnt offering, indicated by its prominent location in the exact center of the square (see 1 in the initial diagram and throughout this Supplement to Lesson 20). The second structure located in the eastern square was the laver (2), which stood between the altar and the western square. There was one entrance (←) into the courtyard, located at the eastern side of the court.



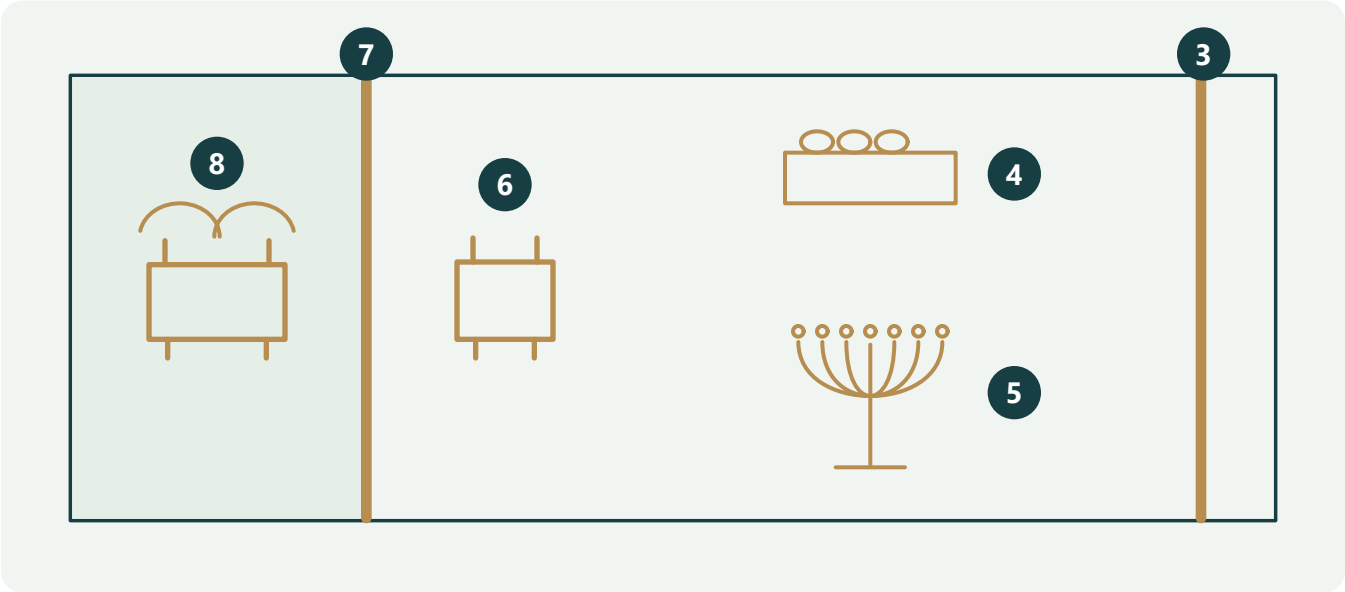
The eastern square represented the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), or Christ's earthly, Savior mission, consisting of His doing and dying (1). All eastern square services pointed to what are now completed, historical facts, accomplished in Christ some 2000 years ago for the entire human race. In this mission, the sentence of condemnation for the human race was changed to a verdict of justification (Romans 5:16, 18). What Christ did was not just a provision. He actually obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). On Calvary's cross, the whole world was reconciled to God through the death of His son, that is, in Christ (Romans 5:10).

The term "obeying the gospel," or a related expression, is frequently used in the New Testament (e.g., Romans 2:8, 6:17, 10:16; Galatians 5:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 1:22, 4:17). This refers to a believer's acknowledgment and acceptance of his or her history in Christ. When we hear and understand the gospel, we believe the good news that Christ is our righteousness. We accept His righteous life as ours, and His death to sin as ours (Romans 6:4). See further details at 1 and 2.

The western square was also 50 cubits x 50 cubits, and contained the tabernacle with its two compartments, the Holy and Most Holy Places. While there was no physical barrier between the whole of the eastern and western squares of the courtyard, the outer veil of the tabernacle, which was the way into the Holy Place, was located exactly at this dividing longitude (3).

reproduced in us. While these works do not qualify us for heaven, they are visible evidence that we are wearing the imputed righteousness of Christ. This tangible evidence is what proves in the judgment that we have become one with Christ. See Lesson 21, Questions 9-19.

Original supplement page 5



Whereas common people could enter the eastern square of the court, only the Levitical priests, who were types or figures of Christ, could enter the tabernacle located in the western square. Everything the priests did in the tabernacle was based upon the ceremonial sacrifices and washings that had already occurred in the eastern square. Daily, priests ministered blood (from sacrifices on the Altar of Burnt Offering) before the inner veil, or curtain (7), in the Holy Place which contained the Table of Showbread (4), the Lampstand (5), and the Altar of Incense (6).

Yearly, on the Day of Atonement (Jewish feast day called "Yom Kippur"), an additional ceremony was performed by the High Priest of Israel to remove the final vestige of sin. On that day, only he could

pass through the veil (7), to minister in the Most Holy Place. The sanctuary was cleansed of sin on this day by the ceremony of the two goats - see 8 and Lesson 22.

The western square furnishings and services have their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, our heavenly, High Priest. Since His ascension to heaven, our High Priest is making real in our experience what God has already fulfilled in the earthly mission of His Son, Jesus Christ. See details at 3-8.

Walking Through the Eastern Courtyard

"←" The only entrance into the court was on the eastern side, which was of itself, significant. As people entered the court, they faced the opposite direction from the sun's rising in the east. Thus, worshiping the true God of Israel meant rejecting all pagan gods, including the popular sun god. In the light of the gospel, to which the eastern square of the courtyard pointed, this meant that the believer was rejecting righteousness by works (e.g., offering sacrifices to appease the sun god), and was accepting God's forgiveness through sacrifices that pointed to the then-future Messiah, or Savior.

Justification was obtained for all men in the humanity of Christ (See Lesson 3). Salvation is found in Him only (Acts 4:12). Jesus said, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved

Original supplement page 6

(John 10:9)." Therefore, the gate into the eastern square represented entering into Christ, where there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1). For more on the "In Christ" motif, see Lesson 3.

We receive the life of Christ through the Holy Spirit, who convicts us by knocking on the doors of our hearts (Revelation 3:20). Our bodies then become the stage for witnessing what is in our hearts (Proverbs 4:23).

1 - The Altar of Burnt Offering

As previously mentioned, in the very center of the eastern half of the courtyard was its most important structure, the Altar of Burnt Offering. On this altar, sacrifices were made every morning and every evening on behalf of all Israel. In addition, there were individual offerings (e.g., burnt, grain, peace, sin, and trespass offerings - see Leviticus, chapters 1-5), as well as offerings for sabbaths, new moons, and special feasts. While sacrifices ranged from pigeons (Leviticus 5:7) to bulls (Leviticus 16:6), the most prevalent animal that was sacrificed was an unblemished, male lamb of a year old (Exodus 12:5). No matter what the sacrifice, it had to be without defect.

Christ's "Doing" - All of these sacrifices had their fulfillment in only one true and meritorious sacrifice, that of Jesus Christ crucified on the cross of Calvary. Using sanctuary language, John the Baptist referred to Christ as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). In like manner, Peter states that we "were… redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Elsewhere we are told that despite being tempted in His

humanity, Christ never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). The meaning of the sacrifice without defect is that Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life in obedience to all of God's commandments continually.

In the earthly sanctuary, the sins of the people were symbolically transferred to the animal sacrifices, and then to the sanctuary via the sprinkling of blood by the priests. If it were possible, the people would have literally become one with the animal that was to be offered and they, too, would have died along with the sacrifice. Of course that was impossible. Therefore, the message of becoming one was conveyed through the confession of sin over the sacrifice, whereby sin was ceremonially transferred to the animal.

Christ's "Dying" - The reality of this union, or sin-bearing, took place at the Incarnation, where Jesus was made sin (2 Corinthians 5:21) by bearing the fallen humanity that He came to

Original supplement page 7

redeem. Thus, while Jesus did not deserve to die, His union with that humanity qualified Him to be our substitute and Savior. We saw in the preceding section entitled, "Christ's 'Doing'," that it was the continual, perfect righteousness wrought out in the body of Christ (our humanity) that constituted the unblemished aspect of the sacrifice. But why, if Jesus did not sin, did He have to die?

Since He had become united with our corporate, fallen life, He was put to death, the just for the unjust (1 Peter 3:18). And unlike the ceremonial service, where the sinner could not be joined, literally, to the sacrifice and thus die, corporate humanity did in fact die in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14). This became possible only as a result of the miraculous union of divinity and humanity that began at the Incarnation and lasted until the cross, where the world was judged (John 12:31a).

It was not until after God rested on the seventh day (notice it was God's Sabbath, not the Jew's) from His perfect, completed work of redeeming the world in His Son on "Good Friday", that humanity was reunited with Christ and transported to heaven in Him. For this reason, we are told that eternal life is in God's Son (1 John 5:11). This is further discussed at 2. In addition, see explanations 3 and 6 in Lesson 3's Supplement for more on the ethical issues surrounding Christ's death.

New sins are not heaped upon Christ every time a person sins and confesses them. If that were the case, Christ would have had to "offer Himself often" (Hebrews 9:25) and "suffer often since the foundation of the world." Instead, "once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26). This sacrifice refers to the cross of Calvary, where by the one sacrifice of Christ, He has put away sin3. When Hebrews 9:28 states that Christ will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation, it means that when He returns, He will not deal with the sin problem. On the contrary, as verse 28 also states, He appears a second time to those who eagerly wait for him. See further details related to the Second Coming of Christ in Lesson 12.

If it were true that new sins are transferred to Christ every time someone confesses a sin, that would also contradict Hebrews 10:12, which clearly states that after Christ "had offered one

3 Note, however, that a record of sin exists because there is an accuser of the brethren, who accuses day and night (Revelation 12:10). The vindication of God's saints is discussed in Lesson 21. In addition, God's sanctuary must be cleansed to remove all remnants of sin that defile it (see Lesson 22).

Original supplement page 8

sacrifice for sins forever, (He) sat down at the right hand of God." If new sins had to be transferred to Christ every time someone confessed a sin, it would be too late for us in the 21st Century, because where there is already remission of sins (in that one sacrifice), there is "no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:17, 18). Since we were not yet born, our sins would not have met the deadline for sin-bearing. On the contrary, by assuming humanity (as the Second Adam - see Lesson 3 Supplement), Christ bore every sin of every individual, repentant or unrepentant, past, present, and future, on the cross.

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Why then are sins confessed? For two main reasons: First, in order for us to receive the imputed righteousness of Christ, we need to acknowledge our utter sinfulness. If we attempt to be justified by our good works and our lawkeeping (even though this is impossible - Romans 3:20), we essentially say that we have no sin, and we deceive ourselves (1 John 1:8). On the contrary, "If we confess our sins (that is our sinfulness as well as transgressions of the law), He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The second reason for confessing our sins is that since we were present in the humanity that Christ assumed (see explanations 3 and 6 in the supplemental material at Lesson 3), we recognize that our sins contributed to Christ's death on the cross. Thus, we confess our sins because of our relationship to Christ under grace.

Confession of our sins within a relationship is altogether different than confession under the law. Israel attempted this latter method and failed. See Question 19 of Lesson 10 and the other questions leading up to that one. If we attempt that method, we too will fail. And in the process, we will be robbed of the joy of our salvation.

Like a husband who confesses his shortcomings (sins) to his beloved wife (because he loves her), or as James instructs us to confess our trespasses (or sins) to one another (James 5:16), we are to confess our sins to Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us (Ephesians 5:2). We are to ask then for His abiding presence in our lives, that we may bear much fruit, and thereby glorify God (John 15:5, 8). These are words within a loving relationship, whereby we experience Jesus Christ as our personal Savior.

We are therefore not lost every time we fall, and then rejustified every time we confess our sins. It has been stated that the only sin that is not forgiven is the sin that is not confessed. On the contrary, the Bible speaks of only one sin that is unpardonable, which is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:28, 29). It is the ultimate, deliberate, and willful rejection of salvation in

Original supplement page 9

Christ, of which the Holy Spirit convicts the world (John 16:8), which leaves no other way to be saved (Acts 4:12). "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life (pardon full and complete); and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36). To reject Christ is therefore the only unpardonable sin.

As believers, we reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in active faith (Romans 6:11). This is what it means to repent. Our minds are renewed, however no change has taken place in our bodies, which puts the renewed mind and the flesh at odds with each other. Therefore, as we walk in the Spirit our bodies become the place of sacrifice (Romans 12:1, 2; Colossians 3:5).

2 - The Bronze Laver

Also located in the eastern square of the court is the bronze laver, which contained water for washing. This is where the priests washed their hands and feet whenever they ministered in the tabernacle or when they came near the altar of burnt offering (Exodus 30:19, 20). This was the last place the priests went before entering the tabernacle, which represents heaven. If they did not wash, they would die (Exodus 30:21). This signified the need to be cleansed prior to entering the western square of the court (heaven).

Soon after Jesus' baptism, He went to Jerusalem during the Passover. When He arrived, He found that the temple had been defiled, and with great authority, He cleansed the temple (John 2:13-16). He then related that cleansing to the cleansing of the human temple in Him (John 2:19, 21). What He was referring to was the washing of humanity in His resurrection (John 2:22).

In the humanity of Jesus Christ (Lesson 3), our corporate humanity that needed redeeming was cleansed. In Christ, man was saved according to God's mercy through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4, 5). In the context of believers being able to enter the holiest (i.e., the very presence of God), through the humanity of Christ (Hebrews 10:19, 20), we are told that we can draw near with full assurance of faith. Why? Because our hearts have been sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies have been washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22). Where did this take place? In Christ, at the resurrection.

In the resurrection, we were deemed "fit in Him" to be transported into heaven. And in Him, we were made to (and now) sit. The old life of Adam died and remained in the grave. In exchange, we

Original supplement page 10

were given the life of Christ in the resurrection (Ephesians 2:4-6). The washing in the watery grave of baptism symbolizes what the Holy Spirit does in the lives of all believers: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13), which is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). We enter the church by (a proclamation of) faith, i.e., we accept our death in Christ, which was a death to sin (Romans 6:10), as our death. This is symbolized by our submersion under the baptismal waters. In exchange, we accept the life of Christ, made available in the resurrection through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18). This is symbolized by our coming up out of the baptismal waters. The truth of baptism, therefore, represents our exodus from this world and our entrance into the kingdom of God. It is our laver experience.

Walking Through the Western Courtyard

To recap, the western square ministry of the Levitical priests prefigured the heavenly ministry of Jesus Christ upon His ascension to heaven after the resurrection. Unlike His earthly mission, which included the reconciliation of the entire human race to God, Christ's heavenly ministry is that of a priest, i.e., representing the people to God. Christ can present as "perfect in Him" (Colossians 1:28) only those who have received the gift of His righteousness, which qualifies them for heaven (Romans 5:17).

3 - The Outer Veil

The outer veil of the sanctuary was the dividing line between the eastern and western halves of the court. If extended north and south to the surrounding linen walls in a straight line, this bisection of the court would be completely visible. As previously discussed, only priests, who were types of Christ, could enter the western square of the court, which represented heaven. Upon entering within the outer veil, Levitical priests found themselves in the first compartment of the tabernacle, called the Holy Place. It was there that they performed their daily ministry. Upon His ascension, Christ began the first phase (daily intercession) of His two-phased, priestly ministry. Jesus Christ, the true High Priest, "ever lives to make intercession for us" (Hebrews 7:25). He mediates on behalf of repentant sinners by continually applying the merits of His sinless life and sacrificial death (i.e., what He accomplished in His earthly mission) on their behalf. As soon as a believer is justified by faith (See Lesson 6), all that is true of him in Christ is credited, or imputed, to him subjectively

Original supplement page 11

(personally). Because of Christ's continual intercession, he remains an adopted child (Galatians 4:5), without interruption, as long as his faith endures (Matthew 24:13).

4 - The Table of Showbread

On the Table of Showbread was, of course, the showbread or "bread of the presence." Because it was on the table before the Lord always (Exodus 25:30), it was considered to be part of the daily service.

Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven," and "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no (eternal) life in you" John 6:51, 53.

We are to thus partake of, or experience, the life (bread) and death (blood) of Christ, which is our obedience to the gospel, as previously mentioned in the eastern square overview. This is summarized nicely in 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread." Similarly, Galatians 2:20 states, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me…"

5 - The Lampstand

How is it that we can experience the life (bread) and death (blood) of Christ, as discussed in 4? First, it was imperative that Christ leave earth and return to His Father in heaven. Jesus said, "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7). He then defined the Helper as the Spirit of truth (or Holy Spirit) in John 16:13. The Holy Spirit was to be with us continually. Jesus appropriately said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Through the Holy Spirit, we are convicted that we are falling short of the glory of God, which is codified in His law (Romans 3:20, 23). In addition to convicting us of sin, the Holy Spirit convicts our hearts of what God did to us in Christ, how He rewrote our history unto righteousness (John 16:8-10). See explanations 3-6 in the supplemental material at Lesson 3.

With heartfelt appreciation for what Christ did in reconciling us

Original supplement page 12

to the Father, despite our ungodly, sinful condition (Romans 5:6, 8), we gladly choose to partake of the body and blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit then imparts to every humble believer the life of Christ. As we thus walk in the Spirit, we participate in Christ. In the context of the fruit of the Spirit, Paul says, "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh (participating in His blood) with its passions and desires. If we live (participating in His body) in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:24, 25).

The article in the Holy Place that encapsulated all this was the golden, 7-branched lampstand (Exodus 25:31- 37). Each of its lamps was filled nightly by Aaron and his Levitical descendants with pure olive oil, to cause the lamp to burn continually (Exodus 27:20, 21).

The lampstand also emitted light from its burning oil. As long as Jesus was in the world, He was the light of the world (John 9:5). Jesus called His plurality of believers the light (singular) of the world, referring to when His life (singular) was to be multiplied throughout the body of Christ. When His life was first poured out upon the believers at the Day of Pentecost, tongues of fire, as though from the

Golden Lampstand, sat upon each of them as they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3, 4). Oil was also used to refer to the Holy Spirit in the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13).

6 - The Altar of Incense

While the golden altar was located within the Holy Place directly in front of the inner veil (7) (Exodus 30:1-6), it was considered as belonging to the Most Holy Place (Hebrews 9:3, 4). Sweet incense was burned upon this altar every morning and at twilight, and was thus referred to as a "perpetual incense before the Lord" (Exodus 30:7, 8). In addition to incense being burned on the altar, blood was applied to the horns of the altar by the priest after certain sacrifices (e.g., Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 4:18).

In the book of Revelation, an angel is seen at the Altar of Incense and given incense to offer with the prayers of the saints, that they may ascend before God together (Revelation 8:3, 4). Thus, it is shown that only as the prayers of the saints are mixed with the merits of Christ's righteousness may our worship be acceptable to God. This allows no room for self-righteousness, but for one who worships God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). For an explanation of the application of the blood to the horns of the altar, see the

Original supplement page 13

significance of the sprinkling of blood before the veil in 7...

7 - The Inner Veil

The Holy and Most Holy Places of the earthly sanctuary were separated by the inner veil. This was to keep a protective barrier between the priests who ministered daily in the sanctuary, and who were sinful men, from the direct presence of God, which appeared in a cloud above the mercy seat of the ark in the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:2). Had they been exposed to God directly, they would have been destroyed, for the glory of God is as a consuming fire (Exodus 24:17; Hebrews 12:29).

Therefore, whenever the priests performed the daily application of blood from the sacrifices of the eastern court, the closest they could get to the mercy seat, whereupon mercy was obtained, was before the veil in the Holy Place (Leviticus 4:17, 18). While they were only about 5 cubits (less than 10 feet) away from the mercy seat, the best they could do was to look in the direction of the mercy seat by faith, lest they die.

As soon as Jesus died on the cross, reconciliation to God (and also to His holy law, which is a transcript of His character) became an historical event (Romans 5:10). The stark evidence of this reconciliation was manifested within the sanctuary at the hour of the evening service. The inner veil that separated the Holy from the Most Holy Place was immediately torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:50, 51). Thus, the barrier between sinful man and a holy God was removed in Christ.

We now have direct access to God through our heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ. There is now no need to go through another human priest, because we can have "boldness to enter the holiest (or Most Holy Place) by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh (Hebrews 10:19, 20). This does not preclude the need to cleanse God's sanctuary - see Lesson 22. There is one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). We can now come directly to God as priests through Christ (Revelation 1:5, 6).

8 - The Ark of the Covenant

At the very center of the western square of the Courtyard was the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Ten Commandments (Hebrews 9:4), or law of God, that condemns the world

Original supplement page 14

universally (Romans 3:19). Fortunately, above the ark was the mercy seat (Hebrews 9:5).

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Only once a year, on the annual Day of Atonement, could the high priest enter into the Most Holy Place. Before he did, however, he had to offer a bull as a sin offering for himself and make atonement for himself and his house (Leviticus 16:6). He also had to bring incense within the veil before the presence of the Lord, that it should provide some barrier between him and the direct presence of God. He did this before sprinkling blood on the mercy seat for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance (Leviticus 16:12-14; Hebrews 9:7).

While the priest's entering into God's presence was a very real event, the daily and yearly sacrifices with their application of blood before the veil (daily) and on the mercy seat (yearly) never actually took away sin (Hebrews 10:1, 4, 11). The Holy Spirit indicated that "the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing" (Heb 9:8).

"But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place (heaven) once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11, 12).

However, after Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins forever, He sat down at the right hand of God…for by one offering He has perfected (past tense) forever those who are being sanctified (Hebrews 10:12, 14).

While the Ten Commandments (which were contained in the ark) condemn the whole world (Romans 3:19), all the positive and negative demands of the law were met in Christ. There is therefore no

condemnation to the person who has subjectively joined himself to the body of Christ (Romans 8:1). See Lesson 3 Supplement, Item 5, also Lesson 7.

See Lesson 21 to see how Jesus defends the saints as our Advocate in the Pre-Advent Judgment. See Lesson 22 to see what Jesus has yet to accomplish in order to bring sin to its ultimate end. The solemn service that symbolized this cleansing process took place on the Day of Atonement.

My Response to Lesson 20 & Supplement

• The sanctuary was given by God to the Jews as a visual aid of the whole plan of salvation in Christ. Since it reveals both Christ's earthly mission (the gospel) as well as His heavenly, priestly ministry, do you believe it is still relevant to us as Christians?

Response: _____