

Preparation

As we complete our first month of devotions, let's all examine ourselves and our walk with Christ. Have we learned anything? Has God revealed Himself to us in a new way? Have we found encouragement? God tells us in Isaiah 55:11 that his word "shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Oftentimes, it seems as though we can make it easily through the first couple weeks of reading through the Bible. However, as we continue our journey, we tend to get too "busy". Or perhaps, we lose sight of the purpose of reading in the first place. If we find ourselves in a place where we don't feel like we're "getting anything", let's be encouraged to not give up just yet. God has promised that His word would not return unto Him void. It may be this week that your eyes are opened to some amazing truth through this treasure God has given us.

In preparation of the week, set some time aside today for prayer. Of course, the Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that we should "Pray without ceasing". However, let's pray for each other as many are on this journey through the word of God. Furthermore, pray as David prayed in Psalm 119:18 for God to "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." As Satan deceived Eve in the garden, he would love nothing more than to cause you to question the word of God and your purpose in reading it. Prayer is essential to a proper relationship with God and His written word. Again, be encouraged that you hold God's word and mind on all matters of faith and practice. Understand that the purpose of our pursuit is to "Be ye holy" (1 Peter 1:16). We'll find that the more we get into the Book; the Book will get into us. That, in turn, will make us the clean and holy vessels that God desires us to be (Psalm 119:11; John 15:3).

Monday – January 30, 2017

TODAY'S READING: EXODUS 25-28

OVERVIEW:

God details His plans for the tabernacle; God details His plans for the High Priest's coverings.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Here the Divine Architect (Designer and Builder of the entire universe) takes on His second building project through man. His first, the Ark, was a vessel that carried man through the flood. The second, a tabernacle, is a way for God to be carried by man through the desert. God's second building project is a tent, but in actuality, it is far, far more.

The blueprint is SIMPLE – made from materials available to the children of Israel in the desert – gold, silver and brass (unintentional gifts from the Egyptians), fine linen, animal skins, wood, oil, incense and precious stones. The blueprint is SYMBOLIC – absolutely every detail is a portrait of God's character, how He desires to dwell with us, and how we can approach Him.

The tabernacle is to be PRECIOUS. God's art demands the very best workmanship available to the Israelites – sewing, carving, goldsmithing, baking, dying. The tabernacle is to be PORTABLE. God has His people on the move and His design allows the Israelites to keep Him at the center of their lives while they move on to the Promised Land.

Entire books have been written about the numerous pictures drawn by God in this design. Like any great art, the more you look, the more you see.

Historically, God designed this tabernacle because He wanted to dwell and commune with His people (Ex. 25:8, 22). Practically, God designed the record of it for all history to know how we can dwell in Him (I John 4:12-13; Hebrews 9:1-14).

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In the ARK OF THE COVENANT – wood overlaid by pure gold (wood representing His humanity and gold representing His deity – Ex. 25:10-11 (Phil. 2:6-8).

In the MERCY SEAT – Ex. 25:17 (Rom. 3:24-25 – Note that the word “propitiation” in Rom. 3:25 is translated “mercy seat” in Heb. 9:5)

In the TABLE OF SHEWBREAD – Ex. 25:23-30 (Jesus is the Bread of Life: John 6:33, 35, 48, 51). In the CANDLESTICK – Ex. 25:31 (Jesus is the Light: John 1:4-9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46)

In the VEIL – Ex. 26:30-37 (Representing the body of Christ which was torn to bring us to God: Mark 15:38; Hebrews 10:20)

Through the HIGH PRIEST and all of his CLOTHING – Ex. 28:1-43 (Jesus is our High Priest: Heb. 2:17; 3:1)

Tuesday – January 31, 2017

TODAY'S READING: EXODUS 29-32

OVERVIEW:

God gives instruction on the consecration of the priests; God explains how the tabernacle is to operate; God appoints specific men to oversee the building of the tabernacle; God emphasizes the Sabbath day; Israel sins against God; Moses intercedes for Israel.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

For 40 days (since the end of Ex. 24) Moses has been back on Mount Sinai receiving explicit direction from God. Israel had just faithfully promised, “*All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.*” (Ex. 24:3) What could be better? God’s presence was apparent; God was actively working with Israel; Moses was at that very moment on the mount hearing from God.

BUT –(Gen. 4:7) “*Sin lieth at the door.*” Aaron, (the High Priest about whom God was giving detailed instructions on how he would picture our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ) bows to the pressures of the people, builds a false god and leads Israel in the worship of it; dancing about it naked and praising it for delivering them from Egypt. How could they be so weak? Sound like anybody you know? AND –Then comes the lame cover up (Ex. 32:24), where when confronted with his sin, Aaron explains that he simply threw the gold into the fire and out popped this golden calf! That “miracle” having taken place, the only natural thing was to then to set it in front of the people, so they could dance around it and party the day away in sensual lust.

Sadly, the wonderful things that God had planned for His people were being permanently polluted by them as He spoke (Acts 7:41). While God is painting a beautiful picture of how His people could exemplify His holiness and mercy, Israel is painting the dreadful portrait of how we so often react to His love (I Corinthians 10:1-10).

Make special note that this great sin of Israel is also used in Steven’s sermon in Acts 7:41 to illustrate how we so blatantly reject God’s perfect plan.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through God's plan for Aaron the HIGH PRIEST. Ex.29 (Hebrews 7:26 - 8:1)

Through the ONCE-A-YEAR SACRIFICE FOR ATONEMENT. Ex. 30:10 (Rom. 6:10, Hebrews 7:27, 9:7, 9:12, 10:10)

Wednesday – February 1, 2017

TODAY'S READING: EXODUS 33-36

OVERVIEW:

God commands the people to go to Canaan; Moses asks God to reestablish His presence with Israel; God rewrites the tables of stone that Moses had broken; God reaffirms His special relationship with Israel; Moses reveals the tabernacle plans and the people respond obediently.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

What is God to do with a “stiffnecked” people? (Ex. 32:9, 33:3, 5, 34:9) He delivers them, He protects them, He provides for them, but still they are dead set on living like the world. God is wroth, considering consuming them (Ex. 32:10, 33:3, 5) and building His people up again through Moses, but Moses begs God for His presence once more. This brush with extinction, Moses prays, will be a wake-up call to God’s people. God offers to send His Angel to lead them, but Moses pleads for the actual personal presence of God (Ex. 32:15). The “insight” here is as simple as a look in the mirror (II Chron. 30:8, Acts 7:51).

With God’s presence restored, the admonitions from God are unchanged, *“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God”* (Ex. 34:14). Paul was jealous in this same way in II Corinthians 11:2.

God’s plan for the tabernacle, delivered to the children of Israel in chapter 35, is basically a repeat of chapters 25 – 31 with one incredible difference. While God’s plan was so very specific (it almost sounds stifling!), the execution of the plan employs the willing and wise-hearted participation of God’s people. Here they apply their skill, their cunning and their curious works (Ex. 35:32, 33, 35). The work of God drew on all their talents and, filled with God’s wisdom, they were enthused to do it; so much so that they almost went overboard. (Ex. 36:7).

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In the TABERNACLE – Ex. 35 (Heb. 9:1-14). The SINGLE DOOR into the tabernacle – Ex. 35:15 (John 10: 1, 2, 7, 9). The HOLY OF HOLIES into which only the High Priest could enter – Ex. 35:19 (Hebrews 9:12)

Thursday – February 2, 2017

TODAY S READING: EXODUS 37-40

OVERVIEW: The tabernacle is completed and an inventory is taken; God commands Moses to set up the tabernacle; God's presence fills the tabernacle.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

In chapters 37 and 38, God prompts Moses to once again list and describe the seven pieces of furniture to be placed in the tabernacle. **1) The Brazen Altar 2) The Brazen Laver 3) The Table of Shewbread 4) The Candlestick 5) The Altar of Incense 6) The Ark 7) The Mercy Seat.**

John says of the Lord Jesus Christ, *And the Word was made flesh and dwelt (literally, tabernacled) among us.* It is amazing to observe the order of the furniture found in the tabernacle, and the order of the Gospel of John. It is as if the Holy Spirit were leading us, in the same exact order as the furniture was to be placed in the tabernacle, to the incredible spiritual realities pictured by the furniture in the tabernacle.

He begins by leading us to the Brazen Altar of Sacrifice, as twice in John chapter one He urges us to *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world* (John 1:29,46).

We are then taken to the Laver in John 3:5 where the Spirit of God records, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Moving further into the Gospel of John (and into the tabernacle), the Spirit leads us in chapters 4-6 to the food and drink of the Table of Shewbread, as Christ is presented as Living Water and Living Bread.

In John 8 and 9 we are taken to the Golden Candlestick as twice Jesus proclaims, *I am the Light of the world, and he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

In John 14-16, the Spirit of God brings us as it were, to the Altar of Incense, as Jesus teaches us to pray in His name —the name that is to the Father a sweet smelling savor.

Then in John 17 we are taken beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies to behold our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, making intercession for us in the presence of God. Here, Christ is seen not only as our High Priest, but as the Ark and the Mercy Seat through whom we have found access and acceptance with His Father and God. Jesus said in John 20:17, *I ascend unto my Father, and YOUR Father; and to my God, and YOUR God.*

Finally in Exodus 39-30, everything having been made according to the Divine Pattern was now to be filled with the Divine Glory. Coincidentally, the Gospel of John closes with Jesus breathing on His disciples saying, « *Receive ye the Holy Ghost* »(John 20:22).

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In the HIGH PRIEST and his BREASTPLATE, who bears the names of Gods people before the presence of God –Ex. 39:8-21 (Heb. 9:11; 10:19-22)

In the FOUR COLORS as representing the FOUR GOSPELS –Ex. 38:18, 23: 39:2, 3,5,8, 24, 29

Purple (Matthew) –Christ presented as the King.

Scarlet (Mark) Christ presented as the Suffering Servant.

White (Luke) Christ presented as the sinless Man.

Blue (John) Christ presented as the Son of God come down from heaven.

Friday – February 3, 2017

TODAY'S READING: Leviticus 1-5

OVERVIEW: The burnt offering; the meat (meal, grain) offering; the peace offering; the sin offering; the trespass offering.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS: Chapters 1-5 describe five types of sacrifices, all of which are a prophetic picture of both Jesus Christ and New Testament believers.

Chapter 1: The Burnt Offering. This offering represents the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As Believers, we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God (Romans 12:1). Note that the head and fat of the animal is laid upon the wood (verse 8), a picture of you and I laying our plans, our wills, and our treasures upon the cross of Christ (Luke 9:23). Notice also that the inside and the legs are washed in water (verse 9), representing our “inner man” (Ephesians 3:16) and our “walk” (Colossians 1:10) being washed with the water of the word of God (Ephesians 5:26–27).

Chapter 2: The Meat (meal, grain) Offering. This is the only bloodless sacrifice. It represents the sinless life of Jesus Christ. The remnant of this offering was given to Aaron’s sons (verse 10) picturing Christ’s righteousness given to believers (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Chapter 3: The Peace Offering. This offering represents the peace which Jesus Christ purchased for us with His own precious blood (Colossians 1:20). Note that the kidney, caul and liver were taken away. These organs filter out poisonous chemicals. Through this sacrifice, God tells us that we have permanent genuine peace with Him through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4: The Sin Offering. This offering reveals how Jesus Christ has given believers victory over our sinful nature, the flesh. The sin referred to here is “ignorant sin”, meaning sin that mysteriously permeates our flesh; sin that is so deeply rooted that we are sometimes unconscious of it (Psalm 19:12; 90:8; 139:23-24; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 7). Note that the whole body of the bullock (an ox or horned cow) is taken outside of the camp and burned. Our flesh is of no value or use to God and must therefore, but “put off” and “mortified” (Colossians 3:5-17; Romans 6:1-23).

Chapter 5: The Trespass Offering. This offering represents Christ’s victory

over specific individual sins, also called trespasses. This is the only sacrifice associated with money (verse 15). Truly, “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Thanks be to God, Jesus Christ has paid the price for our sins with His precious blood (Acts 20:28).

Levitcus is a book of violence and blood. In fact, the word “offering” occurs 387 times, and the word “blood” appears 88 times. Why would a loving God require such horrible violence? Several reasons are obvious: first, without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sins (Hebrews 9:22); second, God doesn’t want us to forget the horrible consequences of sin (James 1:15); third, God wants us to know that He loved us so much that He voluntarily (Levitcus 1:3; Romans 5:8) subjected His Son to bloody violence for the price of our sin; fourth, we are in a violent war with our flesh (Galatians 5:17); finally, God desires to have every part of us, severally and wholly, and that can be very painful!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As our VOLUNTARY SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE (Levitcus 1 – burnt offering) who lived a sinless life (Levitcus 2 – meat offering) and purchased peace with God (Levitcus 3 – peace offering) by paying the price for our sins (Levitcus 4 – trespass offering) and giving us victory over our flesh (Levitcus 5 – sin offering).

Saturday – February 4, 2017

Reflection

In reflecting back over the week of reading, let's be sure we grasp the concept of the tabernacle. God preserved much detail concerning the implementation of not only the tabernacle, but of the sacrifices that should be offered as well. Remember that God's purpose for the tabernacle was to have a dwelling place with man. God desired to reconcile the relationship He had with Adam in the garden before man sinned (Genesis 3:8). Through comparing scripture with scripture we understand that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). God is holy; He is pure. Therefore, He could not just visit with man as He did before sin entered this world, because light can have no fellowship with darkness. The tabernacle provided the opportunity for God to rekindle His relationship with man.

Through reading of the meticulous details of the tabernacle, what should stand out to us is that the tabernacle was made of the willful offerings of the children of Israel. The Bible tells us in Exodus 25:2 "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering." It should serve as a reminder to us that God will not force a relationship with Himself on anyone. God desires to be chosen and pursued willfully. Through their willful offering, however, they were able to build a tabernacle for God to come into them and commune with them. They were able to have a place where they could sacrifice an offering to cover their sins. The tabernacle truly paints a picture of the gospel and the opportunity our Lord Jesus Christ provided in offering Himself as a sacrifice and then providing, to those who willfully receive Him, the ability to have a personal relationship with God the Father as a son of God (John 1:12).

As we began the Book of Leviticus, we began to see that much detailed emphasis was placed on the burnt offerings the nation of Israel were required to offer. Each offering served a unique purpose. What we should further note is the fact that we'll find, through these offerings, God was never fully pleased. We can understand through scripture that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) and that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). However, we also understand that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). Again praise be to God that He provided "himself a lamb

for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:8). Because of this "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). If for nothing else, we can find reason of joy and praise through each page we read through the Book of Leviticus that we do not have to "year by year"

bring another sacrifice before God, temporarily atoning for our sins. Our Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself "once" and "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" interceding daily on our behalf. Amen. Amen. Amen. We truly serve an amazing God who is deserving of all glory, honour, and praise.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Exodus 25:8 "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."

Exodus 32:8 "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

Exodus 34:6 "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"

Exodus 39:32 "Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they."

Leviticus 1:2 "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock."