



FEED MY SHEEP

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Your Salvation Is Pictured in The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

We shall continue our survey of the types and shadows of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, particularly as it portrays the Plan of Salvation. In the previous issue, we stated that salvation is a three-phase process: of spirit, soul and body. These three phases are pictured in three major areas of the Tabernacle: the Outer Court, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies). The history of Israel from their bondage in Egypt to their entrance into the Promised Land symbolizes the path of salvation for Everyman.

We showed how that before each person begins his trek back to the Father, he is in a condition of spiritual death. This corresponds on the chart on page 3 to the Outer Darkness of Egypt. When one is dead, there is nothing he can do for himself; hence, it is God who takes the initiative.

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

The Holy Spirit acts upon the spirit of a person to cause him to seek spiritual things. His spirit has then been made alive (“quickened”) and he begins his journey of salvation. He enters the Outer Court and after passing through its various steps, he has completed phase one of salvation. He has been *justified* by faith in the blood of the Lamb (Jesus Christ). His spirit has been saved. Many a Christian never progress beyond the various substages in phase one, the Passover realm. But some are predestinated to go on into phase two, the Holy Place, at this time.

Our Christian life after our justification is not merely to be one in which we become fire insurance salesmen for God, trying to get others “saved” from alleged “hellfire.” In the Holy Place phase, we undergo the process of *sanctification*. To sanctify means to make holy. Holiness is defined by God’s laws: His commandments, statutes and judgments. Our sanctification consists in our learning to

hear God’s voice. But more than that, in the Hebrew, the word translated “hearing” implies obedience. It is obvious that one cannot be obedient if one does not hear what God is saying and commanding. Thus *the essence of the realm of Pentecost is hearing God’s voice and being obedient*.

But note well: we are not saying that we earn our salvation by our works of obedience to God’s law. Salvation is not earned; it is a free gift—every step of The Way. Nonetheless, in the process of our sanctification, we strive to obey for several reasons: (1) because He first loved us, (2) because He has already given us the gift of salvation, and we therefore desire to please Him by our obedience to His Word, and (3) while salvation itself is a free gift, the rewards in the kingdom of heaven are according to our works. (Mat. 5:19 *et al.*) Paul strove for the high calling. (Phi. 3:14) He knew he already had salvation. He wanted the rewards associated with the high calling.

Nationally, because the children of Israel feared to draw near to the fire of God on Mt. Sinai, they (as a corporate body) experienced the leading of God primarily in an external form as a pillar of fire. Throughout the Old Testament, the Spirit of God is often said to “come upon” people, but seldom in the OT is the Holy Spirit ever spoken of as being permanently “within” a person. The leading and presence of God was primarily external during the Age of Passover. The Passover Age lasted from the exodus from Egypt until Pentecost Day in A.D. 33. Typologically, it is represented as the Outer Court in the geometry of the Tabernacle.

When a new age dawned with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the New Testament church was birthed on Pentecost in 33 A.D., those who were called went on to experience the “tongues of fire” above

their heads. Note the progression: In the Passover Age, the flames of the fire of God were enormous. They engulfed and scorched the top of the earth (the mountain called Sinai). It was accompanied by very loud thundering and noise. The earth shook. The people feared and ran afar off.

When the Age of Pentecost (which most Christians call “the Church Age”) commenced, the scale of magnitude was reduced greatly but the power and presence of God went internal. (It’s an “inside job.”) The flame was now just a small, cloven tongue of fire manifesting on the top of the “earth” (the bodies) of the assembled disciples. They were not afraid. They subsequently discovered that if they embraced the fire of God, it did not kill them physically. But it did change them. It “shook their earth.” It “burned” their “flesh,” their carnal nature.

Instead of thundering noise as heard all over the region of Mt. Sinai, they heard only “a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” ...not even the whole neighborhood, only the house where they were gathering. (Acts 2:2)

The cloven tongues of fire indicated the Presence of God within their minds and hearts. The Holy Spirit (God) was now with his people individually and internally. This was a Pentecostal anointing.

Ephesians 1:13 ... after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, ...

Under this anointing the disciples in the upper room were given spiritual gifts which are today commonly called charismatic gifts. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 12-14.) They were given as a small sample, a down payment, the “earnest” of what would come under a Feast of Tabernacles anointing (phase three of salvation) ...the redemption of the body into immortality.

Many of those called “Pentecostal” or “charismatic” today seem to have the idea that the essence of Pentecost is speaking, as in speaking in tongues. While speaking in tongues is one of the charismatic gifts, it is neither the primary gift, nor the most important one. (1 Cor. 12:28, 31; 13:1; 14:1-6, 18, 19.)

Since the Holy Place represents the 40 years of wilderness wandering by Israel, the period of their sanctification, let us ask ourselves: what was its purpose? Was it not a period of testing, trials and tribulations as Israel strove to fol-

low God (the pillar of fire) and be obedient to His voice? Speaking in tongues was non-existent as far as we know. This gift was given on the Day of Pentecost for the purpose of spreading the Gospel to those who didn’t know the native language of the disciples. While a “prayer language” may have its place, surely it is clear that the major purpose of the Pentecost phase is hearing and obedience to the voice of God.

The Holy Place-Pentecost phase concerns the salvation of our soul, as opposed to our spirit’s salvation which has already been accomplished at this point. The soul is our “self,” our personality. It, too, is trichotomous in nature, consisting of mind, will and emotions. The mind concerns our intellect and our thinking process. The will is our desires, intents and faculties of judgment and decision-making. Emotions are our feelings, as distinguished from the cognitive and volitional aspects of our consciousness.

Therefore the salvation of our soul consists of its retraining. By following the leading of the Spirit (i.e., by obedience to God, His commandments, statutes and judgments), we learn to *think* properly, to *desire* righteousness and *judge* correctly, and to *emote* righteously (e.g., to love God with all our heart...). This is our process of sanctification. Doing the above gradually makes us holy. There may be many who have instantaneous conversions (phase one salvation), but no one is instantaneously sanctified completely. It is a gradual process. Moreover, since we are yet in mortal bodies, we are incapable of perfect obedience. Nevertheless, as Paul did, we should all strive for the highest rewards.

As we notice on the chart, in the physical structure of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, there were three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place: the Table of Showbread, the Golden Lampstand and the Golden Altar.

The rituals associated with them were, of course, all types and shadows on the various levels of meanings which we outlined on page 1 of the previous FMS. On the individual Christian level, they represent three subparts to phase two of our salvation.

Since we are merely surveying the Plan of Salvation in FMS, we shall only present brief meanings of these three pieces.¹ The Table of Showbread represents Christ as the Bread of Life. Jesus Christ is the Word of God made flesh. Therefore, to partake of the Showbread is to “eat” of the Bread of Life, which in turn means to ingest and be nourished by the Scriptures.

The Golden Lampstand (Heb.: *menorah*) symbolizes Christ and His church as the Light of the World. The oil which fueled the lamps represents the Holy Spirit. Just as the Golden Lampstand gave light to the Showbread in the Holy Place, so it is the Holy Spirit which illuminates our understanding of the Scriptures (the Bread).

The Golden Altar was an altar of incense. No blood offerings were ever to be made there. This altar represents a place of intercession. Furthermore, the sweet-smelling odors of incense symbolize the prayers of the saints.

Does this mean that Christians still in the Outer Court phase of their salvation cannot pray or study the Word or give light to others? No, not at all. It is simply a matter of degree. The Holy Place is closer to the Holy of Holies and therefore closer to God. Yes, Christians in the Outer Court can and do and should pray. But their prayers are generally of an immature nature. Everybody starts as a spiritual babe. Their prayer life is not as advanced or deep as the person in the Holy Place.

And of course, these Outer Court Christians do read and study the Scriptures. Their understanding is also led by the Holy Spirit, but they are generally nourished at this point on the milk of the Word, not the filet mignon. They must start on the milk. They would gag on the meat. They must be nourished for a time on the basics of the Bible.

Then, it follows that since their knowledge is only just beginning, then the light they are able to show to the world is a penlight compared to the laser light of a more mature Christian. It is a very common occurrence that the new “baby” Christian is so full of zeal and love for the Lord over his initial salvation (which at this point he thinks is all there is to it), that he goes out “witnessing” to everybody he meets. Due to his spiritual immaturity, he often “turns people off” or gets in over his head in not having “an answer for every man that asketh you...” (1 Pet 3:15). Many grow out of it. Nonetheless, we all know people who remain in this mode and mindset their entire lives.

Remembering the original Tabernacle in the Wilder-

ness, we recall that only priests could enter the Holy Place. Before entering, they were to wash at the Laver. Today, one who believes himself to be in the Pentecost realm and who has not been water-baptized is fooling himself. He has skipped a step in the Plan of Salvation. There are no shortcuts. It is a narrow way. Jesus Christ is pictured in every step along the way: the Brazen Altar, the Laver, the Table of Showbread, etc. Jesus is the only way. The goal is to enter the Most Holy Place and commune with the Father. Jesus said:

John 14:6 ...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The Levitical priesthood with all its blood sacrifices was done away with in Jesus Christ. He is the new High Priest under a (re-)new(ed) order: the order of Melchizedek. Thus, in the New Testament times, all who progress on into the Holy Place (both males and females) are priests after the order of Melchizedek.

Of all who have ever lived, no one will complete phase two of their salvation before their death — except that very highly privileged group of Overcomers who are alive at the Second Coming of the Lord. They alone of the living (not all Christians, as most teach) will be translated from mortality to immortality and incorruptibility. What about the rest of us who die on the path? Not to worry.

Phi. 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it ...

Did God begin the process of salvation in you? Then He *will* finish it — for most of us, that means after the resurrection.

Heb. 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...

You and I may or may not be awarded the great blessings of the High Calling, but if not, we also will ultimately experience complete salvation. At some point, God will call us forth from the grave and we will be awarded our vivified body which will radiate with the glory of God. This is the *glorification* phase of salvation. It occurs in the Most Holy Place. We will then bask in the complete and mutual love with the Father for all eternity.

ENDNOTE

1. In our taped Bible study series on the Tabernacle, we have spent about two hours on each of these three items. See the tape list we enclosed with the FMS last month.

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