

WEEK 11 — OUTLINE

The Angel of Jehovah for His People to Take Possession of the Promised Land

Scripture Reading: Exo. 23:20-33

« DAY 1 »

I. The title the Angel of Jehovah in Exodus 3:2 refers mainly to Christ, the Son of God, as the One sent by God (cf. John 8:42) to save His people from their situation of suffering (cf. Judg. 6:12-22; 13:3-22):

- A. According to Exodus 3:2 and 6, the Angel of Jehovah, the sent One, was Jehovah Himself, the sending One (cf. Zech. 2:6-11), and Jehovah is the Triune God (Exo. 3:6, 15).
- B. For the purpose of calling and sending Moses, God, the sending One, appeared to him as the sent One (cf. John 20:21; Acts 7:30-31).

II. “The Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them” (Exo. 14:19):

- A. The Angel of God in Exodus 14:19 is the Angel of Jehovah who called Moses; the Angel of Jehovah is Christ as God’s sent One (3:2, 4).
- B. The fact that God’s sent One went before the camp of Israel indicates that Christ was the One who was leading the people.
- C. When the Angel of God moved, the pillar moved also, showing that the Angel and the pillar were one; Christ and the leading Spirit cannot be separated (John 14:17-20; 16:13; 2 Cor. 3:17; Rev. 5:6).

III. The Angel of Jehovah in Judges 2:1 is God Himself in His Divine Trinity serving His elect as a Servant (cf. Heb. 1:14):

- A. The embodiment of the Triune God is Christ, and Christ is the Angel of Jehovah, who took care of Israel as Jehovah in action in the Old Testament.
- B. For Christ to be the Angel of Jehovah means that God has appointed and commissioned Himself in His Divine Trinity to act in caring for His people.
- C. Because Israel did not act as a proper wife, the very Jehovah who was the Husband, the Head, and the King of Israel became a Servant to His wife:
 - 1. He came to her not as a Husband, Head, or King but as the Angel of Jehovah, who was sent by Jehovah (Zech. 2:9-11).
 - 2. Since Israel did not regard Jehovah as the Head, He became a Servant to serve

her; His word to Israel in Judges 2:1-3 was not a rebuke or a command but the admonition of a servant.

« DAY 2 »

IV. Christ is the Angel of the covenant in Malachi 3:1:

- A. Christ's coming suddenly as the Angel of the covenant will be to execute upon Israel the covenant that He enacted through His death (Matt. 26:28).
- B. In His first coming Christ came in the way of an Angel, a serving one (cf. Heb. 1:14), to serve God in forming the new testament (Mark 10:45).
- C. When He established His table on the night in which He was betrayed, He enacted the new covenant (Luke 22:20), in which God is obligated to forgive our sins and to dispense Himself into our being to be our life, our law of life, and our everything as our inward content that we may live Him (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12).
- D. As the Angel of the covenant, Christ in resurrection executes the new covenant as its surety, making it real to us by assuring us that our sins have been forgiven and by dispensing the riches of the covenanted Triune God into us (7:22; Jer. 31:31-34).

« DAY 3 »

V. In the book of Revelation Christ is another Angel in His work in the divine administration (7:2; 8:3; 10:1, 5, 9; 18:1):

- A. In the book of Revelation He is called "another Angel," the unique, special Angel, because He is the One sent by God to carry out His economy.
- B. As another Angel, Christ takes care of God's people, both the sons of Israel and the believers:
 - 1. In 7:2-8 He takes care of the chosen remnant of Israel and is unveiled as another Angel in relation to "a hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel" (v. 4).
 - 2. In His work as another Angel, Christ takes care of the believers, the redeemed saints of the church, preserving them throughout all the tribulations (vv. 9-17).
 - 3. Christ as God's Angel controls the whole universe, directing the other angels to carry out God's judgment upon the earth (vv. 2-3).
- C. In 8:3-5 Christ as another Angel executes God's administration over the earth by ministering to God as the High Priest with the prayers of His saints:
 - 1. The incense altar (the golden altar) is the executing center of God's administration.
 - 2. The golden censer signifies the prayers of the saints (5:8), and the incense signifies

Christ with all His merit to be added to the saints' prayers.

3. When the prayers of the saints ascend to God with the incense of Christ, God carries out His administration (8:5):
 - a. God's administration needs the saints' prayers, which are their response to Christ's heavenly ministry; as we pray, He administers, and as He administers, we pray.
 - b. Christ first offers our prayers to God and then pours out God's answers; the pouring out of God's answers to our prayers equals God's universal administration.

« DAY 4 »

- D. In 10:1-2 Christ comes as another Angel to take possession of the sea and the land:
1. His having one foot on the sea and the other on the land signifies that He is coming to take possession of the whole earth (v. 2b).
 2. Although the earth and the sea have been usurped by God's enemy, one day Christ will no longer tolerate this usurpation, and He will come to claim His rightful inheritance (Psa. 2:8; 24:1).
- E. In His work as another Angel, Christ will come to declare God's judgment over Babylon the Great and to appear in glory to make the whole earth the kingdom of God (Rev. 18:1-2; 11:15).

« DAY 5 & DAY 6 »

VI. "I am now sending an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared" (Exo. 23:20, cf. vv. 21-33):

- A. That the decree of the law concludes with a portion regarding the Angel and the good land indicates that the purpose of the decree of the law is that those who received the law would enter into the good land (vv. 20-33).
- B. The Angel of Jehovah typifies Christ as the One sent by God to keep His people in the way and to bring them into the good land, and the good land typifies Christ in His all-inclusiveness as the allotted portion of God's people (Deut. 8:7; Col. 1:12).
- C. Thus, Christ as the sent One brings God's people into Himself as the good land; the goal in God's purpose is to bring His people into the full enjoyment of Christ as the all-inclusive land.
- D. Regarding the Angel of Jehovah, Exodus 23:21 says, "My name is in Him"; the name of Jehovah is identical to His person, indicating that the Angel of Jehovah is Jehovah Himself.
- E. Christ, the sent One of God, speaks for God within us; if we would take

possession of Him, we must learn to obey His voice; that the Angel's voice was Jehovah's speaking proves strongly that the Angel and Jehovah are one (vv. 21-22).

- F. The various pagan tribes that occupied the land signify the different aspects of our natural life (v. 23):
1. The gods (idols) of the pagan tribes (v. 24), with the demons behind them (cf. 1 Cor. 10:20), represent the spiritual forces of evil (Eph. 6:12).
 2. Behind our natural life are the forces of evil (cf. Matt. 16:23), who utilize, manipulate, and direct the aspects of our natural life to frustrate us from taking possession of the all-inclusive Christ and enjoying His riches.
 3. History shows that the pagan tribes in the land were the source of Israel's sin against God (cf. Exo. 23:33); this indicates that our natural life is the source of our sins.
 4. In the sight of God, those who live according to the natural life are sinning continually, whether they do good or evil; because the natural life frustrates us from possessing Christ and enjoying Him, we must hate it (Luke 14:26) and, as we grow in Christ, be willing to drive it out.
- G. The blessings in Exodus 23:25-26 signify spiritually that God will give us bread (the Word—Matt. 4:4) to nourish us and water (the Spirit—John 7:37-39) to satisfy us, will cause us to grow and be fruitful, and will take away our sicknesses that we would not suffer a premature death (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 John 5:16) but would grow in the divine life to maturity, to full age (Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28), in order to gain the all-inclusive Christ as our possession for our enjoyment (Phil. 3:8).
- H. God will not cut off our natural life, signified by the pagan tribes, all at once, because this would leave us inwardly vacant and in danger of being taken over by demons, signified by the animals of the field (Exo. 23:29; cf. Matt. 12:43-45):
1. God cuts off our natural life gradually, little by little, according to the degree of our growth in the divine life (Exo. 23:30; cf. Col. 2:19).
 2. The more Christ increases in us, the more He will replace our natural life.
- I. "I will set your border from the Red Sea even to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out from before you" (Exo. 23:31):
1. The seas and the river in verse 31 signify the waters of death, and the wilderness signifies barrenness.
 2. That the promised land, an elevated land full of life and the abundance of fruit (Deut. 8:7-8), was surrounded by water and wilderness indicates that outside of Christ, the reality of the good land, there is nothing but death and barrenness.

3. Making a covenant with the pagan tribes signifies compromising with, tolerating, our natural life (Exo. 23:32).
4. God promised to drive out the pagan tribes, but God's people had to cooperate with Him by taking the initiative in destroying them; the more Christ increases in us, the more we will be able to cooperate with God in driving out the natural life (vv. 29-33; cf. Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Sam. 15:9, 15, 23 and footnotes).

« WEEK 11 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 3:2 And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thornbush...

4 ...When Jehovah saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the midst of the thornbush...

14:19 And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.

The title the Angel of Jehovah refers mainly to Christ, the Son of God, as the One sent by God (cf. John 8:42) to save His people from their situation of suffering (cf. Judg. 6:12-22; 13:3-22). According to Exodus 3:2 and 6, the Angel of Jehovah, the sent One, was Jehovah Himself, the sending One (cf. Zech. 2:6-11), and Jehovah is the Triune God (Exo. 3:6, 15). For the purpose of calling and sending Moses, God, the sending One, appeared to him as the sent One (cf. John 20:21). (Exo. 3:2, footnote 1)

The Angel of God [in Exodus 14:19] is the Angel of Jehovah who called Moses (3:2, 4 and footnote 1 on v. 2). The Angel of Jehovah is Christ as God's sent One. The fact that God's sent One went before the camp of Israel indicates that Christ was the One who was leading the people. When the Angel of God moved, the pillar moved also, showing that the Angel and the pillar were one. Christ and the leading Spirit cannot be separated (John 14:17-20; 16:13; 2 Cor. 3:17; Rev. 5:6). (Exo. 14:19, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

The Angel of Jehovah is God Himself in His Divine Trinity serving His elect as a Servant (cf. Heb. 1:14). The embodiment of the Triune God is Christ, and Christ is the Angel of Jehovah, who took care of Israel as Jehovah in action in the Old Testament (see footnote 1 on Exodus 3:2). For Christ to be the Angel of Jehovah means that God has appointed and commissioned Himself in His Divine Trinity to act in caring for His people.

Because Israel did not act as a proper wife, the very Jehovah who was the Husband, the Head, and the King of Israel became a Servant to His wife. He came to her not as a Husband, Head, or King but as the Angel of Jehovah, who was sent by Jehovah (Zech. 2:9-11). Since Israel did not regard Jehovah as the Head, He became a Servant to serve her. His word to Israel in Judges 2:1-3 was not a rebuke or a command but the admonition of a servant. (Judg. 2:1, footnote 1)

In order to take possession of Christ, we need to realize that we have Him with us, even within us, as a living person....We have Him as the sent One, the Angel of Jehovah, who has come to us through the wonderful process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension, glorification, and enthronement. How marvelous that such a One has been sent to be with us!

In Exodus 23:21 and 22...the Lord says of the Angel, "Be careful before Him, and listen to His voice....Listen to His voice and do all that I speak." Twice we are told to obey [listen to] the voice of the Angel, for His voice is God's speaking. This means that as the Angel, the sent One, Christ speaks for God. How crucial, then, that we obey His voice!

Today Christ speaks for God in a living way from within us. In John 10 there is strong emphasis on hearing the Lord's voice. Speaking of Himself as the good shepherd, the Lord Jesus says, "The sheep hear his voice" (v. 3) [cf. vv. 16, 27]....I have the assurance that we all have the voice of the Lord within us. Even the young people, those who are still teenagers, have heard the voice of the living One in them. Because they hear the Lord's voice, many times it is not necessary for their parents or anyone else to tell them what to do. Christ, the living One, is more subjective to them than their parents. The parents of a young person cannot go to school with him, whereas the indwelling Christ not only goes with him to school but remains in him all the time. Because we have Christ, the sent One of God, within us, we must obey Him. In particular, we should obey His voice. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 876-877)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 74

« WEEK 11 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Mal. 3:1-3 I am about to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me; and suddenly the Lord, whom you seek, will come to His temple. And the Angel of the covenant, whom you desire, He will come, says Jehovah of hosts....And who will stand when He appears?...He will purify the sons of Levi and purge them like gold and like silver, and they will offer to Jehovah a sacrifice in righteousness.

The book of Malachi reveals Christ in His first coming and in His second coming. In His first coming He is the Messenger of God. As the Messenger of God, Christ not only brings a word or a message from God to God's people; He Himself is the living message....In His second coming, Christ will be the Angel of the covenant, the Desire of nations (3:1), and the Sun of righteousness (4:2). Actually, Christ was the Angel of the covenant even in His first coming. As the Angel of the covenant, Christ enacted the new covenant. Before going to the cross, the last thing He did was to establish the new covenant at His table (Matt. 26:26-30). (Life-study of Malachi, p. 9)

Today's Reading

Based upon this new covenant (Heb. 8:10-12), we are forgiven by God, who even forgets our failures. God is then able to dispense Himself into our intrinsic being to be our life, to be the law of life, and to be everything to us as our inward content that we may live Him. This means that the new covenant is to make us absolutely one with God. He becomes us, and we, being constituted with Him, are one with Him in His life and nature. The New Testament reveals that He and we form a mutual abode (John 14:20, 23). What a miracle this is!

We need to have the proper understanding of what it means to say that God has been constituted into us to become us and that we have become one with God in His life and nature. The New Testament reveals that God is our Father and that we are His sons. We are not sons who have been adopted by God but sons who have been born of God. God is our Father because He has begotten us, and we are His sons because we have been born of Him. Just as a child shares the life and nature of his father but not the fatherhood, so we as sons born of God share God's life and nature but not His fatherhood nor His Godhead. We are the same as God our Father in life and nature, but we surely are not God in His Godhead or the Father in His fatherhood. This is the intrinsic revelation of the Bible, especially of the New Testament.

In our daily living, we need to remember our status as sons of God possessing the life and nature of God. For example, if a brother and his wife both realize this, knowing that they are not only human but also divine, they will respect each other to the uttermost. Instead of disputing, they will honor each other and be kind to each other. Also, this realization will keep them from losing their temper. When we are tempted to lose our temper, we need to remember that we are sons of God. Even in such a matter as shopping in a department store, we should not forget our status as sons of God. (Life-study of Malachi, p. 10)

Christ's coming suddenly as the Angel of the covenant will be to execute upon Israel the covenant that He enacted through His death (Matt. 26:28). In His first coming Christ came in the way of an Angel, a serving one (cf. Heb. 1:14), to serve God in forming the new testament (Mark 10:45). When He established His table on the night in which He was betrayed, He enacted the new covenant (Luke 22:20), in which God is obligated to forgive our sins and to dispense Himself into our being to be our life, our law of life, and our everything as our inward content that we may live Him (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-12). As the Angel of the covenant, Christ in resurrection executes the new covenant as its surety (Heb. 7:22), making it real to us by assuring us that our sins have been forgiven and by dispensing the riches of the covenanted Triune God into us. (Mal. 3:1, footnote 2)

Further Reading: Life-study of Malachi, msg. 2

« WEEK 11 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 7:2 And I saw another Angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and He cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom authority was given to harm the earth and the sea.

8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Christ is another Angel (Rev. 7:2; 8:3; 10:1; 18:1) sent by God to carry out God's commission. In the Old Testament, Christ appeared as the Angel of the Lord several times (Exo. 3:2-6; Judg. 6:11-24; Zech. 1:11-12; 2:8-11; 3:1-7), coming to take care of God's people for the fulfillment of God's plan. Now in Revelation He is again the Angel sent by God to carry out God's purpose. (Life-study of Revelation, p. 49)

Today's Reading

[Revelation 7 is] an insertion revealing that before the great tribulation God will do two things to preserve His people: He will seal the chosen remnant of Israel and He will begin the rapture of the redeemed ones of the church.

Revelation 7:1 says, "After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth nor on the sea nor on any tree." This is the insertion between the sixth and seventh seals, showing how God cares for His people while He is about to execute His judgments upon the earth. The winds here are for God's judgments (Jonah 1:4; Isa. 11:15; Jer. 22:22; 49:36; 51:1).

At the opening of the seventh seal, all heaven becomes silent because the age is about to be changed [Rev. 8:1]. The period before the opening of the seventh seal was the age of God's toleration. For the sake of His purpose of preaching the gospel to produce the churches to fulfill His eternal plan, God has been tolerating the sinful situation on earth. But with the opening of the seventh seal, the age of toleration is terminated and another age is brought in. This is the age of God's wrath. God is now coming in to intervene in the rebellious and sinful situation on earth.

In the midst of this solemn scene, another Angel appears (v. 3). This angel is Christ...In the administration of God's judgment upon the earth, Christ is the Angel standing on the position of One who has been sent by God. In a very positive sense, Christ is everything; He is whatever the economy of God needs. Revelation specifically describes Christ as "another Angel," indicating that He is not a regular or common angel but...the unique, special Angel.

The first altar in Revelation 8:3 refers to the altar of burnt offering (cf. Exo. 27:1-8), and the golden altar before the throne refers to the incense altar (cf. Exo. 30:1-9). The golden censer signifies the prayer of the saints, which is brought to God by Christ as the other Angel. The incense signifies Christ with all His merit to be added to the prayers of the saints that the saints' prayers might be acceptable to God upon the golden altar. At the opening of the seventh seal there will still be "saints" praying on the earth.

In this scene in heaven after the opening of the seventh seal, Christ appears as another Angel to execute God's administration over the earth in the way of ministering to God as the High Priest with the prayers of His saints. As He offers the prayers of His saints to God, He adds His incense to them. Revelation 8:4 says that "the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God." The "smoke of the incense" indicates that the incense is burnt to God with the prayers of the saints. This implies that by the incense which is added to them the prayers of the saints become effective and acceptable to God...The prayer of the saints in this chapter must be for the judgment of the earth which opposes God's economy. The answer to the saints' prayers is the execution of God's judgment upon the earth by the following seven trumpets. (Life-study of Revelation, pp. 255, 278-279)

Further Reading: Life-study of Revelation, msgs. 4, 21, 23

<< WEEK 11 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 10:1 And I saw another strong Angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon His head, and His face was like the sun, and His feet like pillars of fire.

18:1-2 ...I saw another Angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was illumined with His glory. And He cried with a strong voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great!...

“Another strong Angel” in Revelation 10:1, as well as the One in 7:2, 8:3, and 18:1, is Christ. At this point He is coming down out of heaven. This vision, part of the insertion between the sixth and seventh trumpets, is a hint that before the seventh trumpet, Christ is on the way to earth. At this time He is clothed with a cloud and is not yet on the cloud, in contrast to Revelation 14:14 and Matthew 24:30; 26:64. To be on the cloud is to come openly, whereas to be clothed with a cloud is to come secretly. This indicates that even after the sixth trumpet, Christ still is coming secretly, not openly. He will come secretly until He is seen by all the tribes of the earth, as mentioned in Revelation 1:7 and Matthew 24:30, at which time He will come openly. (Rev. 10:1, footnote 2)

Today's Reading

At the completion of His judgment of the world, Christ will come back to take full possession of the earth (Rev. 10:1-7; 18:1). The whole earth will belong to Him; not one part of it will belong to anyone else. Today many nations are fighting to increase their territory, but they are fighting in vain, for whatever they gain will eventually belong to Christ. In His coming back to take possession of the earth, Christ will be like another Angel...This title is used to denote Christ because, as God's Administrator, He behaves like an angel...When He comes to take over the earth, He will come as One who has been commissioned by God for this purpose. He will be another Angel with great authority and will come in His glory (18:1). In His coming, Christ will place “His right foot on the sea and the left on the land” (10:2). This indicates that He will tread upon the sea and the land, which means that He will take possession of them (Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:3). In the Bible, whatever your feet tread upon becomes your possession. Since Christ will tread upon the sea and the land, both the sea and the land will belong to Him.

Christ is coming down to take possession of the earth. Only He is worthy to open the scroll of God's economy, and only He is qualified to possess the earth. In Joshua, God told the people that they would possess whatever part of the land the sole of their foot would tread upon [1:3]...Based upon the same principle, Christ, as another Angel sent by God, will come to tread upon the sea and the earth, for the earth and the sea have both been given to Him as His inheritance (Psa. 2:8). Although the earth and sea have been usurped by His enemy, and although He has been tolerating this for centuries, one day He will tolerate it no longer. He will come to claim His rightful inheritance. (Life-study of Revelation, pp. 23-24, 310)

This Angel with great authority is Christ. As He comes down out of heaven, the earth is illumined with His glory. In Revelation 10:1 Christ is still clothed with a cloud, and in 14:14 He is sitting on the cloud, whereas in 18:1 His glory shines over the earth, indicating that His coming back to earth is nearer at hand than the coming mentioned in 10:1 and 14:14. He will come out of heaven, first in the cloud secretly, then on the cloud openly; eventually, He will shine over the earth to destroy Babylon the Great, the city of Rome, with His great authority. (Rev. 18:1, footnote 1)

[The Angel's coming down out of heaven] is Christ's coming (parousia) reaching the earth at the end of the great tribulation for Him to take full possession of the earth as His kingdom. At this time the material Babylon the Great will suffer judgment and fall. (Rev. 18:1, footnote 2)

Further Reading: Life-study of Revelation, msgs. 2, 26, 49, 53

<< WEEK 11 — DAY 5 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 23:20 I am now sending an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.

31 And I will set your border from the Red Sea even to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out from before you.

Both the Angel and the promised land are types of Christ. The Angel typifies Christ as the One sent by God to guard us in the way and to bring us into the land....The good land typifies Christ in His all-inclusiveness. Thus, Christ as the sent One brings us into Himself as the good land. This good land is the goal, the aim, the mark, of God's purpose. Since the good land typifies Christ, this means that Christ is the goal. Who will bring us to this goal? No one other than Christ Himself. On the one hand, Christ is the good land; on the other hand, He is the One who brings us into the good land. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 862)

Today's Reading

The fact that the decree of the law concludes with a portion regarding the Angel and the good land indicates that the purpose of the decree of the law is that those who received the law would enter into the good land. It was not God's intention simply to give the law to His people. His intention was to bring the children of Israel into the good land....For this reason, immediately after the decree of the law and the ordinances, God speaks of the Angel bringing the people into the good land.

Regarding the Angel of Jehovah Exodus 23:21 says, "My name is in Him." The name Jehovah means "I Am Who I Am" (3:14). This name is in the Angel of Jehovah. Why is the name of Jehovah in the Angel? Simply because the Angel is Jehovah Himself....The name of a person is identical to the person himself. We cannot separate a person from his name, for his name indicates his very being....The name of Jehovah was in the Angel and inseparable from the Angel.

Exodus 23:22 says, "But if you will indeed listen to His voice and do all that I speak..." This indicates that the Angel's voice is God's speaking. In John 14:10, the Lord Jesus said, "The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works." Just as the Angel's voice was Jehovah's speaking, so the Son's speaking was the Father's working. The fact that the Angel's voice was Jehovah's speaking proves strongly that the Angel and Jehovah are one. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 863-865)

The blessings in Exodus 23:25-26 signify spiritually that God will give us bread (the Word—Matt. 4:4) to nourish us and water (the Spirit—John 7:37-39) to satisfy us, will cause us to grow and be fruitful, and will take away our sicknesses that we would not suffer a premature death (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 John 5:16) but would grow in the divine life to maturity, to full age (Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:28), in order to gain the all-inclusive Christ as our possession for our enjoyment (Phil. 3:8). (Exo. 23:25, footnote 1)

Exodus 23:31 describes the boundaries of the promised land:...The bounds were from "the Red sea even to the sea of the Philistines [the Mediterranean]." The seas here signify the waters of death. Hence, from sea to sea signifies from death to death. This means that one of the boundaries of the promised land is death. Verse 31 also says that the boundary was to be "from the wilderness to the River." The river also signifies the water of death, and the wilderness signifies barrenness. If we study a map, we shall see that the promised land is surrounded by death and barrenness. The land itself, however, is a region of life filled with abundance of fruit.

Outside of Christ there is nothing but death and barrenness. Death and barrenness surround Christ as our land and are the boundaries of Christ. The Bible indicates that the promised land is elevated. This signifies that Christ is elevated in resurrection. However, this elevated land, this elevated Christ, is surrounded by death and barrenness. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 867-868)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 73

<< WEEK 11 — DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 23:29-30 I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the animals of the field multiply against you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have become fruitful and inherit the land.

God will not cut off our natural life, signified by the pagan tribes (see footnote 1 on Exo. 23:23), all at once, because this would leave us inwardly vacant and in danger of being taken over by demons, signified by the animals of the field (cf. Matt. 12:43-45). God cuts off our natural life gradually, little by little, according to the degree of our growth in the divine life (Exo. 23:30). The more Christ increases in us, the more He will replace our natural life. (Exo. 23:29, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

According to Exodus 23:23-24 and 32-33, there are frustraters which keep us from possessing the land. These frustraters, the various pagan tribes occupying the land, signify different aspects of our natural life. For example, one of the tribes was the Canaanites. The word Canaan means merchant. In our natural life there is a Canaanite, one who aspires to make money. Other tribes signify the lust of the natural man and the greed of the natural life. In principle, all of the pagan tribes signify aspects of the natural life. In a very real sense, these tribes are in us. This means that in our natural life there are many frustraters which hinder us from taking possession of the all-inclusive Christ.

Exodus 23:24 indicates that these pagan tribes had idols....The gods of the pagan tribes were idols, and idols are related to demons. Behind every idol there is a demon. The idols with the demons behind them represent spiritual forces (Eph. 6:12).

Behind our natural life are spiritual forces. For example, do you like to lose your temper?...Within our natural life there is an evil temper, which we despise. But behind this evil temper there are spiritual forces, demons....As Christians, we have experienced losing our temper even when we did not want to do so. There was something, some kind of force, which caused us to lose our temper involuntarily. This indicates that the aspects of our natural life are utilized, manipulated, and directed by spiritual forces behind the scene. The aspects of the natural life with the spiritual forces behind them frustrate us from the enjoyment of the riches of the all-inclusive Christ.

Exodus 23:33 says, "They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me." It is a fact of history that the pagan tribes were the source of Israel's sin in the good land....This indicates that the natural life is the source of sin....In the sight of God, all those who live according to the natural life are sinning continually, even when they give alms or donate to charity.

As the source of sin among God's people, the natural life frustrates them from possessing Christ as the good land. Because the natural life keeps us from possessing Christ and enjoying Him, we must hate it and, as we grow, be willing to drive it out....Without growth in Christ it is not possible for us to drive out the natural life.

The children of Israel were forbidden to make any covenant with the pagan tribes (v. 32). Today we should not make any covenants with the natural life. To make a covenant with the natural life is to compromise with it. Because it is not easy to eliminate the natural life, we may be tempted to compromise with it. To compromise in this way is to tolerate some aspect of the natural life. But we should not tolerate the natural life in any way....If we take the initiative to drive out the natural life, God will come in to honor us and strengthen us in this matter....[This] depends on our growth in Christ. God promised the children of Israel that He would drive out the pagan tribes from before them. But the children of Israel had to take the initiative to drive them out....The more we grow in life, the more we shall take the initiative to drive out the natural life. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 869-870, 885-886, 889)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 75

<< WEEK 11 — HYMN

Hymns, #1286

1

The Lord has shown the way
Within the church today—
It's laboring, laboring, laboring on Christ.
Christ is the Canaan land;
In Him we boldly stand,
While laboring, laboring, laboring on Christ.
On to victory! On to victory!
Cries our great Commander—On!
We'll move at His command
And now possess the land
Through laboring, laboring, laboring on Christ.

2

The way that God has planned
To labor on the land
Is "Amen, Lord! Amen, Lord! Amen to Your Word!"
Whene'er He speaks today,
Whatever He may say,
It's "Amen, Lord! Amen, Lord! Amen to Your Word!"
On to victory! On to victory!
Cries our great Commander—On!
We'll move at His command
And now possess the land
By "Amen, Lord! Amen, Lord! Amen to Your Word!"

3

The Lord has also shown
The land we'll fully own
By following, following, following the church.
Where'er the Body goes,
Howe'er the Spirit flows,
It's following, following, following the church.
On to victory! On to victory!
Cries our great Commander—On!
We'll move at His command
And now possess the land
By following, following, following the church.