

WEEK 39 – OUTLINE

Serving God

Scripture Reading: Exo. 7:16; 5:1, 3; 3:12; 24:8; 3:6; 19:6; 25:8-9

« DAY 1 »

I. “Let My people go that they may serve Me in the wilderness” (Exo. 7:16; 5:1; 4:23; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3):

- A. The children of Israel had been usurped by Pharaoh to serve as slaves to carry out the purpose of the Egyptians (14:12).
- B. Pharaoh signifies not only Satan but also the self and the natural man; our natural mind, will, or emotions may be a Pharaoh who rebels against God or who bargains subtly with Him.
- C. Positively, the wilderness signifies a realm of separation; in His dealing with Pharaoh, God demanded such a separation for His people (7:16).

II. “Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness”; “let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah” (5:1, 17):

- A. God’s goal was not separation; His goal was that the children of Israel would hold a feast to Him and sacrifice to Him (vv. 1, 3, 8, 17):
 - 1. God’s demand of Pharaoh was to let the people go a three days’ journey into the wilderness so that they could hold a feast to Him and sacrifice to Him; this is the enjoyment of God’s salvation (vv. 1, 3).
 - 2. Because of the Lord’s full salvation, we have been delivered from bondage in Egypt in order to serve God, and we are now in the wilderness enjoying the feast and offering sacrifice to God (8:20, 26-27, 29).
- B. To hold a feast to God is to enjoy God with God and to worship God (5:1):
 - 1. The words to Me in 5:1 indicate that when God’s people are feasting, He is happy; their feasting is to Him.

« DAY 2 »

- 2. The best and highest relationship man can have with God is to feast to God and with God (23:14-17).
- 3. To have a feast to God means that we feast for Him and with Him; the more we feast, the more enjoyment He has and the happier He is.
- 4. This feasting to the Lord is dispensational worship, that is, worshipping God according to what has been dispensed into us (John 4:14, 23-24).
- C. The children of Israel were to sacrifice to the Lord (Exo. 3:18; 5:3, 8, 17):

1. Sacrifice is a word parallel to hold a feast (vv. 1, 3):
 - a. To the children of Israel, the feast was a feast, but to God it was a sacrifice.
 - b. Without the sacrifice, there is nothing to feast on; what the children of Israel were to feast on was the very sacrifice they were to offer to God.
2. To sacrifice to God is to offer something to Him, and to hold a feast to God is to enjoy with God what is offered to Him (vv. 1, 3).

« DAY 3 »

III. The purpose of God's calling is to bring His chosen people to the mountain, where they may serve Him and sacrifice to Him (3:1, 12, 18; 19:1-2, 11; 24:16-18):

- A. In Exodus 3:12 God says that His people would serve Him on the mountain of God (cf. v. 1).
- B. The mountain of God is where we receive the revelation regarding God's purpose (v. 12; 19:2; 24:9-13, 18):
 1. At the mountain the children of Israel received the revelation concerning what God is and concerning God's desire to have a dwelling place on earth (19:3-6; 20:2; 25:8-9).
 2. Here on the mountain, where the sky is clear, we see the vision of God's economy; here we come to know what is on God's heart, and we see what God desires to have on earth today (24:10; 25:8).
 3. We realize that God desires to have a people who walk according to His statutes and who build Him a tabernacle so that He may dwell among them.

IV. We must serve God according to the vision of God and of the pattern shown on the mountain (24:10-11; 25:9):

- A. We need to see a vision of God in a transparent and clear heaven; only when we are in such an atmosphere can we receive the heavenly vision of the building of God's dwelling place (24:10-11; 25:8).
- B. "According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, even so shall you make it" (v. 9):
 1. Before the tabernacle was built, God showed Moses the pattern of the tabernacle and its furnishings (24:9—25:9, 40; 39:32-43).
 2. In order to serve God, we must see the pattern shown on the mountain (Heb. 8:5).

« DAY 4 »

3. The pattern shown on the mountain is God's plan; if we do not understand God's plan, it will be impossible for us to do God's work (Eph. 3:4).
4. Because the church as the mystery of Christ was revealed to the apostles and

prophets, the revelation they received is considered the foundation on which the church is built (vv. 4-5; 2:20).

V. The blood of the covenant enables the believers to serve the living God (Exo. 24:8; Heb. 9:14):

- A. The blood of the covenant has made it possible for God's people, as fallen and sinful persons who have been redeemed, forgiven, and cleansed, to enter into God's presence and remain there to be infused with Him (Exo. 24:9-18; 34:28-29; Lev. 16:11-16; cf. Heb. 10:19-20; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1:7).
- B. The blood of Christ makes it possible for us to serve the living God; through the redeeming blood of Christ, we have life and have been brought into the presence of God to serve Him (Heb. 9:14; Eph. 1:7).

VI. The basis of our service is God as fire from heaven (Lev. 9:24; 6:13):

- A. The fire burning out of the midst of the thornbush was the Triune God, the God of resurrection (Exo. 3:2, 4, 6; Matt. 22:31-32).
- B. As those who have been gained and are being used by God, we are a thornbush according to our natural man; however, there is a fire in us; God has come to us in the fire:
 1. When the fire of God was burning in the thornbush, it was God who was burning (Exo. 3:3-4).
 2. The strength and brightness of the fire come from the fire itself; the fire is merely resting on us; our purpose is to express the fire.

<< DAY 5 >>

- C. Our service to God must be based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 9:24; 16:12-13; 6:13; 10:1-2):
 1. The fire that burned on the altar of the burnt offering came down from the heavens (9:24):
 - a. After coming down from the heavens, that fire burned continually upon the altar (6:13).
 - b. The divine fire, the burning Triune God, enables us to serve; our service must come out of the burning of God's fire (Rom. 12:11; Exo. 3:2, 4, 6).
 2. The fire from the altar is the genuine motivating power of service (Lev. 6:13; Rom. 12:11).

VII. The Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt in order to make them a kingdom of priests, a kingdom in which everyone would be a priest, one who serves God continually (Exo. 19:6):

- A. Exodus 29 reveals that we were saved so that we may be sanctified to serve

God as priests:

1. The goal of God's salvation is to make all those who believe in Christ priests of God (Rev. 1:5-6; 5:10; 7:15).
2. The Lord Jesus, the Priest, brought us into the priesthood through His redemption; since we are priests, we should be serving God in whatever we are doing (1:5-6; Rom. 1:9).

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- B. A priest is a person who serves God by enjoying God in Christ and through Christ as the reality of the offerings (v. 9; Gal. 5:22; 1 Pet. 2:5).
- C. To serve God as priests is to minister Christ to Him as food for His satisfaction; in typology, God's food was the burnt offering presented to Him for His satisfaction (Exo. 29:37-44).
- D. The result of the priestly life depicted in Exodus 29 is that God comes to meet with us, eat with us, speak with us, and dwell among us (vv. 42b, 45-46).

VIII. God's building is the desire of God's heart and the goal of His salvation (25:8-9; 40:1-38):

- A. The pictures in Exodus unveil the desire of God's heart with respect to His chosen people:
 1. God wanted the tabernacle to be His dwelling place; this was the desire of His heart (25:8).
 2. The physical tabernacle erected in Exodus 40 was a symbol of a corporate people, the children of Israel as the house of God (Heb. 3:6).
- B. The building of God's house is related to the priesthood and depends on the priesthood; priests build up the dwelling place of God and become part of God's dwelling, God's house (Exo. 19:6; 25:8-9; Zech. 6:12-13; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:5).
- C. Christ is the redemption, salvation, and supply of God's people and the means for them to worship and serve God so that in Him they may be built up with God together for them and God to meet, communicate, and dwell mutually; this is the central thought of the book of Exodus (12:3; 16:4; 17:6; 29:45-46; 25:8-9).

<< WEEK 39 — DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 7:16 “And you shall say to him, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you, saying, Let My people go that they may serve Me in the wilderness. But until this very moment you have not listened.”

5:1 “...Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.”

Not only were the children of Israel under God’s judgment; they were also under the tyranny of Pharaoh. They had been usurped by Pharaoh to serve as slaves to carry out the purpose of the Egyptians. Hence, the children of Israel had two serious problems: God’s judgment and Pharaoh’s tyranny. Although the Passover was adequate to save them from God’s judgment, it was not effective to rescue them from the usurpation of the Egyptians. In order to be saved from Egyptian tyranny, the children of Israel needed the exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 333)

Today’s Reading

We need to consider Pharaoh’s subtle bargaining. Pharaoh signifies not only Satan but also the self and the natural man. In addition, our relatives or friends can also be a Pharaoh to us today. Furthermore, our natural mind, will, or emotion may be a Pharaoh who rebels against God or who bargains subtly with Him.

Negatively the wilderness signifies a place of wandering, but positively it signifies a realm of separation. When the children of Israel entered into the wilderness, they were separated from everything Egyptian, from everything worldly. This separation is related to burial and resurrection. Once we were in Egypt, that is, in the world. But through burial and resurrection we have passed out of the world into the wilderness, where we are separated to the Lord. In His dealing with Pharaoh, God demanded such a separation for His people....Separation, however, is not the goal. God’s goal was that the children of Israel would hold a feast to Him. He wanted them to be happy with Him in His presence.

As we offer Christ to the Father, the Father is pleased, happy, and satisfied by us through our sacrifice of Christ. Therefore, God’s demand of Pharaoh was to let His people go a three days’ journey into the wilderness so that they could hold a feast to Him and sacrifice unto Him. This is the enjoyment of God’s salvation.

God wants us to take a three days’ journey into the wilderness....But Satan and the self rise up to deny God and to refuse to let us go. Nevertheless, because of the Lord’s full salvation, many of us have been delivered from bondage in Egypt and are now in the wilderness enjoying the feast and offering sacrifice to our God.

To hold a feast unto God is to enjoy God with God. Everyone who has truly been saved has experienced times of overflowing with joy in the Lord’s presence. Such times are real holidays. If you have not enjoyed such a feast with the Lord but have only been happy when participating in worldly amusements, then perhaps you have not yet been saved. Being saved does not depend upon having such an enjoyment. Nevertheless, everyone who is saved will have the experience, at least once in his Christian life, of holding a feast to the Lord, of enjoying the Lord in His presence. Sometimes I have been so beside myself with joy in the Lord that it seemed as if I were dancing before Him. This is not doctrine or theory but a marvelous enjoyment of our salvation.

Speaking on behalf of the Lord, Moses and Aaron said to Pharaoh, “Let my people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness” (Exo. 5:1). The feast is in contrast with slavery, with rigorous labor. Jehovah was telling Pharaoh to release His people from slavery so that they could hold a feast to Him. The words “to Me” in this verse indicate that when God’s people are feasting, He is happy. Their feasting is to Him. It seems that Jehovah was telling Pharaoh, “I am not happy to see My people under slavery in Egypt. Let them go so that they may feast to make Me happy. I like to see My people feasting and rejoicing. I am glad when they do nothing but eat and rejoice. That is a feast to Me.” (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 221-223, 159, 222, 148)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msgs. 13, 20

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Morning Nourishment

Exo. 5:3 “And they said, The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God...”

John 4:23-24 “But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.”

In Exodus 23:14-17 there are ordinances concerning keeping feasts unto God. The best and highest relationship man can have with God is to feast unto God and with God.

Do you know what the children of Israel were doing inside the house? They were eating the flesh of the Passover lamb. Exodus 12:14 indicates that they were feasting...What does it mean to have a feast to the Lord? It means that we remain in the house and enjoy a full participation in the lamb. In this way we feast on the lamb. However, the Lord enjoys this feast more than we do. To have a feast unto Him means that we feast for Him and with Him...The more we feast, the more enjoyment He has and the happier He is. However, the more we endeavor to do things, the more displeased He becomes, for our endeavors do not give Him any enjoyment. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 823, 270-271)

Today’s Reading

This feasting unto the Lord is dispensational worship; that is, it is worshipping God according to what has been dispensed into us. As we eat, drink, praise, sing, and rejoice in the presence of God, we hold a feast unto Him. As we shall see, such a feast is also a sacrifice unto the Lord. To sacrifice is to worship. Dispensational worship is worship in which God is dispensed into us for our enjoyment so that we may feast in His presence with Him and unto Him. This is the worship God desires. This is not only revealed in the New Testament but also implied in the Old Testament.

We may consider the feast here a festival, a holiday, or a holy day, a time for God’s people to rest with God and to enjoy God’s provision with God...This feasting pleased the Lord because it was worship to Him. According to the human concept, people should always be working; but according to the divine concept, God’s people should put aside their working for the times of festivals to rest from their busyness and to feast with God in worship to Him.

Jehovah also demanded that Pharaoh allow the children of Israel to sacrifice to Jehovah their God (Exo. 5:3). Sacrifice is a word parallel to hold a feast [v. 1]. To the children of Israel, the feast was a feast, but to God it was a sacrifice. Without the sacrifice, there was nothing to feast on. What the children of Israel were to feast on was the very sacrifice they were to offer to God. The Passover illustrates this. The lamb sacrificed to God was food for the children of Israel. This reveals that the feast and the sacrifice are two aspects of one thing. Whatever we sacrifice to God spontaneously becomes our feast. This also is dispensational worship. This kind of worship does not require that we prostrate ourselves before the Lord. God did not say, “Let My people go into the wilderness so that there they may prostrate themselves before Me.” God does not want His people to do this. He wants them to sacrifice to Him and to hold a feast unto Him.

In God’s demand placed on Pharaoh we see a perfect, complete salvation for His people. This salvation includes God’s rescuing His people from the usurping hand of Satan and bringing them into the wilderness in resurrection so that they can hold a feast unto Him and sacrifice to Him. What a wonderful salvation!

In 5:1 Moses told Pharaoh to let the people go so that they might hold a feast unto the Lord in the wilderness. According to 5:3, the people were to make a journey of three days into the desert and there sacrifice unto the Lord. To sacrifice unto God is to offer something to Him, and to hold a feast unto God is to enjoy with God what is offered to Him. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 148-151, 580)

Further Reading: Knowing Life and the Church, ch. 16; Life-study of Exodus, msgs. 50, 139

« WEEK 39 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 24:10 “And they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there was something like a paved work of sapphire, even like heaven itself for clearness.”

25:8-9 “And let them make a sanctuary for Me that I may dwell in their midst; according to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, even so shall you make it.”

Exodus 3:1 speaks of the mountain of God, Horeb....In chapter 19 we see the children of Israel at the mountain of God, Mount Sinai, the place where God could contact His people. In 3:12 God said that His people would serve Him on the mountain of God. It is a very significant thing to serve God. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 579-580)

Today's Reading

The mountain...[is] where the children of Israel received revelation concerning God and concerning the tabernacle. For hundreds of years they had been under darkness in Egypt where there was no light, no word, and no speaking of God. But now, under the enlightenment, they were to live according to the revelation concerning God, and they were to build the tabernacle according to the pattern revealed by God.

When they were at the mountain, the Israelites received the revelation concerning what God is. Do not regard the law simply as some commandments. The law was a testimony, definition, description, and explanation of what God is. By the law we can know God Himself. God required His chosen people to live according to this revelation of Himself. Thus, on the mountain, Moses received a revelation both of what God is and of the kind of life the people of God should live. Because God is holy, righteous, and loving, His people should live a life characterized by holiness, righteousness, and love. Chapters 20 through 24 of Exodus reveal that God is detailed in His holiness, righteousness, and other divine attributes. His people must live a life that corresponds to the detailed attributes of God. Such a revelation can be seen only on the mountaintop.

Here on the mountain, where the sky is clear (Exo. 24:10), we see the vision of God's economy. Here we come to know what is on God's heart, and we see what God desires to have on earth today. We realize that He desires to have a people who walk according to His statutes and who build Him a tabernacle that He may dwell among them.

In my fellowship with the Lord I like to have a clear sky and to see a work of transparent sapphire underneath Him. I am happy when there is nothing between me and the Lord, when there is no cloud, shadow, or obscurity and everything is clear. Those who have had a certain amount of experience with the Lord can bear witness to what I am speaking concerning the vision of God in a transparent and clear heaven.

Only when we are in such a clear atmosphere can we receive the heavenly vision of the building of God's dwelling place.

It is on the mountain that God's people can also see the revelation of the desire of God's heart. Here we see that God wants us to live according to what He is because the desire of His heart is to have a dwelling place on earth. The tabernacle was erected as the temporary fulfillment of this desire. Before the tabernacle was built, a detailed revelation regarding every aspect of it was given to Moses in chapters 25 to 31. The remaining chapters cover the experience of the children of Israel at the mountain and tell of the building of the tabernacle. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 135, 137, 125, 940-941, 137)

[In Exodus 25 God said to Moses], “Let them make a sanctuary for Me that I may dwell in their midst; according to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle,...even so shall you make it” (vv. 8-9). God's desire is to have a dwelling place on this earth. He has planned this; He has a pattern, a pattern according to His pleasure. We must know this; we must realize that God's intention in the universe is to have a dwelling place built among His people and with His people on this earth. (CWWL, 1964, vol. 4, “The Vision of God's Building,” p. 202)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msgs. 11-12, 80-81

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Morning Nourishment

Exo. 24:8 “So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Here is the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

3:2 “And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thornbush. And when he looked, there was the thornbush, burning with fire; but the thornbush was not consumed.”

In our spiritual work, many things are important, and if we come short in any of them, our work will lose its spiritual usefulness and not please God. Of these important items, the most crucial one is “the pattern on the mount.” The pattern on the mount is God’s plan. If we do not understand God’s plan, it will be impossible for us to do God’s work. (CWWN, vol. 38, p. 351)

Today’s Reading

Since the mystery of Christ has been revealed to the apostles (Eph. 3:4-5), the revelation they received is considered the foundation upon which the church is built. This corresponds to the rock in Matthew 16:18, which is not only Christ Himself but also the revelation concerning Christ, upon which Christ will build His church. Therefore, the foundation of the apostles and prophets is the revelation they received regarding Christ and the church for the building of the church. The church is built upon this revelation. (Life-study of Ephesians, p. 234)

In Exodus 24:6 and 8 the blood from the sacrifices offered on the altar (v. 5), typifying the blood of Christ, was for redemption and for the forgiveness and cleansing of sins...This blood also enacted the covenant between God and His people. Hence, the blood is referred to here as “the blood of the covenant.” The blood made it possible for God’s people, as fallen and sinful persons who had been redeemed, forgiven, and cleansed, to enter into God’s presence, that is, into God Himself, and remain there to be infused with Him and thereby be constituted pillars as a living testimony, a living portrait, of what God is. (Exo. 24:8, footnote 2)

The blood of Christ makes it possible for us to serve the living God [Heb. 9:14]....There is no way for lifeless people to serve the living God. Praise Him that through the redeeming blood we have life and have been brought into His presence to serve Him! (Life-study of Exodus, p. 929)

The thornbush has a special meaning in the Bible. When the Sadducees were debating with the Lord concerning resurrection, the Lord said, “Concerning the dead, that they are raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the section concerning the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Mark 12:26-27). The Lord Jesus referred to the thornbush in Exodus 3 when speaking concerning resurrection. As those who have been gained and are being used by God, we are a thornbush according to our old, natural man. However, there is a fire in us; God has come to us in the fire.

When the fire of God was burning in the thornbush, it was God who was burning. Hence, God does not use what is in us. The thornbush was not the fuel for the fire; it was merely a place for the fire to be expressed. The fire did not depend on the thornbush in order to burn. Moses was used by God according to this principle. God’s fire of glory was expressed through Moses, a thornbush, in order for God to deal with the magicians and the officials of Egypt and with Pharaoh. Even though the fire was burning, Moses was not consumed.

We must see that we are but a thornbush and that God has come upon us in resurrection as fire. He will do what He wants to do in us, but we will not be consumed. He will not use our capabilities or our abilities to strengthen the fire or to make it brighter. The strength and the brightness of the fire come from the fire itself; the fire is merely resting on us. Our purpose is merely to express the fire. (The Operation of God and the Anointing, pp. 82-83, 85)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 7; The Spirit and Service in Spirit, ch. 8

<< WEEK 39 — DAY 5 >>

Morning Nourishment

Lev. 9:24 “Then fire came forth from before Jehovah and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar...”

Exo. 19:6 “And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...”

In the Old Testament the priests burned incense before God. The burning of incense symbolizes the service rendered to God by man. The fire used to burn the incense had to be taken from the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 16:12-13)...Our service to God must be based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering. (The Service for Building Up the House of God, p. 19)

Today's Reading

After coming down from the heavens, that fire burned continually on the altar. The incense must be burned by the fire from the first altar. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1638)

Fire is a source of energy. Everything that moves in the physical world uses energy, and energy is produced through burning. In order for our service to be full of energy, our service must pass through the fire on the altar. This is not strange fire, which is of man and of the earth. Rather, this is holy fire. This fire is of God and of heaven. Our service must come out of the burning of God's fire. This fire should be the energy, the driving force, the impulse within us. Then our service will be out of God, not out of ourselves.

The energy and the motivating power for the New Testament service began with fire from heaven. The fire that descended upon the Galilean fishermen became the energy and the motivating power within them.

In order for our service to have spiritual value and be acceptable to God, He must move through us and serve through us. This is the purpose of the altar. God is calling those who love Him and desire to satisfy His heart's desire to offer themselves on the altar. (The Service for Building Up the House of God, pp. 20, 22)

Exodus 19:6 reveals God's purpose in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt: “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” The Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt in order to make them a kingdom of priests, a kingdom in which everyone would be a priest, one who serves God. Hence, God's goal was to have a priestly kingdom. (Life-study of Mark, p. 119)

From Exodus 29 we see that we have been saved so that we may be sanctified to serve God as priests. As revealed in this chapter, sanctification includes being washed and clothed. It also includes redemption, which solves the problem of our sinful nature, and having our hands filled with something to satisfy God and ourselves. This last aspect of sanctification—feasting on Christ—involves saturation and transformation. Eventually, we are saturated by what we eat and transformed by it. The priests do not eat ordinary food. Instead, they have a priestly diet and eat priestly food. Their food, as typified by the offerings, is Christ. Eventually, the priests were constituted of the food they ate, for we always become what we eat.

According to the New Testament, the goal of God's salvation is to make all those who believe in Christ priests of God. Therefore, if a person is saved but fails to become a priest to serve God, he cannot fulfill God's purpose or satisfy His desire. In the last book of the New Testament, Revelation, we see that the redeemed ones are all priests of God. In Revelation 1:5 and 6 we are told that Jesus Christ has released us from our sins by His blood and “made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.” Likewise, Revelation 5:10 says that we have been made “a kingdom and priests to our God.” (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1517, 1501)

The Lord Jesus, who is the Priest of all priests, brought us into the priesthood through His redemption. The whole church must now be the priesthood. However, this priesthood has also been lost. Therefore, the recovery of the church life is the recovery of the real priesthood. It is not a matter of service, work, or activity. It is solely a matter of the priesthood. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, “The Priesthood,” pp. 440-441)

Further Reading: The Priesthood, chs. 1-6, 8-10

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Morning Nourishment

1 Pet. 2:5 “You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Heb. 3:6 “But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house, whose house we are if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end.”

A priest is one who serves God by enjoying God in Christ. God’s intention is that all His people enjoy Him as priests. God’s original intention was to present Himself as the tree of life to be enjoyed by man, and those who enjoy God the most are the priests. (Functioning in Life as Gifts Given to the Body of Christ, p. 461)

Today’s Reading

Leviticus 21:6 says, “They shall be holy to their God, and they shall not profane the name of their God, for they present Jehovah’s offerings by fire, the food of their God; therefore they shall be holy.” Verse 8 goes on to say, “You shall sanctify him therefore, for he presents the food of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I Jehovah, who sanctifies you, am holy.” This signifies that we, the ones who minister Christ to God as food for God’s enjoyment, should separate ourselves to be holy unto God. (Life-study of Leviticus, pp. 446-447)

The result of the life depicted in Exodus 29, in which we have the priestly garments (vv. 29-30), the priestly food (vv. 31-34), and the food offered to God by the priests (vv. 35-42a), is that God comes to meet with us, eat with us, speak with us, and dwell among us (vv. 42b, 45-46). (Exo. 29:46, footnote 1)

The book of Exodus is a book of pictures, not a book of philosophy. The pictures in the first part of Exodus present a portrait of life in the world under Satan’s usurpation. By means of these pictures the nature of such a life is exposed. The pictures in this book also unveil the desire of God’s heart with respect to His chosen people....God’s people had fallen into a worldly life under Satan’s usurpation....God delivered them from this and brought them into the wilderness and to the mountain, where they received a heavenly vision of the pattern of God’s dwelling place on earth. God wanted the tabernacle to be His dwelling place. This was the desire of His heart. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 185)

In the Old Testament the people of Israel did not serve God individually. Their service was corporate, involving all the people, and the center of their service was the tabernacle. Before the tabernacle was built, the Israelites did not have a corporate service. When the tabernacle was erected in Exodus 40, they became a coordinated unit of service. The Israelites were a priesthood serving God together, and the Tent of Meeting was the center of their service. This means that the corporate service, the coordinated unit of service, the priesthood among God’s people, was based on the building among them. (The Vision, Type, and Practice of the Building Up of the Church, p. 43)

The priesthood is crucial because the enjoyment and expression of God depend upon the priesthood. Furthermore, the building of God as the dwelling place of God is the priesthood. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, we see that God wants to gain a priesthood. All the glorious items in the Bible are related to the priesthood. (The Priesthood and God’s Building, p. 118)

A priest is a person who becomes a part of God’s dwelling, God’s house. In the New Testament, in 1 Peter 2, we see that the house of God is the priesthood composed of all the priests (v. 5). Therefore, every priest is an item of the material for the building of the house. When a priest is mingled with God, spontaneously he becomes a part of the house of God. (CWWL, 1965, vol. 2, “Functioning in Life as Gifts Given to the Body of Christ,” p. 457)

The central thought of Exodus is that Christ is the redemption, salvation, and supply of God’s people and the means for them to worship and serve God so that in Him they may be built up with God together for them and God to meet, communicate, and dwell mutually. We see Christ throughout the book of Exodus. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 10)

Further Reading: The Priesthood and God’s Building, chs. 1, 8-15

What a blessing, what a priv'lege

The Church — Her Building

848

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with the lyrics '1. What a blessing, what a priv'lege! Called of God a royal priest, That this glorious, holy of - fice I should bear, though last and least. (C) All the building of the Bo - dy On the priest - hood doth de - pend; Ev - er pray - ing in the spir - it I this of - fice would at - tend.' The score includes various chords such as G, C/G, Am, D, D7, A/C#, G/B, and C. A 'Chorus' box is placed above the eighth measure of the third staff.

2. If I keep this royal calling
Under Thine authority,
Priestly duty thus fulfilling,
Then the church will builded be.

3. Now the church is but the priesthood;
Thus the priesthood formed we need;
When the priests are knit together,
Then the church is built indeed.

4. Through the church's degradation,
Saints this office desolate;
Through the weakness of their spirits
Preaching doth predominate.

5. Most are leaning on the message
And the preaching emphasize,
Yet neglect the priestly praying
And their spirits' exercise.

6. Deal with me and make me balanced,
As in preaching, so in prayer;
Leading others oft in praying,
As Thy Word I too declare.

7. Only serving by our praying
Will our spirits mingled be;
Stressing prayer as much as preaching—
Thus the church is built for Thee.