

Message Nine

Ministering to the Lord to Enjoy Him as the Hidden Manna, the Budding Rod, and the Law of Life

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 44:10-11, 15-18; Acts 13:1-2; Heb. 9:3-4

Outline

Day 1

- I. **“The Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear their iniquity. Yet they shall minister in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house. They shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them...But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to present to Me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord Jehovah. It is they who will enter My sanctuary, and it is they who will come near to My table to minister to Me, and they will keep My charge”—Ezek. 44:10-11, 15-16:**
 - A. *In God’s eyes, not only is there the ministry to the house; there is also a better ministry, the ministry to the Lord.*
 - B. *God has only one goal: to have men who belong absolutely to*

“Me”; in other words, He wants us to be before *“My”* presence and minister to *“Me”*; God’s unique goal is not in so many things; rather, it is in *“Me”*—vv. 15-16.

- C. To minister to the Lord does not mean that we neglect the house; those who minister to the Lord will also preach the gospel to save sinners and help the brothers and sisters to make progress, but their one goal is to be for the Lord, and their focus is the Lord Himself; they treasure men absolutely for the Lord’s sake.*
- D. If we come to the Lord’s presence, focusing only on Him, we will spontaneously be able to minister to the brothers and sisters also; the question of whether or not we are ministering to the Lord hinges on whether or not the Lord occupies the first place in our heart.*

Day 2

- E. Whatever we do in the Lord’s service should be for the Lord’s sake; it should be for His satisfaction, His heart’s desire, His happiness, His goal, His pleasure, and His glory.*
- F. In the Lord’s work there are areas that are appealing and attractive to our flesh because they are solely for the pleasure and glory of our self—cf. 2 Cor. 4:5.*
- G. No one can minister to the Lord without drawing near to Him, approaching Him in prayer; spiritual power is not in the power of preaching but in the power of praying; how much we pray indicates how much inner strength we really possess.*
- H. If we want to minister to the Lord in the Holy of Holies, we must spend time before the Lord and pray more; we need to draw near to Him, stand before Him, and wait for His will.*
- I. To pray is to stand before God (Ezek. 44:15); it is to seek His will*

before Him in order to be saved from the sin of presumption (Psa. 19:13).

J. Those who ministered to the Lord had to present to Him the fat and the blood—Ezek. 44:15:

1. Whereas the fat of the offerings typifies the preciousness of the person of Christ, the blood signifies the redemptive work of Christ.
2. In our service to God we must present both to Him; the blood is for God's holiness and righteousness, and the fat is for God's glory.

Day 3

K. Those who ministered to the Lord had to be clothed with linen material, not with woolen garments or with anything that caused sweat—vv. 17-18:

1. Linen garments signify a daily living and walk in the life-giving Spirit by the life of Christ; such a living and walk is pure, clean, and fine.
2. Woolen garments would cause the priests to sweat (v. 18), a sign of fallen man laboring under God's curse, without God's blessing, by his own energy and strength (Gen. 3:19).
3. The work that causes sweat is the work that comes out of human effort without the blessing from God the Father; everyone ministering to the Lord must do a work that causes no sweat, a work without human effort and fleshly strength—Isa. 30:15a.
4. If we spend an adequate amount of time in God's presence and deal properly with Him, there is no need to sweat before man; we can accomplish the most amount of work with the least amount of strength—cf. Matt. 11:28-30.

Day 4

L. "Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers...As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the

Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”—Acts 13:1-2:

1. This is the work of the New Testament and the unique principle for the work of the New Testament—the work of the Holy Spirit can be revealed only at the time of ministering to the Lord.
2. Only at the time of ministering to the Lord will the Holy Spirit send some forth; if we do not place ministering to the Lord as the top priority, everything will be out of order; only the Holy Spirit has the authority to commission men to work.
3. To minister to the Lord is not to forsake all the work on the outside; instead, all the work on the outside should be based on our ministry to the Lord.
4. We go forth, out from our ministry to the Lord, rather than out from our own desires, which have no basis in the ministry to the Lord.

Day 5

II. “After the second veil, a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, having...the Ark of the Covenant covered about everywhere with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron’s rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant”—Heb. 9:3-4:

A. The hidden manna is the portion of Christ that we enjoy in the presence of God when there is no distance between us and Him; when there is no distance between us and the Lord, we enjoy Christ in the most intimate and hidden way; this is the enjoyment of the hidden manna, the hidden portion of Christ—Exo. 16:31-36:

1. To overcome the condition of the church in Pergamos is to separate ourselves from the general practice of today’s Christianity and to remain in the presence of God ministering directly to Him, not to anything else; here we enjoy

something of Christ that all those who are far off from His presence cannot taste—Rev. 2:17.

2. If we want to enjoy the hidden manna, there must be no distance between us and God; all the distance between us and the Lord must be eliminated—Ezek. 1:22, 26.
3. When we are ministering to the Lord and enjoying Him as the hidden manna, we have direct fellowship with Him and know His heart and His intention; it is in the presence of the Lord that we can be charged with Him, with His intention, and with all that He wants us to do.
4. When we are ministering to the Lord, we will have God’s commitment because we are in His presence, realizing that there is no distance between us and God.

Day 6

B. The budding rod signifies that Christ, the resurrected One, should be our life, our living, and the resurrection life within us and that this life should bud, blossom, and bear fruit to maturity—Num. 17:8:

1. After the children of Israel rebelled, as recorded in Numbers 16, God commanded the twelve leaders to take twelve rods according to the twelve tribes of Israel and put them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony; then He said, “The rod of the man whom I choose shall bud”—17:5.
2. All twelve rods were leaf less, rootless, dry, and dead; whichever one budded was the one chosen by God; here we see that resurrection is the basis of God’s selection and that the basis of service is something apart from our natural life; thus, the budding rod signifies our experience of Christ in His resurrection as our acceptance by God for authority in the God-given ministry.
3. The principle to every service lies in the budding rod; God returned all the eleven rods to the leaders but kept Aaron’s rod inside the Ark as an eternal memorial; this means that resurrection is an eternal principle in our service to

God—vv. 9-10:

- a. Resurrection means that everything is of God and not of us; it means that God alone is able and that we are not able.
- b. Resurrection means that everything is done by God, not by ourselves; all those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it.
- c. As long as the natural strength remains, the power of resurrection has no ground for manifestation; as long as Sarah could conceive a child, Isaac would not come—Gen. 18:10-15; 21:1-3, 6-7.
- d. What we can do belongs to the natural realm, and what is impossible for us to do belongs to the realm of resurrection; a man must come to the end of himself before he will be convinced of his utter uselessness—Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27.
- e. If a man has never realized his own inability, he can never experience God's ability; resurrection means that we cannot make it and that God is the One who has done everything—cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-9; 4:7.

C. The tablets of the covenant, which are the tablets of the law, signify the law of the divine life, which is the spontaneous power, automatic function, innate ability, and divine capacity of the divine life—Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; cf. Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; 10:12-13:

1. The law, this divine capacity, of life can do everything in us for the carrying out of God's economy:
 - a. According to this capacity, we can know God, live God, and be constituted with God in His life and nature so that we may become His increase, His enlargement, to be His fullness for His eternal expression—Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19-21.
 - b. Furthermore, the capacity of the inner law of life constitutes us to be the

members of the Body of Christ with all kinds of functions—4:11, 16.

2. While the divine life grows in us, the law of life functions to shape us, to conform us, to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:2, 29:
 - a. The law of life does not regulate us from doing wrong; it regulates the shape of life.
 - b. The law of life does not primarily function in the negative sense of telling us what not to do; rather, while life grows, the law of life functions in the positive sense of shaping us, that is, conforming us, to the image of Christ.
 - c. Through the function of the law of life, we all shall become the mature sons of God, and God will have His universal expression.

WEEK 9 – DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 44:10-11 ...The Levites...shall minister in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house. They shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them.

15 But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok...shall come near to Me to minister to Me...

Are we really ministering to the believers or to Him? Is the focus of our work really on the work or on the Lord? There is a great difference. Ministering to the house is extremely different from ministering to Jesus Christ. We can see many today ministering and serving, but they are only in the outer court. They have not come near to the table.... The ministering that the Lord is after—the ministering that He is continually after—is to minister to Him. His desire is not for us to do His work. Laboring is certainly important, plowing the fields is important, and feeding the cattle is also important, but the Lord does not look at these things. Rather, He is after the ministering to God and the serving of God. He wants His slaves to minister to Him and to serve Him. Oh, how happy are those who are able to minister to Him. (CWWN, vol. 11, “Ministering to the House or to God?” p. 783)

Today’s Reading

Ezekiel 44:11 is very different from verses 15 and 16.... Verse 11 speaks of ministering to the house. Verses 15 and 16 speak of ministering to “Me”—that is, the ministering to Jehovah.... According to God there were two groups of Levites. Although all were Levites belonging to God and to one tribe, the majority among them were only worthy to minister to the house. Yet there was a small minority, who were not only Levites but also the sons of Zadok, who could minister to “Me”—that is, minister to Jehovah.

Brothers and sisters, do you know what it is to minister to the house and what

it is to minister to Jehovah? Do you know the difference between these two kinds of ministering?... Many feel that it would be wonderful if they could save sinners and ask them to join the church, thereby causing the church to grow in numbers. But I say this is merely ministering to the house.... In God's eyes, not only is there the ministry to the house; there is also a better ministry.... We are not only ministering before the Lord; rather, we are ministering to the Lord.

God has only one goal: to have men belong absolutely to "Me." In other words, He wants us to be before "My " presence and minister to "Me." God's unique goal is not in so many things. Rather, it is in "Me."

To minister to the Lord does not mean that you neglect the house. Rather, what I am saying is that there is not only ministering to the house, but there is something deeper, which is ministering to the Lord.... No doubt it is good to preach the gospel. It is also good to save the sinners and help the brothers and sisters make progress....However, your eyes are only set on the brothers and sisters. This is ministering to the house. Since you are ministering before people, you are ministering to them and not to the Lord. This does not mean that those who minister to the Lord will not do these things. Those who minister to the Lord will also do these things, but their one goal is to be for the Lord. They treasure men absolutely for the Lord's sake. Hence, their focus is not only on men. If you come to the Lord's presence, focusing only on Him, you will spontaneously be able to minister to the brothers also. This is a big difference.

We must see clearly that outwardly there may not be much difference between ministering to the house and ministering to the Lord....There is a basic question: What is your motivation for doing this? The question hinges on whether or not the Lord occupies the first place in your heart.... Your motive tells everything about your situation. Your situation hinges on why you do things. (CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?" pp. 784-785, 789, 785-786)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?"

WEEK 9 – DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 44:15-16 But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok...shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to present to Me the fat and the blood, declares the Lord Jehovah. It is they who will enter My sanctuary, and it is they who will come near to My table to minister to Me, and they will keep My charge.

The work has areas that are appealing to the flesh.... For example, [if you ask] a person who is active... [and who speaks] a great deal...to go to the countryside to preach the gospel, ...he is very happy. Why do you think he does this? He is basically an active person who loves to speak. I can tell you frankly that he is not doing this for the Lord because many times he is not able to do the things he does not like, even though the Lord really wants him to.... A sister may think it is dull to stay home and take care of the children, to be someone's wife, and to do all the household chores! If she could be set free to speak of spiritual things here and speak of the Lord's things there, how good it would be! But this is the attraction of the flesh and is not spiritual. It is solely for the pleasure of the self.

Many consider that ministering to the Lord in the sanctuary is not that interesting. But this is the place where the Lord wants us to be. Here it is calm and dark [with only seven olive oil lamps], and there are no crowds or great multitudes of people.... Here one finds the genuine ministry to the Lord. (CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?" pp. 786-787, 790)

Today's Reading

Men can see you [outside the house]; the work is very apparent. Others will praise you, saying that you are wonderful and strong because you have killed many cattle and sheep and tied them to the altar. Many people are thrilled at the outward achievements of the work.

The basis for the ministry to the Lord, the basic requirement for ministering

to the Lord, is to draw near to the Lord [cf. Ezek. 44:15]. It is to be bold enough to come before Him, to sit firmly before Him, and to stand before Him.... No one can minister to Him without drawing near to Him. No one can minister to the Lord without approaching Him in prayer. Spiritual power is not the power of preaching but the power of praying. How much you pray indicates how much inner strength you really possess. No spiritual matter requires more strength than prayer. What does it mean to stand? It means to wait for a command, to wait upon the Lord to speak His will.

There are only two types of sin before God. One is rebellion against His command. If He gives an order and you refuse to do it, it is sin. But there is another type of sin, which is doing something without the Lord's command. One is the sin of rebellion, and the other is the sin of presumption. One ignores what the Lord has said; the other does what the Lord has not said.

If we want to minister to the Lord in the Holy of Holies, we must spend time before the Lord and pray more.... We need to pray to be ushered into God's presence and to draw near to Him. Hence, to pray is to stand before God; it is to seek His will before Him.

In order to stand before the Lord, it is necessary "to present to Me the fat and the blood" (Ezek. 44:15).... God is holy and righteous in the Holy Place and... God is glorious in the Holy of Holies. God's glory fills the Holy of Holies; God's holiness and righteousness fill the Holy Place. The blood is for God's holiness and righteousness, while the fat is for His glory. The fat is for God to gain something, while the blood deals with God's holiness and righteousness.... The blood deals with sin.... The fat is the richest and best part, and it satisfies God's heart. Thus, it is for God's glory

We cannot minister to God if we do not know death and resurrection.... When His incorruptible blood was poured out, we too were poured out.... Everything of the natural life was poured out.... He did not only pour out His own life, but ours as well. Hence, we have to continually stand on this fact and deny our soul-life. (CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?" pp. 791-796)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?"

WEEK 9 – DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 44:17-18 And when they enter the gates of the inner court they shall be clothed with linen garments, and no wool will come upon them while they minister in the gates of the inner court and inside it. They shall have linen turbans on their heads and have linen trousers over their loins; they shall not gird themselves with anything that causes sweat.

Those who ministered to God before Him had to be clothed with linen garments, linen bonnets on their heads, and linen breeches on their loins. Their whole body was clothed with linen material. Ezekiel 44:17 also says that no wool should come upon them. No one who ministered to the Lord could be clothed with wool. Before God, no one could ever put on woolen garments. Why?...[Verse 18] reveals that all those who minister to the Lord should not sweat. All work that produces sweat is not pleasing to God and is rejected by Him. What is the meaning of sweat? The first sweat in the entire world was shed by Adam when he was driven out of the garden of Eden. Genesis 3 tells us that, due to Adam's sin, God punished him by saying, "By the sweat of your face / You will eat bread" [v. 19]. Sweat is a result of the curse. Due to God's curse, the ground ceased to yield its fruit; due to the absence of God's blessing, human effort is necessary, and this causes sweat. What is the work that causes sweat? It is the work that comes out of human effort without the blessing from God the Father. Everyone ministering to God should absolutely abstain from any work that causes sweat. (CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?" pp. 798-799)

Today's Reading

All of God's work is serene; it is not accomplished by running around but by sitting down. Although outwardly one may be very busy, he is very restful within; although outwardly it is hot, within it is very calm. This work is done by sitting down. This is the work that causes no sweat! All the real work before God is not

accidental and not accomplished by fleshly effort.... In slaying cattle and sheep outside, serving sinners, and ministering to the saints, sweating is permissible. If you are doing that kind of work, you can sweat all you want. But those who minister to the Lord in the Holy Place absolutely cannot sweat. God does not need man's sweating. No doubt, all work is busy, but God's work does not need fleshly strength. I do not mean that there is no need of spiritual strength. In fact, how much spiritual strength you need and how much suffering you have to go through is hard to say.

The most important aspect of spiritual work is to deal with God. The first person we should contact is God, not man. The work of the flesh is different; the first one it contacts is man. Hence, if a work cannot be accomplished without man, it is not the work of God. How precious it is to be in God's presence. We have to deal with Him alone. We are not idle; rather, we are doing a work that causes no sweat. What does this mean? If we deal properly with God, there is no need to sweat before man. We can accomplish the most amount of work with the least amount of strength.... God is working, and there is no need of human strength and sweating.

Brothers and sisters, we should examine ourselves very honestly before God. Let us ask Him, "O Lord, am I really ministering to You or to the work? O Lord, is my ministry unto the house or unto You?" If we are sweating from morning till evening, then we can surely say to ourselves that we are ministering to the house and not to the Lord.... There is more than just ministering to the people. Brothers and sisters, too many are already ministering to the people. Why do we still want to add our portion there?... I hope we all can say to the Lord, "O God, I want to minister to You. I am willing to drop everything, to let go of all the work and forsake all the outward things. I want to minister to You and do a spiritual work. I am willing to give up all the outward things. I want to enter within, more deeply within." (CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?" pp. 799-801)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?"

WEEK 9 – DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 44:16 It is they who will enter My sanctuary, and it is they who will come near to My table to minister to Me, and they will keep My charge.

Acts 13:1-2 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers....And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

Ezekiel 44:16 tells us that there is a place to minister to the Lord. The ministry to the Lord is in the sanctuary—a hidden, quiet place, not public like the outer court. Brothers and sisters, may He grace us so that we would not consider it a suffering to be in the sanctuary. Actually, a day there is better than a thousand days in another place.

[Acts 13:1-2 illustrates] the work of the New Testament. It is also the unique principle for the work of the New Testament. The work of the Holy Spirit can only be revealed at the time of ministering to the Lord. Only at the time of ministering to the Lord will the Holy Spirit send some forth. If we do not place ministering to the Lord as the top priority, everything will be out of order. (CWWN, vol. 11, “Ministering to the House or to God?” pp. 797, 801-802)

Today’s Reading

The work of the church in Antioch began during the time of ministering to the Lord. The Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” [Acts 13:2]. I repeat again, God does not want men to volunteer for His army. The soldiers who volunteer for the army are not wanted by God. God only has conscripted, or drafted, soldiers. We know that there are two kinds of soldiers in an army: one kind volunteer to join the army, and the other kind are drafted by the country. Based on the orders of the country, they have no choice except to serve as soldiers. But in the Lord’s work, there are only drafted

soldiers; there are no voluntary soldiers. Therefore, no one can say, because of his preference, he will go and preach the gospel; God will not use him. God's work has been greatly damaged by too many volunteer soldiers. They cannot declare as the Lord has declared, "Him who sent Me..." O brothers and sisters, this is not a light matter. God's work cannot be accomplished according to our will. God's work is completely His. We must check to see if this work is out of ourselves or out of the Lord's call. We must ask ourselves if we have volunteered to join the army or if we have been drafted by God. All the volunteer soldiers will not last; all those who recommended themselves will not last because God only wants soldiers who have been drafted by Him. When they ministered to the Lord, Paul and Barnabas did not say, "We will go forth to spread the gospel." Rather, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Only the Holy Spirit has the authority to commission men to work. Concerning this matter, the church has no authority at all. Yet within many missionary societies and crusades there is the sending forth of men by men. God never allows such things. We should only minister to the Lord, not to the house. God desires to have those who will minister to Him directly and receive the commission by the Holy Spirit directly.

I say again, to minister to the Lord is not to forsake all the work on the outside. To minister to the Lord is not to give up serving in the villages. What I say is that all the work on the outside should be based on our ministry to the Lord. We go forth, out from our ministry to the Lord, rather than out from our own desires, which have no basis in the ministry to the Lord. There is a vast difference between these two matters. The difference is greater than that between heaven and earth. All those with experience realize that there is no difference greater than the difference between ministering to the Lord and ministering to the house. (CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?" pp. 802-803)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 11, "Ministering to the House or to God?"

WEEK 9 – DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 9:3-4 And after the second veil, a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar and the Ark of the Covenant covered about everywhere with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron's rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant.

The eating of spiritual food altogether depends upon the distance between us and the Lord.... If we are far off from the Lord, we cannot partake of any spiritual food. When the children of Israel were in Egypt, they could not eat the manna, because the manna was the spiritual food for God's people in the wilderness.

After the children of Israel had enjoyed the manna, God commanded the Israelites to present an omer of manna to Him (Exo. 16:33).... The hidden manna is simply the top portion of the manna given by God and offered back to God.... It was placed in a golden pot and hidden in the Ark in the Holy of Holies.... If you are a priest, you may be in the Holy Place and be closer to God than the Levites who are serving in the outer court. Nevertheless, although you may be a priest ministering in the Holy Place, you are not yet in the Holy of Holies. Thus, there is still a distance between you and God. If you want to enjoy the hidden manna, there must be no distance between you and God. All the distance between you and the Lord must be eliminated. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 665-666)

Today's Reading

After the children of Israel had entered into the good land, they ate the produce of the land.... At the time of the feasts, however, they enjoyed the special portion, the one top tenth, because they were closer to God, having come together to meet around God's dwelling place where they enjoyed the top portion of the produce of the good land, which they had offered to God (Deut. 12:17-18; 14:22-23). Another tenth of their produce was given to the priests and the Levites who served in the outer court or in the Holy Place and who were closer to God than most of the people were. Thus, the closer an Israelite was to God, the better was his

enjoyment of the spiritual food.... [The] topmost portion...was...given to the high priest who ministered to God in the Holy of Holies, ... the one closest to God. Some may say that the hidden manna was kept only for a memorial, not for eating.... [However, in Revelation 2:17] the Lord promises that the omer of manna which is kept in the presence of God as a memorial will be given...to the overcomers in the church at Pergamos.

The top portion of Christ...is kept in the presence of God, reserved especially for those who do not serve anything other than God Himself.... To overcome the condition of the church in Pergamos is to separate yourself from the general practice of today's Christianity and to remain in the presence of God ministering directly to Him, not to anything else....Here we enjoy something of Christ which all those who are far off from His presence cannot taste....The hidden manna...is that portion of Christ which we enjoy in the presence of God when there is no distance between us and Him.

When there is no distance between us and the Lord, we enjoy Christ in the most intimate and hidden way. This is the enjoyment of the hidden manna, the hidden portion of Christ.

The closer we are to Him, the more service we render to Him. Eventually, when we enter into the presence of the divine glory in the Holy of Holies, all service ceases. Here we only have the presence of the Lord and enjoy the hidden Christ, the hidden manna. It is here that we have direct fellowship with the Lord and know His heart and His intention. It is here that we can be charged with Him, with His intention, and with all He wants us to do.... We have God's commitment...because we are in His presence, ...realizing that there is no distance between us and God [and having] the deep inner sense that we are enjoying the hidden Christ as the top portion of the produce of the good land. This is the hidden manna. Praise the Lord! (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 667-673)

Further Reading: Life-study of Hebrews, msgs. 59-60

WEEK 9 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Num. 17:8 And on the next day Moses went into the Tent of the Testimony, and there was the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi: it had budded; it even put forth buds and produced blossoms and bore ripe almonds.

Jer. 31:33 But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel...declares Jehovah: I will put My law in their inward parts and write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.

The budding rod is related to the building up of God's people...The budding rod signifies that Christ, the resurrected One, should be our life, our living, and the resurrection life within us, and that this life should bud, blossom, and bear almonds.

In the Holy of Holies we enjoy Christ in God's presence. This enjoyment causes us to bud, not with our ability but with the resurrected life. In this way, God can exercise His authority for the building up of His people. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 687, 690, 697)

Today's Reading

God commanded the twelve leaders to take twelve rods according to the twelve tribes of Israel, and put them in the Tent of Meeting before the Ark [Num. 17:6-7]...All twelve rods were leafless, rootless, dry, and dead. Whichever one budded was the one that was chosen by God. Here we see that resurrection is the basis of God's selection. It is also the basis of authority... This [also] shows us that the basis of service is something apart from our natural life. If a man has never realized his own inability, he can never experience God's ability... Resurrection means that you cannot make it and that God is the One who has done everything.

The principle to every service lies in the budding rod. God returned all the eleven rods to the leaders, but kept Aaron's rod inside the Ark as an eternal

memorial. This means that resurrection is an eternal principle in our service to God.... Authority to serve God lies in resurrection, not in a person himself. All services to the Lord must pass through death and resurrection before they will be acceptable to God. Resurrection means that everything is of God and not of us. It means that God alone is able and that we are not able. Resurrection means that everything is done by God, not by ourselves. All those who think highly of themselves and who hold a misguided judgment of themselves have never realized what resurrection is....All those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it. As long as the natural strength remains, the power of resurrection has no ground for manifestation. As long as Sarah could beget a child, Isaac would not come. What we can do belongs to the natural realm, and what is impossible for us to do belongs to the realm of resurrection.... A man must come to the end of himself before he will be convinced of his utter uselessness. (CWWN, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," pp. 243-244, 248-250)

According to its life, the law of the new covenant is the Triune God, and according to its function, it is the almighty divine capacity. This divine capacity can do everything in us for the carrying out of God's economy. According to this capacity we can know God, live God, and be constituted with God in His life and nature that we may become His increase, His enlargement, to be His fullness for His eternal expression (Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19-21). Furthermore, the capacity of the inner law of life constitutes us the members of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30) with all kinds of functions (Rom. 12:4-8; Eph. 4:11, 16). (Jer. 31:33, footnote 1)

The law of life does not regulate us from doing wrong; it regulates the shape of life.... The law of life does not primarily function in the negative sense of telling us what not to do. No, rather, while life grows the law of life functions in the positive sense of shaping us, that is, conforming us to the image of Christ.... Eventually, through the function of the law of life, we all shall become the mature sons of God, and God will have His universal, corporate expression. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 770, 772)

Further Reading: Life-study of Hebrews, msgs. 61-62, 64-65, 69; CWWN, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," ch. 15

WEEK 9 — HYMN

To the holiest place I'd come

Prayer — In the Holiest

769

Musical notation for the hymn 'To the holiest place I'd come'. The score is in 2/4 time, G major, and consists of two staves. The first staff contains the melody and lyrics: '1. To the ho - liest place I'd come, There with - in the veil to be;'. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics: '9 There to touch the throne of grace, Let life's wa - ter flow thru me.' Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, G/B, C, G/B, C, Am, A7, D, G, Em, G/D, C, G/D, D7, G.

2. Now the holiest place of all
Right within my spirit is;
Here the Lord in me abides,
And my spirit joins with His.
3. To my spirit I'd return,
For 'tis here the Lord I'll meet;
O how marvellous it is!
He's within, in me complete.
4. Fragrance of the risen Christ
Thru my spirit may be spread;
If in spirit I will pray
Christ will be exhibited.
5. If in spirit Him I touch,
With His riches filled I'll be;
Life and light and love and grace
As a stream will flow thru me.
6. Touching deeply, richly I
Of Himself experience,
Thus the law of life I touch
And His clear anointing sense.
7. In my spirit deeper still
I would touch the Lord I love,
Touch Him in His hidden depth
And His hidden manna prove.
8. When the resurrection life
Is made real in pow'r to me,
As the rod with sprouting buds,
I will then accepted be.
9. Here I find the throne of grace,
Where the living water flows
As a river full of grace
Into me grace to bestow.
10. Then when'er we meet to pray,
All our spirits we'll release;
Mingled will our spirits be,
And we'll serve the Lord as priests.
11. This the holiest place is too,
Where we all may touch the Lord,
Touch His throne in many ways
Till His grace on us is poured.

