

Sabbath S Lesson #10 – Jesus Opens *the Way Through the Veil* – 26 Feb-4 Mar 2022

Christ “is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24). While some may seek to substitute a ministry for a place, we would emphasise a ministry in a place, and that place is the sanctuary in heaven. Since our Lord as the ministering High Priest is real, then the place where He ministers must also be real.

Sunday: Jesus Before the Father – Our Lord Jesus Christ “appear in the presence of God for us.” Man cannot plead his own case before God. However confident others may be of their power to stand and plead their own case before God, we are glad for the promise that “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). These texts plainly teach that man has an advocate; that advocate is Christ; and He is now making intercession for us. “The intercession of Christ in our behalf is that of presenting His divine merits in the offering of Himself to the Father as our substitute and surety; for He ascended up on high to make an atonement for our transgressions. ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world’ (1 John 2:1, 2). ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins’ (1 John 4:10). ‘He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them’ (Hebrews 7:25)” {FW 105.3}. Through the intercession of Christ we are reconciled to our God.

Monday: God’s Invitation – “This Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:25-26). As there are the two covenants, so there are two cities to which they pertain. Jerusalem which now is pertains to the old covenant – to Mount Sinai. It will never be free, but will be replaced by the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, “which cometh down out of heaven” (Revelation 3:12; 21:1-5). It is the city for which Abraham looked, the “city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10; Revelation 21:14). There are many who build great hopes – all their hope – on Jerusalem which now is. For such the veil remaineth “untaken away in the reading of the old testament” (2 Corinthians 3:14). They are in reality looking to Mount Sinai and the old covenant for salvation, and it is not to be found there. “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake); but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:18-24). Whoever looks to the present Jerusalem for blessings, is looking to the old covenant, to Mount Sinai, to bondage; whoever worships with his face toward the New Jerusalem, and who expects blessings only from it, is looking to the new covenant, to Mount Zion, to freedom; for “Jerusalem which is above is free.” From what is it free? – Free from sin; and since it is our mother, it begets us anew, so that we also become free from sin. Free from the law? – Yes, certainly, for the law has no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus. But do not let anybody deceive you with vain words, telling you that you may now trample God’s law underfoot, – that law which He Himself proclaimed in such awful majesty from Sinai. Coming to Mount Sion, – to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, – we become free from sin, – from transgression of the law.

The basis of God's throne in Zion is His law. From the throne proceed the same "lightnings and thunders and voices" (Revelation 4:5; 11:19) as from Sinai, because the selfsame law is there. But it is "the throne of grace," and, therefore, in spite of the thunders, we come to it boldly, assured that from God, the Judge of all, who sits upon the mercy-seat, we shall obtain mercy. Nay, more, we shall also find grace to help in time of need, – grace to help us in the hour of temptation to sin,—for out of the midst of the throne, from the slain Lamb (Revelation 5:6), flows the river of water of life, bringing to us from the heart of Christ "the law of the Spirit of life." We drink of it, we bathe in it, and we find cleansing from all sin.

Tuesday: The Need for a Veil – It was because of their unfaithfulness that they needed a veil as they needed a tabernacle made by hand. "And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (Leviticus 26:11-12). How are we to understand this text as to what God really desired here, was He desiring only to be around them or was He also to be in them in their hearts? Paul quote this very text and says in 2 Corinthians 6:16 "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Notice Paul quote what God had said in Leviticus and says God will "dwell in them" yet the text says God will "walk among" them. Paul understood that God desired not to be "among" but "in" them. In Exodus 25:8, God said, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." In one sense this was a great honour; for, as Moses said, "What nation is there so great, that hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?" (Deut. 4:7). Yet, the command to build the sanctuary, together with the reason for it, is one of the most sorrowful things to be found in the Scriptures. "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them!" What a sad thing! that God's people, whom He had delivered from bondage for the express purpose of dwelling not simply among them, but in them, had to have a house made with hands in order that His glory might be seen among them. Thus, the tabernacle was at once a witness of God's presence and of the unfaithfulness of the children of Israel. "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:48). "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? for all these things hath my hand made" (Isaiah 66:1-2). It is evident that the tabernacle built by Moses could not be the real dwelling-place of God, and every Jew ought to have been impressed by that truth every time he looked at it. Solomon knew it well, for at the dedication of the temple that he built, which was far larger and grander than the first tabernacle, he said, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded" (1 Kings 8:27). What then is God's dwelling place? "Where is the place that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?" "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word" (Isaiah 66:1-2). "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). The human body is the temple of God's Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). This is the true dwelling of God.

Wednesday: The New and Living Way Through the Veil – What does it mean to have a new and living way? It is to truly live in the present, not in the future. Read 1 Peter 1:5-9. Salvation belongs to us to-day just as much as it will when in the kingdom of God. No one but ourselves can deprive us of it. Says Peter, "Receiving [present time] the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Our present salvation is our only hope of a future salvation. "Kept by the power of God" is the expression used by Peter, and it denotes precisely the same condition – "being justified by faith" – in the fifth chapter of Romans.

Thursday: They Will See His Face – We will see His face then only if we see His face by faith now. "He is not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27) and we should be "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith" (Hebrews 12:2), not as One who "is to come," but as One "who is." Our hope to see His face is our personal acquaintance with Him now. If we know Him, and love His presence with us, then we shall "love His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8). The Lord can never be the eternal reward of any of whom He is not the present reward.