

WEEK 12 — OUTLINE

The Vision of God in a Transparent and Clear Heaven and the Heavenly Vision concerning the Desire of God's Heart to Have a Dwelling Place with Man on Earth

Scripture Reading: Exo. 24:9-11, 16-18; 25:1-9; 29:45-46; 33:11a, 18-23; Matt. 5:8; Job 42:5; Rev. 22:4

<< DAY 1 >>

I. “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...And they beheld God” (Exo. 24:10-11):

A. Related to the matter of seeing God, especially seeing God's face, there is a theological problem for which there is no solution (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12a; Rev. 22:4a):

1. On the one hand, according to Exodus 33:20 and 23b, Jehovah said to Moses, “You cannot see My face, for no man shall see Me and live...My face shall not be seen”; on the other hand, verse 11a says, “Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion.”
2. In a sense, we can talk to God face to face, but in another sense, we cannot see God's face; this is a matter not of contradiction but of degree or extent (John 1:18; Rev. 22:4a).
3. Christ is the cleft rock, the everlasting rock cleft for us; only in the crucified Christ can we see God (Exo. 33:21-23; 17:6; cf. Matt. 5:8; Rev. 22:4a).

B. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8):

1. God is light; light is the nature of God's expression (1 John 1:5):
 - a. The Triune God, as revealed in the light of the gospel, is light (2 Cor. 4:4, 6).
 - b. To see God is to see light, and to see light is to see God (1 John 1:5; Matt. 5:8; Psalms 36:9b).

<< DAY 2 >>

2. The condition for seeing God is having a pure heart (Matt. 5:8; Psalms 36:9b):
 - a. A pure heart desires only God and is focused on God; it is a heart that is for nothing else in the universe except God.
 - b. Those who seek God out of a pure heart have God as their only possession and their unique desire on earth; God is their unique goal (Psalms 73:25).
 - c. To be pure in heart is to be single in purpose, to have the single goal of accomplishing God's will for God's glory (Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9; 1 Cor. 10:31).

- d. If in seeking God we are pure in heart, single in heart (the ground where Christ as the seed of life grows—Matt. 13:19), we will see God.
- C. “I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You” (Job 42:5):
 1. In the New Testament sense, seeing God equals gaining God (Matt. 5:8).
 2. To gain God is to receive God in His element, in His life, and in His nature so that we may be constituted with God (Rom. 8:11; Eph. 3:16-17a).
 3. All of God’s redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified people will see God’s face (Rev. 22:4).
 4. Seeing God transforms us, because in seeing God we receive His element into us, and our old element is discharged; this metabolic process is transformation (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2; cf. 1 John 3:2).
 5. To see God is to be transformed into the glorious image of Christ, the God-man, that we may express God in His life and represent Him in His authority (Gen. 1:26; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4; Col. 1:15; 3:10; Heb. 1:3; Matt. 13:43).

« DAY 3 »

- D. When we come to Exodus 24:1-2 and 9-18, we are at the threshold of the heavenly visions contained in the following chapters; unless we come to this threshold, we will not be able to see the heavenly vision of God’s dwelling place:
 1. Beneath God’s feet Moses and the leaders of Israel saw something that had the appearance of a large, transparent stone; Moses could only liken what he saw under God’s feet to a transparent sapphire stone, which was like heaven itself for clearness.
 2. In our fellowship with the Lord, we may have a clear sky and see a work of sapphire stone beneath Him—the vision of God in a transparent and clear heaven.
 3. Only when we are in such a clear atmosphere can we receive the heavenly vision of the building of God’s dwelling place (vv. 9-11):
 - a. In our fellowship with the Lord, our sky will become clear and transparent, and it will seem that in front of our eyes there is something that resembles the body of heaven itself for clearness (v. 10).
 - b. In such an environment we will see God and the heavenly vision concerning the desire of His heart to have a dwelling place with man on earth (25:8; 29:45-46).
 4. Moses was actually the only one to receive the direct vision of the tabernacle; Moses was on the top of the mountain, dwelling with God under His glory and receiving the vision of His dwelling place (25:8; 24:15-18).

« DAY 4 »

5. It took Moses forty days and forty nights to see the revelation of God’s dwelling place

(v. 18); this indicates that receiving revelation from God requires a long period of time, which is a trial or a test to us.

II. “Let them make a sanctuary for Me that I may dwell in their midst” (25:8; cf. 29:45-46):

A. The book of Exodus reveals that the goal of God’s salvation is the building of God’s dwelling place on earth (25:8-9; 29:45-46; 40:1-2, 34-38):

1. At the mountain of God, through Moses God’s people saw the revelation of the desire of God’s heart—to have a dwelling place on earth (25:8-9; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:9b; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16).
2. The physical tabernacle as God’s dwelling place was actually a symbol of a corporate people, the children of Israel as the house of God (Exo. 25:8-9; Heb. 3:6).

« DAY 5 »

B. In the Bible the word tabernacle is used in three ways:

1. It refers to the tabernacle built at the foot of Mount Sinai.
2. It denotes the Lord Jesus as God’s tabernacle with man; the tabernacle in Exodus is a type of Christ as the tabernacle of God (John 1:14).
3. It refers to the New Jerusalem—the ultimate, consummate, enlarged tabernacle of God—which includes God’s redeemed people from both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Rev. 21:2-3).

C. “Tell the children of Israel to take for Me a heave offering. From every man whose heart makes him willing you shall take My heave offering” (Exo. 25:2):

1. The heave offering typifies the uplifted Christ, the Christ who was lifted up in His ascension (Acts 1:9).
2. The fact that the materials for the building of the tabernacle were offered to God by His people as a heave offering signifies that the church is built up not with any natural materials but with the Christ who has been gained, possessed, experienced, and enjoyed by God’s people in resurrection and in the heavenlies (Phil. 3:7-14; Eph. 3:8; 2:5-6; cf. 1 Cor. 3:12).
3. All the materials for the building of the tabernacle signify the virtues of Christ’s person and work (Exo. 25:3-7):
 - a. Twelve kinds of materials were used, in three categories (vv. 3-7): minerals, signifying Christ’s building life (1 Cor. 3:9-12); plants, signifying Christ’s generating life (John 12:24); and animals, signifying Christ’s redeeming life (1:29).
 - b. The redeeming life is for the generating life, and the generating life is for the building life.
 - c. That the minerals are mentioned as the first category indicates that whatever Christ is and whatever He has done and is doing are all for God’s building (Matt. 16:18).

- d. In the New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of God's building, there will be only minerals—gold, pearl, and precious stones; however, in order to arrive at God's goal, the redeeming life and the generating life are needed (Rev. 21:18-21; John 1:29; 12:24).

« DAY 6 »

- D. "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" (Exo. 25:9):
1. In building the church, God works according to a prescribed and revealed plan (Heb. 8:5; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20):
 - a. The most important thing in our spiritual work is a knowledge of the pattern shown on the mountain (Exo. 25:9; Heb. 8:5).
 - b. The pattern shown on the mountain is the plan; if we do not understand God's plan, it will be impossible for us to do God's work (Eph. 3:4).
 2. The pattern of the tabernacle and all its furnishings is a full type of both the individual Christ and the corporate Christ as the Body, the church, including many details of the experience of Christ for the church life and a full picture of the church life with all its details (Heb. 9:4).

<< WEEK 12 — DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Matt. 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

According to Exodus 33:21-23 the Lord said to Moses, “Here, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand upon the rock; and while My glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with My hand until I have passed by. And I will take away My hand, and you will see My back; but My face shall not be seen.” Christ is the cleft rock, the everlasting rock cleft for us. Only in the crucified Christ can we see God. I am not able to explain in full what this means. I can only speak in a general way that in the cleft Christ we can see God to some extent. According to 33:23, we can see His back, but not His face. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1881)

Today's Reading

[In Exodus 33] there are some theological problems for which there is no solution. First, in 33:2 the Lord said that He would send His Angel before the people. No doubt, the Angel here refers to Christ, and Christ is God Himself. As long as Christ goes with the people, this means that God goes with them. Why, then, did God say that His Angel would go, but that He Himself would not go? Furthermore, why, after further bargaining by Moses, did God say that His presence would go with them? God said that both His Angel and His presence would go with the people. The Angel refers to Christ, and the presence actually denotes God's face. Therefore, we have the problem of God's Angel and His presence going with the people, yet God still said that He Himself would not go with them.

Another problem is related to God's word to Moses in verse 20 concerning seeing His face. The Lord said, “You cannot see My face, for no man shall see Me and live.” However, verse 11 says, “Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion.” How can we explain this?

Furthermore, in these verses we see that God's face is His glory, that His glory is His presence, and that His presence is His face. How are we to understand all this?...I do not have the solution to these problems. I can only speak according to our limited understanding of what God is. In a sense, we can talk to God face to face. But in another sense, we cannot see God's face. This is not a contradiction. Rather, it is a matter of degree or extent.

[In the same principle], for the Angel of God to go with the children of Israel meant that to a certain extent God went with them. For God's glory to go with them meant that God went with them to a further extent....[In Exodus 14:19] both the Angel of God and the pillar of cloud were there leading the way. It was possible, however, for the children of Israel to have one without the other. It is better, of course, to have both. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1882)

[In 1 John 1:5] the expression, “God is light,” like “God is love” in 4:8 and 16, and “God is Spirit” in John 4:24, is used not in a metaphoric sense but in a predicative sense. These expressions denote and describe the nature of God. In His nature God is Spirit, love, and light. Spirit denotes the nature of God's person; love, the nature of God's essence; and light, the nature of God's expression. (Life-study of 1 John, pp. 46-47)

Matthew 5:8 says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Seeing is related to light. If you can see, there must be light. Without light, it is impossible to see. This verse also says, “They shall see God.” God is light. Therefore, to see God is to see light. The condition for seeing light is having a pure heart; those who are pure in heart can see light.

When the heart is pure, one sees God; when the heart is single, there is light within; when the heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away; and when the heart is pure, one does not slip and can know God further. Since there is such a close relationship between the heart and light, it is necessary to deal with our heart in order to see light. (CWWN, vol. 37, pp. 73-74)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 37, ch. 13; Life-study of 1 John, msg. 5

<< WEEK 12 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

Psa. 73:25 Whom do I have in heaven but You? And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth.

Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye has seen You.

What is light? First John 1:5 says, “God is light.” Only God is light. It is impossible for us to encounter light without encountering God. God is the Father of lights (James 1:17). God is the source of light. Therefore, when we say that we see the light, it means that we see God; we have met Him inwardly. Because we see God, we have light.

What kind of heart enables a person to see God? Those who are pure in heart shall see God. What does pure in heart mean? A pure heart desires only God and is focused on God. It is a heart that is for nothing else in this universe except God. Only those who have such a pure heart can see God and can see light. (CWWN, vol. 37, pp. 74-75)

Today's Reading

Psalm 73:25 reveals that God's pure seeker would have God as his only possession in heaven and his unique desire on earth. God was the psalmist's unique goal. The psalmist did not care for anything except God and gaining Him. In this matter Paul was the same (Phil. 3:8). (Psa. 73:25, footnote 1)

Matthew 5:8 says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” To be righteous is to deal with ourselves, to be merciful is to deal with others, and to be pure in heart is to deal with God. Toward ourselves, we must be strict and allow no excuses. Toward others, we should be merciful, giving them more than they deserve. But toward God we must be pure in heart, seeking nothing besides Him. The reward for being pure in heart is to see God. God is our reward. No reward is greater than God Himself. We gain this reward by being strict, righteous, with ourselves, by being merciful toward others, and by being pure in heart toward God.

To be pure in heart is to be single in purpose, to have the single goal of accomplishing God's will for God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31). This is for the kingdom of the heavens. Our spirit is the organ to receive Christ (John 1:12; 3:6), whereas our heart is the ground where Christ as the seed of life grows (Matt. 13:19). For the kingdom of the heavens we need to be poor in spirit, empty in our spirit, that we may receive Christ. We also need to be pure in heart, single in our heart, that Christ may grow in us without frustration. If we are pure in heart in seeking God, we shall see God. Seeing God is a reward to the pure in heart. This blessing is both for today and for the coming age. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 184-185)

“I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You; / Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6). This indicates that Job gained God in his personal experience (in addition to knowing God in his vain knowledge by tradition) and that he abhorred himself.

Seeing God equals gaining God (Matt. 5:8). To gain God is to receive God in His element, in His life, and in His nature. Eventually, this not only makes us one with God—it even makes us a part of God. I prefer not to use the phrase one with in describing our relationship with God because to be made a part of God, to be constituted with God in His life and nature, is more than being one with God. We see God that we may be constituted with God, yet we do not have any share in the Godhead.

All God's redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, transformed, conformed, and glorified people will see God's face (Rev. 22:4). Seeing God transforms us (2 Cor. 3:18), because in seeing God we receive His element into us. As we receive God, a new element comes into us, and the old element is discharged. This metabolic process is transformation. To see God is to be transformed into the glorious image of God. This makes us a part of God that we may express God in His life and represent Him in His authority. (Life-study of Job, pp. 157-158)

Further Reading: Life-study of Matthew, msg. 15; Life-study of Job, msg. 30

<< WEEK 12 — DAY 3 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 24:16-18 ...The glory of Jehovah settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like consuming fire on the top of the mountain to the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud and went up on the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

We shall consider Exodus 24:1-2, 9-18. When we come to this portion of Exodus, we are at the threshold of the heavenly visions contained in the following chapters. Unless we come to this threshold we shall not be able to see the heavenly visions. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 936)

Today's Reading

We should not try to analyze the Bible according to our natural mentality, and we should not try to systematize biblical doctrine. John 1:18 says that no one has seen God at any time, but Exodus 24 says that the seventy elders and the others who were with Moses saw God. They even saw God's feet. Moses does not say that a paved work of sapphire was under God's feet; he says that what was under His feet was "something like" [v. 10] a paved work of transparent sapphire. In Colossians 1:15 Paul speaks of the invisible God. How can the invisible God be seen? Questions like these remind us that the Bible is divine, spiritual, and mysterious and cannot be systematized or analyzed by the natural mind. We need to apply the record in Exodus 24 to our spiritual experience.

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. This was necessary for seeing the vision of the tabernacle in the Old Testament, and it is necessary also for seeing the vision of the church today. The vast majority of the people, however, were at the foot of the mountain and could not see this view. They might have seen something, but they did not have as full a view as did those who were with Moses on the mountain.

Those who have had this experience of seeing the Lord under a transparent and clear sky will not trade it for anything in the world. Nothing can compare with it.

If you have not had the kind of spiritual vision described here, it may indicate that you have not yet come to Mount Sinai in your experience with the Lord. You need to come to Mount Sinai and stay there with the altar, the sacrifices, and the blood. Then in your fellowship with the Lord, the sky will eventually become clear and transparent. It will seem that in front of your eyes there is something which resembles the body of heaven in its clearness. Then, in such an environment, you will see God and the heavenly vision concerning the desire of His heart to have a dwelling place on earth. The reason there is virtually nothing said among Christians today concerning God's dwelling place is that many believers have never come to Mount Sinai to receive the vision of God's dwelling place. Many of those who are truly saved have not yet come up the mountain to behold the Lord in a transparent and clear heaven.

Moses was actually the only one to receive the direct vision of the tabernacle. The seventy elders who worshipped afar off did not see the vision directly. During the forty days Moses was with the Lord on the mountaintop, they were waiting. Enjoying a transparent sky and a clear view of God, they ate and drank for forty days, while God gave Moses vision after vision concerning the design of the tabernacle. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 939-941, 943)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 36, pp. 268-271; vol. 43, ch. 80

<< WEEK 12 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 29:45-46 And I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel, and I will be their God. And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell in the midst of them; I am Jehovah their God.

While the people were practicing idolatry at the foot of the mountain, Moses was on the top of the mountain dwelling with God under His glory and receiving the vision of His dwelling place. Praise the Lord for the vision through which we know the desire of God's heart. God's desire is to have a dwelling place on earth constituted of Christ and constituted according to Christ. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 944)

Today's Reading

Moses saw the vision when he was on the mountain of God. If we would see the vision of the tabernacle, we also need to be on the mountaintop with the Lord.

When Moses was on the mountain of God, he stayed with God under His glory for forty days and forty nights. In the Bible, the number forty signifies tests or trials. It is difficult for us to stand God's tests. We prefer to see the vision very quickly, within the space of a few minutes. But to see a revelation from God requires a long period of time. It took Moses forty days and forty nights to see this vision. From my experience I can testify that it has taken me forty years to see this vision. Little by little throughout the years, the Lord has shown His revelation. We should not think that we can see the divine revelation in a hasty way....Spiritual things take time. In order to see the vision Moses had to spend forty days and forty nights under the glory on the mountaintop.

The more I study the book of Exodus, the more I love it. Through my reading of this book, I have discovered that it is a book not only on the exodus, but also on God's dwelling place. The title of the book—Exodus—was not given by Moses. It was given by others years later. This title is not all-inclusive, for it covers only part of the contents of the book of Exodus. In the first part of this book we are told how God redeemed His people and enabled them to make their exodus out of Egypt and thereby to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh and the slavery under the Egyptians. As far as the first part of the book is concerned, the title Exodus is comprehensive. But although this title is good, it can cause difficulty for many readers, because it may give them the impression that this book is merely concerned with coming out from under the tyranny of Satan. This title does not include the goal, or the consummation, of this book. Consummately, the second book of the Old Testament is on the building of God's dwelling place on earth.

In this book many of today's Christians care only for the exodus, not for the building of the tabernacle. In those places where the Scriptures are studied and expounded, can you hear a message concerning the building of God's dwelling place on earth in this age? Many believers have the concept that the building of God is in the heavens and only in the future.

We need to consider the picture portrayed in Exodus 24 and ask ourselves where we are in our fellowship with the Lord. Are we with the people at the foot of the mountain, are we with those on the mountain, or are we Moses on the mountaintop?

Although what we have covered in this message lies beyond human utterance, we can at least partially comprehend that in Exodus 24 we have the vision of God in a transparent and clear heaven and also the stay with God under His shekinah glory. Here we receive the revelation that the desire of God's heart is to have a dwelling place with man on earth. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 952-953, 959-960, 944-945)

The physical tabernacle (and later the temple) as God's dwelling place in the Old Testament was actually a symbol of a corporate people, the children of Israel as the house of God (see footnote 1 on Heb. 3:6). (Exo. 25:9, footnote 2)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 80; CWWN, vol. 36, pp. 91-96

« WEEK 12 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

Exo. 25:2 Tell the children of Israel to take for Me a heave offering. From every man whose heart makes him willing you shall take My heave offering.

The book of Exodus may be divided into two sections: chapters 1 through 24 as the first section and chapters 25 through 40 as the second. The second section, composed of sixteen chapters, is primarily a record of visions concerning the tabernacle. These chapters contain very little history. Here we see the details concerning the design, materials, and construction of the tabernacle as God's dwelling place on earth.

Many Christians have read through the book of Exodus without being deeply impressed with the fact that the goal of God's salvation is to bring His redeemed people into His dwelling place on earth. God's aim in His salvation is to make us His dwelling place. This crucial matter must be emphasized repeatedly until it makes a deep impression on us. Therefore, we need many messages covering the details of the wonderful, heavenly visions described in chapters 25 through 40 of Exodus. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 935)

Today's Reading

In the Bible the word tabernacle is used in three ways. First, it refers to the tabernacle built at the foot of Mount Sinai. Second, it denotes the Lord Jesus as God's tabernacle with man. John 1:14 says that the Word, which is God, "became flesh and tabernacled among us." Through incarnation, Christ became God's tabernacle on earth. Hence, the tabernacle in Exodus is a type of Christ as the tabernacle of God. Third, the tabernacle refers to the New Jerusalem, the ultimate, consummate, enlarged tabernacle of God which includes God's redeemed people from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The goal of God's salvation revealed in the book of Exodus is to bring His people into the tabernacle as His dwelling place. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 935-936)

To heave is to lift up. [In Exodus 25:2] the heave offering typifies the uplifted Christ, the Christ who was lifted up in His ascension (Acts 1:9); it was often accompanied by the wave offering, a type of the resurrected Christ (Exo. 29:26-28; Lev. 7:30-32; Num. 18:11). The fact that the materials for the building of the tabernacle were offered to God by His people as a heave offering signifies that the church is built up not with any natural materials but with the very Christ who has been gained, possessed, enjoyed, and experienced by God's people in resurrection and in the heavenlies (Phil. 3:7-14; Eph. 3:8; 2:5-6). Cf. 1 Cor. 3:12 and footnotes.

All the materials for the building of the tabernacle signify the virtues of Christ's person and work. Twelve kinds of materials were used, in three categories: minerals, signifying Christ's building life (1 Cor. 3:9-12); plants, signifying Christ's generating life (John 12:24); and animals, signifying Christ's redeeming life (John 1:29). The redeeming life is for the generating life, and the generating life is for the building life. The fact that minerals were mentioned as the first category indicates that whatever Christ is and whatever He has done and is doing are all for God's building (Matt. 16:18). In the New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of God's building, there will be only minerals: gold, pearl, and precious stones (Rev. 21:18-21). However, in order to arrive at God's goal, the redeeming life and the generating life are needed. (Exo. 25:2, footnote 1)

The wall [of the New Jerusalem] is not built with natural materials merely created by God, but the wall is built with transformed items. We all are God's old creation, but God put us into Christ to make us His new creation. We all were natural beings, but we have been transformed from the old creation into the new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). (God's New Testament Economy, p. 369)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msgs. 81-82

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 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.

The most important thing in our spiritual work is a knowledge of the “pattern on the mount.” 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

The book of Hebrews tells us that the tabernacle was made according to God’s revealed pattern. Before Moses built the tabernacle, he remained on the mountain forty days and nights, in order to give God time to show him the pattern and method of construction for the heavenly tabernacle. There were prescribed patterns for everything from the Holy Place to the altar, including the material and color of each layer of the tabernacle’s covering. Nothing was left to random design; there were prescribed plans and standards for everything. The altar, laver, table, lampstand, incense altar, Ark, and everything else were made according to God’s prescribed pattern, which even specified the kind of metal or wood to be used and their measurements and colors. Nothing was left to Moses’ design.

God’s building of the church is the same as His building of the tabernacle; He works according to a prescribed plan. No matter how great or how small a matter is, God has an ordained way. Moses was not responsible for the design of the pattern of the tabernacle; he was only responsible for carrying out the pattern according to instructions he received on the mount. The glory of a servant of Christ does not lie in his ability to come up with new designs for God but in his faithfulness in carrying out the will of God as he understands it. Understanding God’s plan and working according to His plan are the glory of a servant of Christ.

A sister who has been serving the Lord for many years once said that man does not have any liberty at all in the work of God. When Moses built the tabernacle, he did not have the liberty to determine whether gold or silver should be used for even the smallest nail; everything had to be done according to God’s instruction.

Moses’ building of the tabernacle gives us much spiritual light. It shows us the proper standing of a servant of God in spiritual work. God prescribed everything concerning the tabernacle; He did not leave one single feature or small detail for Moses to design. God did not allow Moses to propose anything. He told Moses not only the general features of the tabernacle but the details as well. Not only were the patterns, materials, colors, and measurements of every item determined by God, but even the way they were to be made was determined by God. It was not enough for Moses to make them according to God’s prescribed measurements and pattern; he even had to make them according to God’s prescribed procedure. For example, the veils had to be made not only of fine linen but of fine linen that was twined. The lampstand had to be made not only of gold but of one piece of gold of beaten work. God did not leave any room for Moses to make any proposals. He knew what He wanted. He did not need man to be His counselor, and He would not allow His servants to follow their own ideas in carrying out His work. (CWWN, vol. 38, pp. 351-352)

The pattern of the tabernacle and all its furnishings is a full and complete type of both the individual Christ as the Head and the corporate Christ as the Body, the church, including many details of the experience of Christ for the church life. See footnote 3 on Hebrews 9:4. (Exo. 25:9, footnote 1)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 38, ch. 49; Life-study of Exodus, msg. 83

<< WEEK 12 — HYMN

Hymns, #852

1

Thy dwelling-place, O Lord, I love;
It is Thy Church so blessed,
It is Thy joy and heart's delight
And where Thy heart finds rest.

2

For her, Thyself Thou gavest, Lord,
That she be Thine, complete;
For her, I too my body give,
Thy heart's desire to meet.

3

For her, Thou hast become my life,
That she my living be;
For her, I would forsake myself,
That she be filled with Thee.

4

The Church is Thy beloved Bride,
Thou in Thy Body seen;
She is my joy and heart's desire,
The one on whom I lean.

5

In her, Thy full supply, O Lord,
Thou dost to me impart;
In her am I possessed by Thee
To satisfy Thy heart.

6

Thy dwelling-place, O Lord, I love;
It is Thy Church, Thy home;
In it I would forever live
And never longer roam.