

The Heavenly Sanctuary: Was there feasts before Mt. Sinai?

We are told of a great high throne that existed in heavenly places “from the beginning”, which is “the place of our Sanctuary” (Jer. 17:12). Careful study of the Sanctuary and it’s services may yield much wonderful light to the people of God in these last days; indeed the Sanctuary itself is full of instruction for us. The throne in the heavenly Sanctuary was the archetype of the sanctuary patterned after it upon the earth; the purpose of which was to dwell amongst His people as King of His people: “And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” (Exo. 25:8) Now, it’s evident that the heavenly Sanctuary was first, or else the pattern could never have been designed. We’re told that this pattern “serves unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.” (Heb. 8:5)

While the reality did indeed exist in heaven, it was necessary to have a shadow of the true object existing alongside of it to help the mind go forth from the seen shadow to the unseen, yet living, reality.

The throneroom is called the Most Holy place; which throne is called “the throne of God and of the Lamb.” The risen Lamb of God, Christ, was seated on His Father’s throne of glory, “the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John 17:5). We’re told “Even He has build the temple of the LORD; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His [the Father’s] throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” (Zechariah 6:13) Christ is both High Priest upon His Father’s

throne, and the Lamb of God. Yet where this is a Sanctuary there is a priest. Furthermore, even before Christ came to this earth, He was the "Lamb...who was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:20).

When examining the sacrifices of the burnt offerings of lamb, bull, goat, dove, etc. it is important to realize that these were emblematic of Christ's sacrifice, and that "it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin;" (Heb. 10:4) but Christ was "the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:19); those sacrifices ever attended the sanctuary, and without the sacrifice pointing to Christ, not so much as a prayer could be accepted upon the altar of burnt offering. It was the fire of God's throne, His Presence, where "a fiery stream issues and comes forth from before him" (Dan. 7:10) which kindled the coals of the altar. These coals were brought into the golden altar of incense, where prayer is continually offered; thus signifying that apart from the Lamb of God, no prayer is brought before God.

THE TIMES OF WORSHIP

These sacrifices were always enjoined to times of worship where the congregation would assemble. Every evening and morning, a sacrifice was laid upon the altar for the congregation. On the Sabbath, a double portion of the sacrifice signifying Christ was offered. On the new moons, even more sacrifices specified were done to signify the work of Christ, and on the feasts and solemn days; specific sacrifices were meant to carry to the understanding heart beautiful and wonderful spiritual truths (i.e. taking away our sins, taking away our ignorance, etc.), as well shadow forth prophetic signification. They are found specifically in Numbers 28-29.

We recognize that there is worship in heaven united to "better sacrifices than these" (Heb. 9:23). Among the worship in

heaven, it consists of “an innumerable company of angels” and “just men made perfect” whose lives are upheld by Christ as part of the church of heaven, called “Mount Zion...the city of the living God” (Heb. 12:22,23). Additionally, there are men bought by the blood of the Son of God, who are “a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5) These three classes are those whose worship belongs to God upon the throne, and are enjoined to Christ in their various spheres of existence, even as the sacrifices on earth were always enjoined to the temple worship down here below.

THE ANGELS

Angels of God in awesome, wing-veiled face declare “holy, holy, holy” to God the Father (Isaiah 6, Gen. 4,5) “in His holy temple” (Hab. 2:20); and these surround His throne. In fact, the angels are said to use the instruments of the Sanctuary and to do the service of the Sanctuary in heaven under the High Priest, Christ their Commander. It is by virtue of Christ that “angels [are] ascending and descending on the Son of man” (John 1:51). As the sons of Aaron in the earthly sanctuary were connected to Aaron’s high priestly ministry to minister to mankind regarding the sacrifices, even so, the angels of the heavenly sanctuary minister to mankind by virtue of Christ’s high priestly ministry. In like manner, as the success of Aaron’s special work at the end of the year was the basis of all their daily ministrations, even so it is with Christ and His angels. Isaiah, catching a glimpse of the heavenly throne room in the temple, sees an angel bringing the message of the Lamb of God to him in symbolic vision, “having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar...and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. ” (Isaiah 6:6,7) Do we suppose that the angels work upon any manner of timing? “When truth in its simplicity is lived, then God will **work through His angels** as He **worked** on the day of **Pentecost...**” (Ms 21, 1906) We here see that angels, also

called elsewhere "flames of fire" worked on the day of Pentecost, the very time of worship in the Sanctuary; as the blood of the special Pentecostal sacrifices were poured out in the earthly temple, even so the life of Christ was poured out from on high from the heavenly. We can further gather that they do these special acts in regards to the sacrifice of Christ, as declared from the following: "Jesus was clothed with priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands, and with a voice of deep pity cried, "My blood, Father, My blood, My blood, My blood!" Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and **waving something up and down in his hand**, and crying with a loud voice, "Hold! Hold! Hold! Hold! until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads." When the Feast of firstfruits, symbolizing Christ and His resurrection, was come, a sheaf of wheat would be waved up and down as an offering before the Creator; here an angel is doing exactly this, and says to hold until the seal, which is "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus", is poured out in full measure into our hearts.

The angels are shown to be in connection with perfect order which Satan seeks to disrupt the order which characterizes all heaven, this inevitably includes the order pertaining to worship. "Angels work harmoniously. Perfect order characterizes all their movements. The more closely we imitate the harmony and order of the angelic host, the more successful will be the efforts of these heavenly agents in our behalf. If we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully...Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and thorough discipline mark the

movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as he can...The Lord did not leave **His holy tabernacle** to be borne indiscriminately by any tribe that might choose. He was so particular as to specify the order He would have observed in bearing the sacred ark and to designate a special family of the tribe of the Levites to bear it... **they were required to observe perfect order.**" (1 Testimonies for the Church, p. 649-651)

Please notice the perfect order that angels work in unison with is in reference to "His holy tabernacle" and it's order and priesthood. It was not to be done in whatsoever way the angels, or man, dictated it should be done; explicit instructions were given to carefully guard the order of heaven. These angels bear messages of the Lamb of God to the minds of mortals in large measure on these times of sacred assembly; because Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb, is the chief focus of what these assemblies are regarding.

Speaking on this, the apocryphal book, Sirach, gives insight into this truth:

"He made the moon also to serve in her season for a declaration of times, and a sign of the world. From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection. The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven; The beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord. At the commandment of the Holy One they will stand in their order, and never faint in their watches." (Sirach [Ecclesiasticus] 43:6-10)

JUST MEN MADE PERFECT

We are further shown a glimpse of the throne of God; "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan

answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

(Job 1:6-7)

Here we see that the sons of God are gathering before the Lord, to "present themselves", or another word means "to stand" before the Lord. But who are the sons of God? The Scripture tells us enough information regarding who they are. We are told in the Luke's account of the genealogy of Jesus that "Adam...was the son of God" (Luke 3:38); the head of the human race, "the first man", was declared to be a son of God; he was given dominion over this world, called the earth. However, the Bible speaks about other worlds also. "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" (Hebrews 1:2) We're further told that "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God," (Hebrews 11:3) This language cannot be mistaken. There are more worlds than just this one. Upon it were "righteous" who were "made perfect". The sons of God were the heads of the worlds without number, and Adam was the son of God over the earth, and Christ was Son of God over the entire universe; thus the dominion of the sons of God were to be subject to God the Father in the likeness of Christ's subjection; and were to receive the power to reflect this pattern of dominion held by God and Christ on a smaller scale.

It was these sons of God that gathered before the presence of God the Father. Further evidence of this was that Satan presumed the earth to be his, and that it was his right to be at the heavenly convocation. In heaven, where there is perfect order, and a heavenly tabernacle of appointed times, we shall not go further to presume that this was just an assembly call at some unappointed time to the throne of God, but rather an assembly at the Sanctuary in heaven according to His sacred assemblies. Neither do we assume that the occasion was the Sabbath; the day upon which the heads of the worlds ought to

have been rejoicing with their people in their collective creation. No, rather we find that it is a time when those representing their various world families would come to the Most Holy place. More evidence may be gathered from the Hebrew word for "There was a day..." when they came to present themselves; in the Hebrew it is Hayaw Yom; this means "there existed a day" when the sons of God would present themselves. We find in Scripture a similar principle for the feasts and the Sanctuary upon the earth:

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:" (Deut. 16:16) *"Anciently the Lord instructed His people to assemble three times a year for His worship." More specifically, it was required that all men of the land were required to come to the yearly festivals. God has made "man the head of the woman" (1 Cor. 11:3), and together to have dominion over their home, with their children under their authority and jurisdiction; similarly to the realm of heaven. Likewise, men, as privileged to be amongst the redeemed, will reign together with Christ, having a share of His throne, and called "sons of God" (1 John 3:1) [Sidenote: This does not say that women are not the daughters of God, or hold a share of the throne- nor that they were not called to attend the feast, because they were also invited to come if able.] "Again the people were reminded of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath. Yearly feasts were appointed, at which all the men of the nation were to assemble before the Lord, bringing to Him their offerings of gratitude and the first fruits of His bounties. The object of all these regulations was stated: they proceeded from no exercise of mere arbitrary sovereignty; all were given for the good of Israel. The Lord said, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me"—worthy to be acknowledged by a holy God. (Patriarchs and Prophets, pg. 311)*

These assemblies were holy and appointed gatherings of the holy sons of God, of which Satan had no share. In fact, Job was counted as the rightful representative. Job as a faithful priest of the home, as a son of God, offered sacrifice before God for his sons when the days of feasting came in case they should have sinned; thus the sacrifice is enjoined to the feast by the representative priest of the home. This illuminates with vivid distinction the illustration of Job as representing the Son of God in heaven, while upon the earth. It was then that Satan was permitted to leave, and he wasted no time, but we are told he went forth from the assembly in heaven. It is at this time that we find Job's family feasting when a mighty wind comes upon the house to destroy them. As a son of God in Adam's stead, even his own wife tempts him to sin, not realizing that she has, inadvertently, done as Eve did to Adam in being a vessel to bring the son of God down through sin. Yet we see Job overcome where Adam fell, despite being severely tried in the fire.

Like the sons of God must leave their respective worlds, even so the men were to leave their respective homes. Likewise, Job, like the sons of God in heaven, was separate from his family in almost symbolic fashion. The parallels may be found to be strikingly similar when compared.

Connecting this point of the sons of God worshipping in heaven, we turn to men upon the earth more fully. The tabernacle of the appointed times manner of worship was never confined strictly to sacrifices, or to an earthly tent; it was symbolic of the worship of the God of heaven and earth, and the true manner of worship was not as strictly confined as men had made it to be in the time of Jesus, but He rather said "believe me, the hour comes, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father... The hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth; for the Father seeks such to worship Him." (John 4:21-23)

While the physical earthly tabernacle was stationary, the worshippers were not to be confined to one place to worship; although the time of worship would remain the same; every evening and morning, Sabbath, new moon, and appointed holy days.

“The Jewish tabernacle was a type of the Christian church. ...The church on earth, composed of those who are faithful and loyal to God, is the “true tabernacle,” whereof the Redeemer is the minister. God and not man pitched this tabernacle on a high, elevated platform. This tabernacle is Christ’s body; and from north, south, east, and west, He gathers those who shall help to compose it.” Ms142-1899

The Christian church has it’s times of worship, the antitype of the Christian church on earth, as well as the Sanctuary church in heaven. The holy priesthood was to “offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” *Adding more significant to this reality, was that Peter delivered the message of the Lamb of God on “the third hour,” (Acts 2:15) a direct channel in time to when Christ was laid upon the cross (Matt. 15:25), the time of the morning worship sacrifice which took place in the tabernacle upon the earth; no less at the very day of Pentecost this took place. The time was regarded on earth, from the Throne of heaven and the blood of the Lamb wrought powerfully in such an occasion.*

We cannot with safety conclude that the God of heaven has no order or worship which He ordains in heavenly places. In fact, there is more reason to believe He does, than not. While this is by no means an exhaustive list of reasons for worship on the time of the feasts in heaven, these are some of the more conclusive and sound reasons behind the matter. We’ve primarily focused upon the matter of the feasts in heaven in relation to the heavenly sanctuary, but more points will be brought out in our next piece on this subject “Revisiting the Law: Because of Transgression...”

