September 13, 2017

Prison Ministry

**Story of Redemption** (1947) Chapter **19: The Sanctuary**

THE tabernacle was made according to the commandment of God. The Lord raised up men and qualified them with more than natural abilities to perform the most ingenious work. Neither Moses nor those workmen were left to plan the form and workmanship of the building. God Himself devised the plan and gave it to Moses, with particular directions as to its size and form and the materials to be used, and specified every article of furniture which was to be in it. He presented before Moses a miniature model of the heavenly sanctuary and commanded him to make all things according to the pattern shown him in the mount. Moses wrote all the directions in a book and read them to the most influential people.

 Then the Lord required the people to bring a free-will offering, to make Him a sanctuary, that He might dwell among them. "And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all His service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the Lord."

 Great and expensive preparations were necessary. Precious and costly materials must be collected. But the Lord accepted only the free-will offerings. Devotion to the work of God and sacrifice from the heart were first required in preparing a place for God. And while the building of the sanctuary was going on, and the people were bringing their offerings unto Moses, and he was presenting them to the workmen, all the wise men who wrought in the work examined the gifts and decided that the people had brought enough, and even more than they could use. And Moses proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing."

**Recorded for Later Generations**

 The repeated murmurings of the Israelites, and the visitations of God's wrath because of their transgressions, are recorded in sacred history for the benefit of God's people who should afterward live upon the earth, but more especially to prove a warning to those who should live near the close of time. Also their acts of devotion, their energy and liberality in bringing their free-will offerings to Moses are recorded for the benefit of the people of God. Their example in preparing material for the tabernacle so cheerfully is an example for all who truly love the worship of God. Those who prize the blessing of God's sacred presence, when preparing a building that He may meet with them, should manifest greater interest and zeal in the sacred work in proportion as they value their heavenly blessings higher than their earthly comforts. They should realize that they are preparing a house for God.

 It is of some consequence that a building prepared expressly for God to meet with His people, should be arranged with care--made comfortable, neat, and convenient, for it is to be dedicated to God and presented to Him, and He is to be entreated to abide in that house and make it sacred by His holy presence. Enough should be willingly given to the Lord to liberally accomplish the work, and then the workmen be able to say, Bring no more offerings.

**According to the Pattern**

 After the building of the tabernacle was completed, Moses examined all the work, and compared it with the pattern, and directions he had received of God, and he saw that every part of it agreed with the pattern; and he blessed the people.

 God gave a pattern of the ark to Moses, with special directions how to make it. The ark was made to contain the tables of stone, on which God engraved, with His own finger, the Ten Commandments. It was in form like a chest, and was overlaid and inlaid with pure gold. It was ornamented with crowns of gold round about the top. The cover of this sacred chest was the mercy seat, made of solid gold. On each end of the mercy seat was fixed a cherub of pure, solid gold. Their faces were turned toward each other and were looking reverentially downward toward the mercy seat, which represented all the heavenly angels looking with interest and reverence upon the law of God deposited in the ark in the heavenly sanctuary. These cherubs had wings. One wing of each angel was stretched forth on high, while the other wing of each angel covered his form. The ark of the earthly sanctuary was the pattern of the true ark in heaven. There, beside the heavenly ark, stand living angels, at either end of the ark, each with one wing overshadowing the mercy seat, and stretching forth on high, while the other wings are folded over their forms in token of reverence and humility.

 In the earthly ark Moses was required to place the tables of stone. These were called the tables of the testimony; and the ark was called the ark of the testimony, because they contained God's testimony in the Ten Commandments.

**Two Apartments**

 The tabernacle was composed of two apartments, separated by a curtain, or vail. All the furniture of the tabernacle was made of solid gold, or plated with gold. The curtains of the tabernacle were of a variety of colors, most beautifully arranged, and in these curtains were wrought, with threads of gold and silver, cherubim, which were to represent the angelic host, who are connected with the work of the heavenly sanctuary and who are ministering angels to the saints upon the earth.

 Within the second vail was placed the ark of the testimony, and the beautiful and rich curtain was drawn before the sacred ark. This curtain did not reach to the top of the building. The glory of God, which was above the mercy seat, could be seen from both apartments, but in a much less degree from the first apartment.

 Directly before the ark, but separated by the curtain, was the golden altar of incense. The fire upon this altar was kindled by the Lord Himself, and was sacredly cherished by feeding it with holy incense, which filled the sanctuary with its fragrant cloud day and night. Its fragrance extended for miles around the tabernacle. When the priest offered the incense before the Lord he looked to the mercy seat. Although he could not see it he knew it was there, and as the incense arose like a cloud, the glory of the Lord descended upon the mercy seat and filled the most holy place and was visible in the holy place, and the glory often so filled both apartments that the priest was unable to officiate and was obliged to stand at the door of the tabernacle.

 The priest in the holy place, directing his prayer by faith to the mercy seat, which he could not see, represents the people of God directing their prayers to Christ before the mercy seat in the heavenly sanctuary. They cannot behold their Mediator with the natural eye, but with the eye of faith they see Christ before the mercy seat and direct their prayers to Him, and with assurance claim the benefits of His mediation.

 These sacred apartments had no windows to admit light. The candlestick was made of purest gold and was kept burning night and day, and gave light to both apartments. The light of the lamps upon the candlestick reflected upon the boards plated with gold, at the sides of the building, and upon the sacred furniture and upon the curtains of beautiful colors with cherubim wrought with threads of gold and silver, which appearance was glorious beyond description. No language can describe the beauty and loveliness and sacred glory which these apartments presented. The gold in the sanctuary reflected the colors of the curtains, which appeared like the different colors of the rainbow.

 Only once a year could the high priest enter into the most holy place, after the most careful and solemn preparation. No mortal eye but that of the high priest could look upon the sacred grandeur of that apartment, because it was the especial dwelling place of God's visible glory. The high priest always entered it with trembling, while the people waited his return with solemn silence. Their earnest desires were to God for His blessing. Before the mercy seat God conversed with the high priest. If he remained an unusual time in the most holy, the people were often terrified, fearing that because of their sins or some sin of the priest, the glory of the Lord had slain him. But when the sound of the tinkling of the bells upon his garments was heard, they were greatly relieved. He then came forth and blessed the people.

 After the work of the tabernacle was finished, "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." For "the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."

 The tabernacle was constructed so as to be taken to pieces and borne with them in all their journeyings.

**The Guiding Cloud**

 The Lord directed the Israelites in all their travels through the wilderness. When it was for the good of the people and the glory of God that they should pitch their tents in a certain place and there abide, God signified His will to them by the pillar of cloud resting low directly over the tabernacle. And there it remained until God would have them journey again. Then the cloud of glory was lifted up high above the tabernacle, and then they journeyed again.

 In all their journeyings they observed perfect order. Every tribe bore a standard, with the sign of their father's house on it, and every tribe was commanded to pitch by their own standard. And when they traveled the different tribes marched in order, every tribe under their own standard. When they rested from their journeyings, the tabernacle was erected, and then the different tribes pitched their tents in order, in just such a position as God commanded, around the tabernacle, at a distance from it.

 When the people journeyed, the ark of the covenant was borne before them. "And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." {SR 157.2}

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