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THE HOLY OF HOLIES

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 62
HEBREWS 9:3-5

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Corrected translation of verses 1 and 2.

Even so therefore the first (that is the Mosaic Law) used to have regulations for worship and a sanctuary in this world. For the first tent was constructed in which there was both the golden lampstand and the table of the bread of his presence, which first tent categorically is designated the Holy Place."

HEBREWS 9:3 "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all,"

THIS BRINGS US TO THE HOLY OF HOLIES

We have meta meaning "after" plus the accusative of deuterios which means "second" so the meta comes to mean "behind." The word for veil or curtain is katapetasma. So we have thus far "behind the second veil or curtain." The first veil is the one that separated the outside from the holy place. Outside was the brass altar of sacrifice and the laver, and this first veil separated that from the lampstand and the table of shewbread.

1. The second veil divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.
2. The curtain or veil was hung on four pillars and this represents how the incarnate Christ is presented by the four gospel writers.
 - Matthew emphasizes Christ as the King of the Jews.
 - Mark presents Jesus Christ as the serving Christ.
 - Luke presents Jesus Christ as the great perfect human.
 - John presents Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
3. The colors in the veil are very important.
 - The blue depicts the deity of Christ.
 - The purple depicts the fact that Christ has a kingdom.
 - The scarlet speaks of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.
 - The white depicts the perfection of Christ in his incarnation.

So the veil depicts who and what Christ is.
4. The embroidered part of the curtain presented cherubs. The cherubs represented the essence of Christ. As you face the curtain you realize there is a real angelic conflict going on.
5. The hooks on which the veil was hung refer to the sustaining ministry of the Holy Spirit in the humanity of Christ during his first advent. His body was indwelt by the Holy Spirit and his soul was filled with the Holy Spirit.
6. The Levitical priesthood could not go past this veil, that was reserved for the royal priesthood of the Church Age, which followed Christ's victory on the cross. Until Christ was born of a virgin, lived his life on the earth, died on the cross, rose again, and was ascended and sat down at the right hand side of

God, that area behind the veil was off limits to all the people including the Levitical priests--the only exception being the great High Priest once a year. And he could not enter until after seven days of strenuous preparation. He went in once in the Holy Place to offer incense on the golden altar of prayer, and twice into the Holy of Holies, once for himself and once for the people.

Next we have the word skene which means "large tent." No definite article here to call attention to the importance of this tent. "Which is called" is a present, passive, participle of lego and means "is designated." Next we have the word hagios twice, once a nominative singular and next a genitive plural and it means the "Holy of Holies."

HEBREWS 9:4 "Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;" The word for "had" is the present, active, participle of echo and the next words "golden censer" but it is from chruseos thumiaterion and should be translated "golden altar of incense." This is described in Exodus 30:1-10, 30:34-38 and 37:25-29.

It was made of acacia wood and was plated with pure gold. This stands for the hypostatic union, the deity and the humanity of Christ.

1. While just outside the veil, this golden altar of incense belongs to the Holy of Holies. It is actually the thing that introduces the Holy of Holies to us. (So we have two things outside, the altar of sacrifice and the laver for cleansing; two things in the holy place, the lampstand and the table of shewbread; and two things in the Holy of Holies, the golden table of incense and the ark of the covenant.) The golden table of incense was placed outside the veil of the Holy of Holies because it was constantly used, and the ark of the covenant was used only once a year.
2. The golden altar of incense depicts Christ, after his strategic victory on the cross and after his resurrection and ascension and his session at the right hand of God. He is King of Kings and the Great Royal High Priest forever.
3. The altar was not only made of wood and plated with gold (showing both his humanity and his deity) but it had a crown to hold the fire, plus the fire and the incense.
4. The crown kept the fire together and kept it from falling on the ground. This is a picture of how the fire of judgment burned Christ on the cross.
5. The crown, since it held in the fire, points to his death and resurrection and ascension. It shows the strategic victory of Christ.
6. The validity of the work of Christ on the cross is pointed out by the incense. As the incense rises up in sweet fragrance, it speaks of the fact that the work of Christ on the cross was acceptable to God. Incense refers to propitiation. The incense represents prayer, Christ's intercession for us and our prayers to God.

While the horns on the brazen altar speak of sacrifice, the horns on the golden altar speak of power and prayer.

8. The golden altar had rings for carrying it and they speak of the perfection of God's plan of grace. The staves that carried the altar speak of the worldwide ministry of prayer. There is no place where prayer cannot go.
9. This altar represents the power of prayer in the utilization of divine resources.

LOOK AT A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE BRAZEN ALTAR OF SACRIFICE AND THE GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE.

1. The brass altar is the picture of the cross, Jesus Christ being judged for our sins and this is outside the tabernacle. Inside is the golden altar which speaks of the victory Christ had at the cross.
2. Brass speaks of judgment, while gold speaks of power and plunder.
3. There is no crown on the brass altar, which speaks of the humility of Christ on the cross. There is a crown on the golden altar, speaking of the crown of his victory in glory.
4. The brass altar outside emphasizes salvation and how it was acquired. The golden altar emphasizes victory and how it was accomplished.
5. The fire that was carried to the golden altar of incense came from the brazen altar of sacrifice. No cross means no ultimate victory. Apart from the cross there is no victory and no prayer. The prayers of unbelievers go nowhere. The fire must come from the brazen altar to the golden altar. You believe and then pray. The cross before the crown. Therefore a principle emerges--All prayer and worship must begin at the cross. Only the born again believer can pray and worship.
6. Without the fire of crucifixion, there is no intercession and victory and plunder.
7. Therefore, no plunder means no pastor-teacher, no Church Age, no learning of doctrine apart from the cross.
8. The cross must come before the crown. The cross must come before the royal family can be born.
9. In their revolution and reversionism the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, both started strange fire in their tents. They brought this strange fire before the Lord. (Lev. 10:1-2) They put on their priestly garments and walked into the Tabernacle and walked right past the altar of sacrifice and didn't stop there to get the fire as God had commanded. They put their strange fire on the golden altar of incense. This was total disobedience to the plan of God for their lives and their service as priests. They got their fire from a different source says Lev. 16:12. For this sin they died the sin unto death. A good way to drop dead is to ignore the word of God.

The Meaning Of Incense

1. Incense is a symbol of prayer as well as propitiation. (Psalm 141:2, Hebrews 13:15, Rev. 5:8 and 8:3)
2. Therefore incense represents the intercessory prayers of Jesus Christ as High Priest. (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25)
3. The prayers of all believers, which are processed through Christ, are also represented by the incense.
4. The composition of the incense is very important and pictures the strategic victory of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Angelic Conflict. (Exodus 30:34)
Four things in the incense--Stacte, onycha, galbanium and frankincense.
5. The Stache
It means to drop or distill. It is drops of gum from certain trees that produce stache. This is the picture of the uniqueness of Christ in his first advent. He was God-man, perfect, sinless, and no old sin nature. The stache is a picture of the nobility of his life on the earth.
6. The onycha
This is scale or shell, derived from the shell which gives off this perfume. Refers to the work of Christ on the cross in his two deaths. This is the nobility of Christ on the cross.
7. Galbanium
This means fat or fertile. A rosin gum that adds strength or stability to the other ingredients. This is a reference to the resurrection of Christ.
8. Frankincense
It is a white incense, the pure white of the gum from which it is extracted. It burns with a white flame. It refers to Christ's ascension and session as the completion of his glorification. Incense goes up just as Christ ascended when he went back to heaven.

Next we come to "The Ark of the Covenant." This is described in Exodus 25:10-22 and 37:1-9 and in Romans 3:22-25. The words "Overlaid round about" come from the perfect, passive, participle of perikalupto which means to plate, to cover. It was a box plated with gold. Chrusion is the word for gold.

Next we have "The golden pot." The word is stannos and it means urn. Next is the present, active, participle of echo meaning "having." "A golden urn having the manna."
Next we have "Aaron's rod that budded" and this is an aorist, active, participle of blastano which means "to germinate, to sprout."
Next we have "And the tables of the Covenant."

Ark of the Covenant is a box, 45 inches long, 27 inches wide and 27 inches high. It was made of acacia wood and was plated with gold. The completed box represents Christ in hypostatic union. The content of the box is described in Numbers 17:8 and 10.

The Urn Of Manna

This is a picture of sin in the rejection of God's provision.

Aaron's Rod

This is a picture of the rebellion against God's authority. This was not an ordinary rod, for it sprouted and budded.

Tables of the Law

This is a picture of sin as a transgression of the law. The content of the box represents Christ bearing our sins on the cross. Notice, they were all inside the box.

HEBREWS 9:5 "And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat, of which we cannot now speak particularly." We have the words de superano autos and translated "Above the box," above the Ark were the cherubims of glory--The word is cheroubeim plus dozza meaning "glory." The glory refers to the essence of God. Here they represent the righteousness and justice of God and these added together mean holiness. Next we have a present, active, participle of kataskiazo and it is sometimes translated mercy seat and sometimes translated propitiation. (Romans 3:25 and 1 John 4:10) Mercy seat is the place or propitiation. It was fashioned out of pure gold. (Exodus 25:17-22, 37:6-9) At each end we have a cherub overshadowing. They represent the righteousness and justice of God. They look down on that which represents sin in the Ark.

1. At each end of the mercy seat are two cherubs--one representing righteousness and one representing justice.
2. It was righteousness and justice that would be compromised if God took man into his kingdom just as man is in his sin.
3. Therefore righteousness and justice must be propitiated so as not to bring any compromise to God or God's character.
4. On the day of atonement, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies with the blood of a goat and a bullock. Blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat to indicate that God's righteousness and justice had been satisfied by Christ's great work on the cross.
5. Therefore righteousness and justice were both satisfied and God is not compromised and God is not proved to be wrong when he pronounces man justified.
6. Because of propitiation God is free to love man and is justified in doing so. The sin of man cannot destroy or impare the perfect love of God.
7. Propitiation gives maximum emphasis to the celebrityship of Jesus Christ.

THE DOCTRINE OF PROPITIATION

1. Definition. Here are three words that every believer ought to know.
 - a. Propitiation means satisfaction and it is always directed God-ward. This is directed toward God so his justice and righteousness will not be violated.
 - b. Reconciliation and the direction of this word is always man-ward. This is how the barrier is removed between man and God.
 - c. Redemption and the direction of this word is always toward sin.
2. Propitiation was communicated to Israel through the mercy seat. (Exodus 25:17-22, 37:6-9)
3. Propitiation is appropriated through faith and is the basis for man having the righteousness of God. (Romans 3:25-26)
4. Propitiation is related to the work of Christ on the cross. (Lev. 16:13-16)
5. The mercy seat represents the presence of God. (Ex. 25:22, Lev. 16:2, Numbers 7:89)
6. The New Testament confirms the importance of the mercy seat. (Hebrews 9:5)
7. The mercy seat is related to unlimited atonement. (1 John 2:2)
8. Propitiation illustrated the perfect love of God. (1 John 4:10)
9. Propitiation is used to illustrate the celebrityship of Jesus Christ. (Romans 3:25)
10. The importance of propitiation can be observed from the fact that the ten commandments were inside the Ark of the Covenant.
 - a. The law does not bring or buy justification.
 - b. The law is an instrument of condemnation both to the Jews and to the entire human race.
 - c. The purpose of the law of Moses is to curse the whole of mankind with a hopeless curse. (Galatians 3:13)
 - d. The law does not produce a righteousness which has any credit with God. (Phil. 3:9)
 - e. Many Jews of previous dispensations failed because they tried to be saved by keeping the law. (Romans 9:30-33)
 - f. These Jews failed just like the Rich Young Ruler failed. (Acts 13:39)
11. Propitiation is the only approach to God. Luke 18:13 says in the Greek--"O God be propitious to me, a sinner." God can't ignore and overlook sin. But he can be propitious. Helaskomai means to be propitiated. Grace is in keeping with the character of God and not generosity or mercy.

This passage closes with the words "Concerning which we cannot now speak." This is peri plus hos ouk estin nun legen. It really means "It is not now time to teach this in detail."