

Teaching Sound Doctrine

“GOD HEARETH NOT SINNERS” Pt. 3

THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE

God gave explicit instructions for the making of first the tabernacle and later the temple. God told Moses concerning the tabernacle: “And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount” (Exo. 25:40). The pattern God showed Moses was a shadow or a type of the church (see Heb. 8-10). While not going into a detailed study of the wonderful parallel between the two, let us notice that which God established.

The tabernacle was surrounded by an outer court. Inside this court on the eastern-most end stood the brazen altar or altar of burnt offerings. Just a little west of that was the brazen laver used by the priest for various washings. In the western part of the court was the tabernacle proper divided into two compartments separated by a veil. The first compartment was the holy place in which there were three pieces of furniture. On the north side was the table of shewbread which had twelve loaves of unleaven bread on it. On the south side was the golden candlestick or lampstand. It had a central stem with three curved branches on each side. Then in front of the veil was the altar of incense or golden altar. Inside the veil was the most holy place or the holy of holies. It contained the ark of the covenant. Inside the ark was the testimony of the Lord and then later a pot of manna along with Aaron’s rod that budded. On top of the ark was the mercy seat and at each end was a cherub. The cherubim were facing each other with their wings stretched forth and covering the mercy seat. This physical tabernacle was only temporary and pointed to a greater and more perfect tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.

The true tabernacle concerns the church of our Lord. God established the tabernacle to correspond to the church. Let us briefly consider the parallels between the tabernacle and the church. The court represents the world; the holy place represents the church; and the most holy place is the dwelling place of God or heaven. The brazen altar, which is in the court, represents the cross where the Lamb of God shed His blood for man’s sins (Gal. 1:4; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 7:26-27; et al). The brazen laver represents baptism where we wash ourselves clean from our sins and then are qualified to enter into the tabernacle (Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5; et al).

When we enter the holy place (which represents the church) we have three

pieces of furniture. The first is the candlestick which the priest were to keep burning brightly before the Lord. The candlestick apparently has a twofold application: the Word of God which gives light to the church (Psa. 119:105, 130; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Pet. 1:19; et al); the light Christians are to have before a darkened world (Mat. 5:13-16; Eph. 5:8; Rev. 2:5; et al). On the opposite side was the table of shewbread which represents the Lord's supper (Mat. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; 1 Cor. 11:20-29 et al). Then before the veil was the altar of incense. This represents the prayers of the saints. The golden altar was the closest to the dwelling place of God; the closest approach to the most holy place. The high priest took it into the most holy place when he entered on the day of atonement. The Scriptures clearly state that this represents the prayers of the saints. John writes, "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Rev. 5:8). Odours as translated by the King James means "incense" as translated in the American Standard and New King James. Later Inspiration adds: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (Rev. 8:3-4). God placed the altar of incense in the holy place, not in the court. The altar represents prayers and the holy place represents the church. Thus, prayers can only be by those in the church. To take prayers and place them in the court (the world) is to violate what God established. Whose prayers does God hear? Those who are in the court or those who are in the Lord's church. No one has the right to take that which God placed in the church and apply it to the world.

THE APPROACH TO THE FATHER

Jesus was giving comfort to His apostles and He tells them that He is going away and prepare a place for them and they know the way. Thomas said they did not know where He was going or the way. Jesus responded: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). There is no way any man can go to the Father except he goes through Christ. Paul puts the same principle this way: "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). Christ is the way and the only way to the Father. The only ones who would thus have that access to the Father are those who are in Christ. Those who are not in Christ (Christians) would have no way to have access to the Father. Thus, God does not hear a sinner's prayer. Closely akin to this, the Hebrews writer states concerning Jesus: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Christ makes intercession

for those who have been saved by Him. He does not make intercession for the world or those in the world. Yet, if the prayers of those in the world were heard, Christ would also be making intercession for them.