



Devotions within the Heavenly Sanctuary

- **Worship Cultivated**
- **Worship and the Sin Offering**
- **Worship outside the Camp**
- **Worship within the Holiest**

In Hebrews 1 we have the holiness of Christ represented in His essential *deity*; in chapter 2 in His perfect *humanity*; in chapter 3 in His redeemed *posterity* – "...holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling" (Heb 3.1). Further into the epistle we have Christ's holiness seen in His gracious *legacy*. Our Forerunner has opened the way into the holiest and we can enter boldly. What a hallowed birthright bestowed upon us who were once without Christ, "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2.12). What blessing abides in this inalienable provision and what incalculable profit is ours to contemplate its sacred ground.

The Ephesian Epistle takes us into the heavenlies where we are seen seated together in a glorified Christ; to know that we who were once far off "are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph 2.13). The Hebrew writer also takes us into the heavenlies. We are there as a new priestly house within the heavenly sanctuary. Here, too, we are to consider the holy ground of the legacy, the new and living way which He has consecrated for us "through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb 10.20). The ground is all of Christ, our "high priest of good things to come" (Heb 9.11). The high priest of old alone could enter the holiest, and then only annually at the appointed time with the blood of a spotless sacrifice. We have unfettered entrance through Christ's shed blood.

Our Great High Priest is seated within the sanctuary so His work cannot be about redemption. It is about His intercession on our behalf for which "he ever liveth" (Heb 7.25), and about our righteous and royal representation in Him before the Throne. But it is also to do with His presentation of our worship unto God. So the Sanctifier entitles us, and the enabling Spirit invites us into the sanctuary to exercise our transcendent heavenly calling - priestly adoration! Christ's shed blood is our title to enter the holiest; His glory is our treasure within it – the fragrant glory of the Holy and Just who walked among men.

Worship Cultivated

In Gethsemane's garden we hear the Son's moving refrain of *immutable holiness*: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Mt 26.39). Here the sin offering cultivates our worship within the sanctuary. His holiness recoiled from the inevitable prospect of being treated as sin, yet it could never be foiled by it. So He prayed in *unhesitating holiness*, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Lk 22.42). The sin offering was mandatory. He who knew no sin was made sin that we might "become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor 5.21, RV). The offerer laid his hand on the sacrifice and was accepted because of what it represented - sin. Adoring hearts therefore dwell upon what a holy Christ had to become on the cross because of what men are - sinners by nature. This He did once, "being made a curse for us" (Gal 3.13), putting "away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9.26). What price our bold worship within the veil? The immediate contest between sin and holiness having been settled with sweat "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Lk 22.44), we hear the sweet-savour of *unquestioning holiness*: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (Jn 18.11). It is Christ the Burnt Offering giving Himself unreservedly to the Father in obedient, voluntary submission - "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps 40.8). Though not for sin, the burnt offering was needed because of sin. Here God's heart was ruled not by the sin covered by the sacrifice, but by the value of the sacrifice itself. Worshippers "accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1.6) embrace Him who "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God" (Heb 9.14). The crowning refrain within the holiest is not so much that Christ "satisfied" God; but that He glorified Him, "continually morning and evening" (1 Chr 16.40); "I have glorified thee on the earth" (Jn 17.4). The essence of the Antitype is that Christ "glorified not himself" (Heb 5.5), and "God is glorified in him" (Jn 13.31), God's holiness finding in Him a sweet savour of rest.

Worship and the Sin Offering

In Hebrews 10.18 the inspired writer declares there is "no more offering for sin". Again our worship in the sanctuary is associated with Christ as the sin offering. The sin offering was spotless; its shed blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat; its fat burned upon the altar of burnt sacrifice for a sweet savour unto God, while its body was consumed by fire outside the camp. Once more we consider Christ's divine holiness and His suffering for sin. Now, upon the cross they come together to compose His cry of *innate holiness* - "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mt 27.46). It was a cry anticipated by the psalmist and it appropriates our deepest reverence: "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy" (Ps 22.2-3). The sacred standard upon Aaron's forehead - "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" - was inherent in the heart of Christ. It is not so much the Son here, but the holy Man in anguish when a holy God hid His face as He executed judgment upon Him because of imputed sin. He suffered immeasurably at the hands of man, but infinitely more at the hand of God. His soul was made an offering for sin. We see God's *incomprehensible holiness* brought out when He deals with sin. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him" (Is 53.10). What price our privilege within the sanctuary! We cannot enter into its awesome cost, any more than we can begin to comprehend God's pleasure when the Man of Sorrows bore His wrath upon sin; but the Spirit would have us enter its wondrous grace, worshipping God in the sanctuary, our hearts resting and rejoicing in the cry of *triumphant holiness* - "It is finished" (Jn 19.30).

Worship outside the Camp

There is more here concerning Christ as the sin offering which was burned outside the camp, the place of the reviled among men - "Jesus also...suffered without the gate" (Heb 13.12). Psalm 22 foreshadows His reproach as an offering for sin: He was "despised of the people" (v.6). "They shoot out the lip" and "laugh me to scorn" (v.7). The prophet intimates His deep lament - "Is it

nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger" (Lam 1.12). He willingly suffered outside the camp so we could be brought within the veil. We are to "go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Heb 13.13), and by Him "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb 13.15). Here Hebrews 11 is brought in as we learn that faith takes neither idle nor middle ground. May a Christ-rejecting world see the holiness of Christ through our faith's fidelity, as we repair unto Him outside the camp and there identify with His *unwanted holiness*.

Worship within the Holiest

Hebrews 2.9 is the vision, voice, and vocation of redeemed worshippers within the holiest. Here too the sin offering is before us. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." This sacred vista descends into the valley of inexpressible grace and soars heavenward to indefinable heights of exalted glory. Its earthly landmarks are illuminated by the footprints of *indelible holiness* of One who was "the light of the world" (Jn 8.12) - the manger of His condescension; the river of His consecration; the mount of His heavenly confirmation; the upper room of His consolation; the garden of His concentration; the court of His condemnation; the hill of His crucifixion; the tomb of His corporal resurrection; and the summit cloud of His ascension. They signpost the heavenly landmark - the sanctuary of His crowning glorification. We marvel at God's grace. We praise Him for the efficacy of the shed blood of Him who knew no sin, who did no sin, and in whom is no sin. He is no more the rejected and despised Man on the cross; the Shekinah no longer hovers over the mercy-seat. Now, the heavenly sanctuary is filled with the radiant train of the personal, propitiatory, and proprietorial glories of the Holy and Just seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. There we hear the unceasing anthem to His *unsullied holiness* – "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" He is "high and lifted up" (Is 6.1); "very high" (Is 52.13); "highly exalted" (Phil 2.9); "higher than the heavens" (Heb 7.26). "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb 7.26).

May our hearts be indicted with this goodly matter, encouraging ourselves to worship Him according to His *incomparable holiness*. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy" (Rev 15.4).

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