

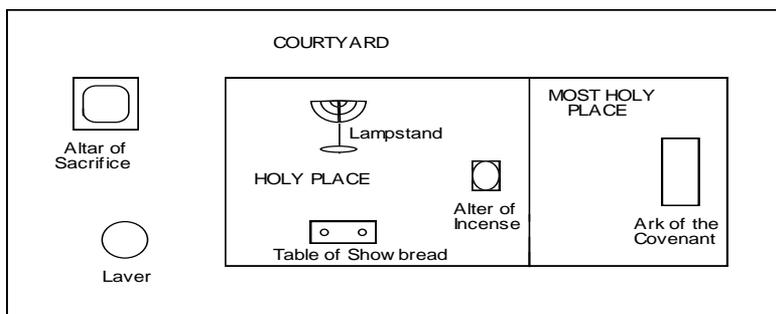
The Sure Word Bible Studies *Lesson 4*

God Wants To Be Your Friend

When man sinned in the Garden of Eden, in mercy God withdrew His glorious presence from the earth. God is recorded in Exodus 33:20 as saying *“No man can see my face and live,”* meaning that sinful man could not live in the literal presence (face) of God. So after they had sinned, God could no longer walk with Adam and Eve *“in the cool of the day”* as He had in the beginning. Sin had caused a separation between God and man, God did not choose to leave man – but man chose to leave God. And though sin resulted in separation, God still longed to be with the man He made and the time came when God said to Moses -

Exodus 25:8,9 *“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”*

The detailed instructions God gave for building the sanctuary are found in the book of Exodus. As seen in the diagram below, the sanctuary had three basic apartments. The Courtyard – The Holy Place – The Most Holy Place.



1. **The Courtyard** contained the altar of burnt offering and the laver (a type of basin used for ceremonial washings).

2. **The Holy place** contained the table of showbread, a seven-branch lamp stand, and the golden altar of incense.
3. **The Most Holy place** was separated from the Holy place by a veil and contained the Ark of the Covenant, in which was placed the Ten Commandments.

New Testament texts confirm that the furnishings in the sanctuary were symbols pointing to Christ. For example:

John 6:35 *“And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life: he who comes to me shall never hunger.”*

Symbolized by the table of showbread in the Holy Place.

John 8:12 *“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world.”*

Symbolized by the lamp stand in the Holy Place.

Hebrews 10:19, 20 *“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,”*

Symbolized by the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

In Leviticus are the detailed instructions of how to perform all the rituals and sacrifices that were to take place at the sanctuary.

Certain things were to be performed by the priests every day on behalf of the people. These rituals were known to the Israelites as “The Daily.” These were a representation of the work of Christ on behalf of mankind.

Example: The most common sacrifice was called the “Burnt Offering.” This offering clearly represented Christ’s sacrifice as the “*Lamb of God.*”

Leviticus 1:3,4 *"If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him."*

This says that the burnt offering would be a "male without blemish" and, "he shall offer it of his own free will."

The Apostle Peter connected this part of the sacrifice with Christ when he wrote - *"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (I Peter 1:19).

Verse 9 in Leviticus continues: *"but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD."*

The Apostle Paul in the New Testament makes the connection to this when he wrote – *"And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma"* (Ephesians 5:2).

This sacrificial offering clearly represented Christ who came of "his own voluntary will" and "gave all of Himself for us."

Other ritual sacrifices listed in Leviticus included:

"The Meat or Meal Offering." This offering signified thanks - giving to God for His provisions.

"The Peace Offering." This offering signified thanksgiving for peace, either with God or with another person with whom there was once disagreement or conflict.

"The Sin Offering." This offering was made for atonement of sins of ignorance.

“The Trespass Offering.” This offering was made for atonement of willful sin.

The New Testament helps us understand that the sacrifices were intended to remind the people that sin leads to death and to point them to God, their Savior.

Hebrews 10:3 says, *“But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.”*

Romans 6:23 says, *“For the wages of sin is death.”*

John 1:29 says that Jesus is *“the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”*

In addition to the daily rituals, the book of Leviticus lists seven annual ceremonies. These ceremonies, called "feasts" in the KJV Bible, pointed to Christ's work in the plan of salvation.

- 1) The Feast of Passover pointed to His death.
- 2) The Feast of Unleavened Bread pointed to His burial.
- 3) The Feast of Firstfruits pointed to His resurrection.
- 4) The Feast of Weeks pointed to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost fifty days later.
- 5) The Feast of Trumpets pointed to the warning of a time judgment soon to come.
- 6) The Day of Atonement pointed to the time of judgment.
- 7) The Feast of Tabernacles pointed to the time when judgment was over and all God's people are gathered in their heavenly home.

All of these annual ceremonies and daily rituals were “a shadow of good things to come.” They all pointed forward to Christ’s coming and man’s salvation.

Hebrews 10:1 says *"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect."*

The “good things to come” was 1) the knowledge of the heavenly sanctuary of which the earthly sanctuary was only a model, and 2) a righteous, divine High Priest that would take the place of the fallible human priest.

Hebrews 4:14 - 15 *"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."*

Hebrews 8:1,2 *"Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man."*

Hebrews 9:1 *"Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and the earthly sanctuary."*

The earthly sanctuary and its services served as a visual aid until “the time of reformation.” It was the “old covenant,” or a better way to state it would be that it was the “old arrangement.” The old arrangement with all its visual aids and symbols would be replaced with a new covenant or a new arrangement which was much better because, instead of visual aids, God himself in the person of Jesus Christ came to show mankind the Way of Salvation.

Hebrews 9:8 - 12 *"The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience-- concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*

Christ did not enter into the earthly sanctuary as High Priest, but into the heavenly sanctuary.

What is the work of Christ's as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary today?

Romans 5:10 *"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."*

Two points to be made here.

1) We are reconciled to God by the death of Jesus. Being "reconciled," means we are won back into relationship with God by the death of Christ. (Commonly referred to as "being justified.")

2) However, having been being won back, we still have the tendency to stray away. Therefore we need His help to keep us close to God once we have been won back. That's where the next text comes in. It helps us to understand what it means to be "saved by his life."

Hebrews 7:25 *"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."*

Christ *"always lives,"* that is, He is always there in the heavenly sanctuary to *"make intercession for them."* Intercession is from a Greek word which means to communicate, to stay in touch with another. Jesus is not there pleading with His Father to forgive us, but rather Christ is pleading with us to stay close to Him, to remind us of His sacrifice that won us back to Him and to continually remind us that He wants to keep us with Him forever. That is what it means *"to be saved by His life."*

Hebrews 4:16 *"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*

We can go directly to God ourselves. It is not necessary to go to a rabbi, or a priest, or a preacher for intercession with God as many people believe.

Where did the idea that we must have a human intercessor with God come from? It came from the picture of God in the Old Testament, where some see God as a God of wrath. We see this in Exodus chapter twenty and the time that God came down on Mt. Sinai and gave the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20:18,19 *"Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."*

In an awesome display of power, God got the attention of that "stiff-necked" people Moses led out of Egypt, and they listened. But they were afraid and wanted someone between them and God. Since they knew that Moses was close to God, they wanted him as a "go-between," to talk to God for them.

But think this through. Was Moses a man? Yes. Then who was between God and Moses? No one. What was the difference? The difference was that those people didn't really know God and not knowing Him they were afraid of Him as many are yet today because of the lies of Satan about God's nature.

As we learned in a previous lesson, we can't go up to heaven to learn about God, so God, in the person of the Son came down to make teach us about Him. This is what it means when the Bible says He is our intercessor or intermediary. Remember - Jesus came to show us what God is really like and to teach us that there is no reason to be afraid of Him. Jesus is the only "go between" we need.

Having said that, there is another who stands between us and God, but rather than trying to connect us with God, he is trying to separate us from God. He is an enemy. Who is this enemy? Satan, the accuser who continues to do everything he can to keep us from the truth about God.

Is God your friend? He wants to be – Jesus tells us exactly how God wants to relate to us:

John 15:14,15 *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you."*

It is wonderful to be God's servant – we want to hear Christ say to us *"Well done thou good and faithful servant."*

And we rejoice that we are considered the children of God – *"What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."*

But our Heavenly Father wants us to come even higher and closer still. He wants us to be His faithful, loyal friends! Proverbs 18:24

says “*there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*” That friend is God in Christ.

Through Christ, God is extending His hand in friendship to you! Will you reach out and grasp it? Will you continue to study to learn more about the God who loves you and wants to be your friend?

Response Questions:

1. Is it clear to you that God loves us and wants to be with us?
Yes __ No __

2. Is it clear to you that sin separates us from God?
Yes __ No __

3. Is it clear to you that Jesus came to show us what God is like?
Yes __ No __

4. Do you want to be God’s friend? Yes __ No __

NOTES
