

Message Three

Serving God

Scripture Reading: Exo. 7:16; 5:1, 3; 3:12;
24:8; 3:6; 19:6; 25:8-9

I. “Let My people go that they may serve Me in the wilderness”—Exo. 7:16; 5:1; 4:23; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3:

- A. The children of Israel had been usurped by Pharaoh to serve as slaves to carry out the purpose of the Egyptians—14:12.
- B. Pharaoh signifies not only Satan but also the self and the natural man; our natural mind, will, or emotion may be a Pharaoh who rebels against God or who bargains subtly with Him.
- C. Positively, the wilderness signifies a realm of separation; in His dealing with Pharaoh, God demanded such a separation for His people—7:16.

II. “Let My people go that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness”; “let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah”—5:1, 17:

- A. God’s goal was not separation; His goal was that the children of Israel would hold a feast to Him and sacrifice to Him—vv. 1, 3, 8, 17:
 - 1. God’s demand of Pharaoh was to let the people go a three days’ journey into the wilderness so that they could hold a feast to Him and sacrifice to Him; this is the enjoyment of God’s salvation—vv. 1, 3.
 - 2. Because of the Lord’s full salvation, we have been delivered from bondage in Egypt in order to serve God, and we are now in the wilderness enjoying the feast and offering sacrifice to God—8:20, 26-27, 29.
- B. To hold a feast to God is to enjoy God with God and to worship God—5:1:
 - 1. The words *to Me* in 5:1 indicate that when God’s people are feasting, He is happy; their feasting is to Him.
 - 2. The best and highest relationship man can have with God is to feast to God and with God—23:14-17.
 - 3. To have a feast to God means that we feast for Him and with Him; the more we feast, the more enjoyment He has and the happier He is.
 - 4. This feasting to the Lord is dispensational worship; that is, worshipping God according to what has been dispensed into us—John 4:14, 23-24.

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- C. The children of Israel were to sacrifice to the Lord—Exo. 3:18; 5:3, 8, 17:
 - 1. *Sacrifice* is a word parallel to *hold a feast*—vv. 1, 3:
 - a. To the children of Israel, the feast was a feast, but to God it was a sacrifice.
 - b. Without the sacrifice, there is nothing to feast on; what the children of Israel were to feast on was the very sacrifice they were to offer to God.
 - 2. To sacrifice to God is to offer something to Him, and to hold a feast to God is to enjoy with God what is offered to Him—vv. 1, 3.

III. The purpose of God's calling is to bring His chosen people to the mountain, where they may serve Him and sacrifice to Him—3:1, 12, 18; 19:1-2, 11; 24:16-18:

- A. In Exodus 3:12 God says that His people would serve Him on the mountain of God—cf. v. 1.
- B. The mountain of God is where we receive the revelation regarding God's purpose—v. 12; 19:2; 24:9-13, 18:
 - 1. At the mountain the children of Israel received the revelation concerning what God is and concerning God's desire to have a dwelling place on earth—19:3-6; 20:2; 25:8-9.
 - 2. Here on the mountain, where the sky is clear, we see the vision of God's economy; here we come to know what is on God's heart, and we see what God desires to have on earth today—24:10; 25:8.
 - 3. We realize that God desires to have a people who walk according to His statutes and who build Him a tabernacle so that He may dwell among them.

IV. We must serve God according to the vision of God and of the pattern shown on the mountain—24:10-11; 25:9:

- A. We need to see a vision of God in a transparent and clear heaven; only when we are in such an atmosphere can we receive the heavenly vision of the building of God's dwelling place—24:10-11; 25:8.
- B. "According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, even so shall you make it"—v. 9:

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1. Before the tabernacle was built, God showed Moses the pattern of the tabernacle and its furnishings—24:9—25:9, 40; 39:32-43.
2. In order to serve God, we must see the pattern shown on the mountain—Heb. 8:5.
3. The pattern shown on the mountain is God's plan; if we do not understand God's plan, it will be impossible for us to do God's work—Eph. 3:4.
4. Because the church as the mystery of Christ was revealed to the apostles and prophets, the revelation they received is considered the foundation on which the church is built—vv. 4-5; 2:20.

V. The blood of the covenant enables the believers to serve the living God—Exo. 24:8; Heb. 9:14:

- A. The blood of the covenant has made it possible for God's people, as fallen and sinful persons who have been redeemed, forgiven, and cleansed, to enter into God's presence and remain there to be infused with Him—Exo. 24:9-18; 34:28-29; Lev. 16:11-16; cf. Heb. 10:19-20; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1:7.
- B. The blood of Christ makes it possible for us to serve the living God; through the redeeming blood of Christ, we have life and have been brought into the presence of God to serve Him—Heb. 9:14; Eph. 1:7.

VI. The basis of our service is God as fire from heaven—Lev. 9:24; 6:13:

- A. The fire burning out of the midst of the thornbush was the Triune God, the God of resurrection—Exo. 3:2, 4, 6; Matt. 22:31-32.
- B. As those who have been gained and are being used by God, we are a thornbush according to our natural man; however, there is a fire in us; God has come to us in the fire:
 1. When the fire of God was burning in the thornbush, it was God who was burning—Exo. 3:3-4.
 2. The strength and brightness of the fire come from the fire itself; the fire is merely resting on us; our purpose is to express the fire.
- C. Our service to God must be based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering—Lev. 9:24; 16:12-13; 6:13; 10:1-2:

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1. The fire that burned on the altar of the burnt offering came down from the heavens—9:24:
 - a. After coming down from the heavens, that fire burned continually upon the altar—6:13.
 - b. The divine fire, the burning Triune God, enables us to serve; our service must come out of the burning of God's fire—Rom. 12:11; Exo. 3:2, 4, 6.
2. The fire from the altar is the genuine motivating power of service—Lev. 6:13; Rom. 12:11.

VII. The Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt in order to make them a kingdom of priests, a kingdom in which everyone would be a priest, one who serves God continually—Exo. 19:6:

- A. Exodus 29 reveals that we were saved so that we may be sanctified to serve God as priests:
 1. The goal of God's salvation is to make all those who believe in Christ priests of God—Rev. 1:5-6; 5:10; 7:15.
 2. The Lord Jesus, the Priest, brought us into the priesthood through His redemption; since we are priests, we should be serving God in whatever we are doing—1:5-6; Rom. 1:9.
- B. A priest is a person who serves God by enjoying God in Christ and through Christ as the reality of the offerings—v. 9; Gal. 5:22; 1 Pet. 2:5.
- C. To serve God as priests is to minister Christ to Him as food for His satisfaction; in typology, God's food was the burnt offering presented to Him for His satisfaction—Exo. 29:37-44.
- D. The result of the priestly life depicted in Exodus 29 is that God comes to meet with us, eat with us, speak with us, and dwell among us—vv. 42b, 45-46.

VIII. God's building is the desire of God's heart and the goal of His salvation—25:8-9; 40:1-38:

- A. The pictures in Exodus unveil the desire of God's heart with respect to His chosen people:
 1. God wanted the tabernacle to be His dwelling place; this was the desire of His heart—25:8.
 2. The physical tabernacle erected in Exodus 40 was a symbol of a corporate people, the children of Israel as the house of God—Heb. 3:6.

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- B. The building of God's house is related to the priesthood and depends on the priesthood; priests build up the dwelling place of God and become part of God's dwelling, God's house—Exo. 19:6; 25:8-9; Zech. 6:12-13; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 2:5.
- C. Christ is the redemption, salvation, and supply of God's people and the means for them to worship and serve God so that in Him they may be built up with God together for them and God to meet, communicate, and dwell mutually; this is the central thought of the book of Exodus—12:3; 16:4; 17:6; 29:45-46; 25:8-9.