

PRAYER AND THE WILL OF MAN
or
HOW TO RECEIVE HELP FROM THE SANCTUARY

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (KJV). One of the best messages ever preached from the sanctuary of God was that of the angels in Luke 2:14. Little did mankind know what manner of good news this baby in a manger would bring. Quite often I teach and share how the will of man can be transformed by worship, or more particularly sacrifice, and thus formed into the image and the will of God. The perfect example of this is Christ's sacrifice. While there is so much more that we could look at concerning examples of sacrifice, especially when looking at the passion of Christ, one example we can discuss at Christmas time is that of the Trinity as a whole. As soon as Jesus left His celestial home and became a child in Mary, Father God Almighty and the Son and the Holy Spirit now had a relationship with mankind that they never had before. God became a man and dwelled with us (see Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). The transformation of the relationship of Jehovah God with mankind is an awesome history which is spelled out in our present day Bibles. God never changes (Malachi 3:6), but the process of man's history is seen in a changing relationship with God. First God comes down to talk and have fellowship with Adam and Eve. Sin breaks this dialogue and now the concept of a sacrifice is introduced (Genesis 3:21; 4:4; 8:20, 21). Before the will of man disobeyed the will of God, open dialogue with God was possible. Now fellowship is encouraged through a sacrifice due to sin, because without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin (Hebrews 9:22). In the presence of a holy God, sin is burned up. It's a little hard to have a dialogue with someone that can turn you into toast unless 'fire retardant' is available. God provides sacrifice to be that 'retardant' so that we can have fellowship. As time goes, on the concept of sacrifice is developed into a code or law and then developed into a tent or tabernacle (Exodus 12; 19-31; 34-40; Leviticus; Numbers 1-10; 15; 18-19; 26-30 and various portions of Deuteronomy).

At this stage the concept of sacrifice is fulfilled during the Old Testament in the building of a temple. David is credited with developing a relationship or dialogue with God that was different for those living during that period of time, but frankly, it was not so revolutionary. David has a concept of sacrifice, but the sacrifice is one of words, music and human understanding. Now sacrifice is a matter of the heart. The blood sacrifices are still going on, but this sacrifice of the will of man so that glory is given to God is another transition in the time line. No man is an island and David was not either. Three prophets influence his own understanding: Samuel, Gad and Nathan (1 Chronicles 9:22; 2 Chronicles 29:25). For the next thousand or so years, God's people go through different challenges and revivals, so to speak, in

sacrificing their human understanding for the glory of God while attempting to dedicate themselves in the prescribed manner of temple worship. And now they are ready for the next step in the dialogue between God and man: JESUS, the God/man.

Jesus steps onto the scene after a four hundred year silence between God and man. Because of that silence, man has turned— through different conquering emperors — upwards of 70 percent of the then living population, into slavery. Fast forward for a moment to Paul's statement in Acts 22:23-29, to the Roman commander that he was born free, and we can understand why it was met with such shocked surprise. The chosen people themselves as a whole are in captivity to the Roman Empire. If ever they needed help from the sanctuary, it was then. God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy does not send them someone who wants to fight with human swords. He knows the Roman Empire is a part of this fleeting world. Father God sends them help from the sanctuary in the form of a baby in a woman. (Does this holiday season find you needing help from God's sanctuary? Read on, God is never far from those who cry out to Him.)

Many times in our church culture we tend to fight the world system by developing our own 'Christianized' world system. When we review God's dealings with mankind, it's plain to see that our help comes from a sanctuary that is not of this world and does not function according to our natural human understanding. Even our present day prophetic practices can sometimes be done according to our own spiritualized understanding. If God decides to give us words ahead of time that go contrary to human thought and thinking, we get frustrated. My experience with the word of God is that it comes ahead of time while it challenges human understanding and you usually don't understand the totality of what God is saying until after much time has passed. Usually prophetic words that make sense are not the ones that answer the prayer of help from the sanctuary, even before a prayer is prayed! Let's look at how God sends help from the sanctuary.

The people are crying under the oppression and rule of slavery; slavery from without and slavery from within their own religious practices. God is transitioning their relationship with Him. In times past He has met them as they sacrificed in a temple. Now He comes down as the sacrifice inside a human temple. The sacrifice of praise, the very WORD Himself, is made flesh, dwelling on the inside of Mary. Mary is still in the old temple system while the author of the new system is inside of her. As Christ is born and living on earth, God now becomes the temple. For me Mary is the most complete example of God's relationship with man. This simple, yet totally profound example of God transitioning human relationship and understanding to His will on earth is exactly what God is doing in the day we live

in. Let me try to explain what I sense.

Before the Lord moves us from slavery to the promised land, we need to have the mentality of slavery removed from us because we have fundamentally grown up in it. Because we are comfortable in our present temple system, we will never change. We will never ask for help from the sanctuary. Before Christ came the first time, God allowed situations that would cause His people to cry out for help from His sanctuary. When we look at Israel today, we can see that until all avenues for a human system of peace are exhausted, they will not accept the only Help from the sanctuary that will truly make a difference for both Jew and Arab. We have similar issues in our present church world. Change scares us, but to add to that change what I call the 'God Understanding,' really messes us up. So God allowed 70 percent of the population to be in slavery in the world Jesus was born into, and He allows His people Israel to be held captive under the rule of a Greco-Roman based world system. Lest anyone think that God is to blame for this, it is simply not true. Human sin causes slavery. To complicate matters further, their minds are still captive to the old temple system. So God sends Elijah, a somewhat unkept and difficult individual— according to their understanding— with seemingly no family ties and no children, to prepare God's people (both the first Elijah and the second one fulfill the type). Some want to be prepared by Elijah, others want Elijah dead. If this isn't challenging enough for human understanding, coming on the scene is THE ONE. Rumor has it He was immaculately conceived, and then again, there are other rumors also. If you were living during that kind of a time frame, what would you think? I have to be honest and say unless I had a relationship with THE ONE or saw His miracles or heard Him speak, I wouldn't know what to believe. And that's exactly God's point. His chosen people are put between a rock and a hard place for a reason: That reason is to look to *The Rock* (Isaiah 51:1; 1 Corinthians 10:1-10). God allows this winnowing process to bring forth a pure child, a pure bride and a pure people. He desires with a passion we just cannot fathom, to ransom and rescue people caught in all different kinds of slaveries, but they just do not have the fortitude to break free from it. He now provides the Help from the Sanctuary for them to do so.

Look at the history of it from the point of Christ's entrance. Mary must sacrifice her own understanding of human conception to receive the miraculous help all mankind would need from the sanctuary of heaven. She could have had no idea as to what exactly all this would turn out to look like. The early church, who were all God-fearing Jews, would have to stay between the proverbial rock and hard place with their understanding of the unity of One True God; but also realize that Father, Son and Holy Spirit is One God with three distinct personalities; not three gods but One true God. It would take approximately 300 years, but eventually humans

would begin to understand the nature of a God who defines things as opposed to things defining God. Let me explain. We say God is love. This is true; yet love does not define God, God defines what love is. We say God is holy. This is true; yet holiness does not define God, God defines what holiness is. The reason we can look these things up in the dictionary and find the definition is because God came down to reveal Himself to mankind. The next issue would be to articulate the divine and the human nature of Jesus. There has never been a God/man before. How do you articulate exactly what that is anyway? The amazing reality is that the church did during the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451.

Each one of these instances and so many more, involved God's people being challenged by what and how they thought God did things, while they endeavored with every ounce of their strength to remain true to all that the Scriptures said, yet sacrifice their own understanding to be able to receive the help from the sanctuary of heaven that would save the human race. If that alone does not tell us there is a God in heaven, I don't know what can. Left to our own devices we would kill one another and cause our own extinction. Yet God in heaven came down, set up history to prepare us to be challenged by a virgin conceiving a child and that child would be Messiah. This baby would heal the sick, but do more than that. He would heal the broken hearted, but He would do more than that (Isaiah 61). He would raise the dead, but He would do more than that. He would sacrifice and die for the living dead, enslaved to sin and the world system, so that by His resurrection from the dead we are set free from death and slavery (Hebrews 2:12-15; Romans 8: 1, 2).

The church today is going through a crisis. Israel is going through a crisis. The world is going through a crisis. We want to know what God is doing; why is there so much sin in God's people and the world? What's the 'new' move of God? Why don't we see the signs and miracles we should? I'm not criticizing anyone asking those questions. Most of them are valid questions with valid answers, even though I will not presume to answer them here. I will say this: God is doing what He has always done. He is revealing what He has already written and He is challenging our human understanding to prepare us for His kind of help from the sanctuary. He met us in times past in a temple made with human hands. He then said, I will send the Holy Spirit to fellowship inside of you and you will be my temple. Later on in the book of Revelation He said, that He— God Almighty alone— is the temple. Jesus said in John 14:23: "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." Our present day religious systems just do not allow God to be the temple. We've been okay with the Holy Spirit dwelling on the inside of us and we've been okay with going to a building to meet with God. But God being the temple? What exactly

does that look like? We were okay when we were asked in the old temple system to sacrifice animals. Then we were okay when we realized God did that to explain the vicarious sacrifice of Christ and we didn't need to sacrifice all those poor animals any more. Then we understood that we were to be like Jesus and sacrifice our own will and our own understanding. (I think all of us are still working through that one.) But then God says to sacrifice to My glory; sacrifice to the point where God receives all glory— even while humans are being made into a temple and a bride— so that Christ is received on earth again and God becomes the temple! Can there be a place on earth where we come in such unity with each other and the Lord that you can literally be enveloped by Him as the temple?

“ ‘See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,’ says the Lord Almighty.” (Malachi 3:1)

“I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.” (Revelation 21:22-27)

I realize this is in the future. But certainly we can start to change our thinking in order to go with God as He moves.

What about you? Maybe this holiday season these questions are not paramount in your mind. Maybe the kind of help you need is the bills paid for, the health of a loved one or the kindness of a stranger. Maybe you're feeling the weight of people hurting you or misunderstanding you. I've got good news. The Psalms I will quote from were written approximately 1000 years before Jesus came the first time. Psalm 22 says this: "...a band of evil men has encircled me; they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.....All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: 'He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.' Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast....."

The preceding passages from Psalm 22 were fulfilled as Christ was dying on the cross (Mark 15:29; John 19:23, 24). Since those passages came to pass, then surely what the psalmist declares a few verses later is true, that this One who is mocked and despised.....“will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.”

In Psalm 20 God listens to the cry of help and sends it from His sanctuary: “May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests.” (Psalm 20:1-5)

This season if you find yourself in need, ask God for help from the sanctuary. We are here at the ministry to help also. If we cannot fill the need when you email or call, we will put you in touch with a ministry in your local region that can help in the area of food or clothing or even spiritual counseling. The need this season is great, but I feel confident the Lord is able to meet the need because we have had tremendous needs over the years and God has saved us each time. If you have never asked to have a relationship with Jesus, you can ask now. It’s simple, just be real with Him. Be honest about doing wrong and ask Jesus to forgive you and come into your heart. Believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and ask Him to be your Lord and Savior. If you need a Bible we will send it free of charge, just contact us. There are no strings attached. The end of Psalm 20 says this: “Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. O Lord, save! O king, answer us when we call!”
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR IN JESUS’ PRECIOUS NAME.

