

Worship and Priesthood Pt. 4.

“Benediction” Acts 3:26.

Sunday morning, March 16, 2008.

I. Review.

We have seen in past weeks how the Lord Jesus in His Person brought a new and permanent kind of priesthood, patterned after the order of Melchizedek, and foretold in Psalm 110:4.

We have also seen how the Lord Jesus Christ patterns His work after the Mosaic priesthood in three distinct ways:

1. The oblation, or the bringing of the sacrifice.
2. Intercession, or the praying for His people.
3. Benediction, or the bringing of God’s blessing to His people.

This morning we focus on the benediction; the blessing of God’s people.

II. God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you.

We must understand these words in terms of Christ’s service in the true and heavenly temple as foreshadowed by the ministry of the earthly temple.

A. The ministry of the earthly temple.

1. The bull and goat, killed on the day of atonement, were burnt in fire outside the camp and outside the city. All the offerings for sin were sacrificed outside the holy place of the temple proper.
2. The priest would enter into the holy place to offer the prayers of intercession in behalf of the people. Once a year he would take with him the blood of the bull and goat and enter the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat of the ark. This was on the day of atonement.
3. The priest would come out of the temple to the waiting people to impart the blessing of God to them in the words of the Aaronic benediction.

B. The ministry of the true and heavenly temple.

1. The Lord Jesus as the true and final sacrifice suffered and died outside the temple and outside the camp (the city). So He appeased God’s wrath for sin, and carried our sins away.
2. The Lord Jesus, in His ascension, entered the heavenly temple with His own blood; into the very presence of God as there is no veil there. There He ministers according to the power of an endless life Hebr. 7:16, and there He always lives to make intercession for us. Hebr. 7:25.
3. From there also the Father Himself sends forth Christ to His people to bless them as the priest did in blessing the people by imparting the benediction.

This, Peter says, is what is happening in Acts 3. The Lord Jesus is sent forth from the throne of God in the true heavenly temple, having entered there with His own blood and having prayed for His people. With Him, He brings the fullness of the blessing of God and gives it to worthy worshippers.

III. How do we understand this coming of Christ.

A. From John 14:16-18

“I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”
Christ comes to us in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

B. From Romans 10:14 and Hebrews 12:25.

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe Him whom they have not heard? An how shall they hear without a preacher?”

“See that you refuse not Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn

away

from Him who speaks from heaven.”

Christ joins Himself to His word and comes to us in His word.

C. From Luke 9:48. “Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me.”

Matt. 10:40 “He who receives you receives Me.”

Matt. 25:40,45. “I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” (And the reverse.)

Eph. 5:30 “We are members of His body; of His flesh and of His bones.”

Christ comes to us in His body; in the authority invested in its officers, right down to the littlest and the least and most needy ones among them.

IV. How shall we receive this fullness of blessing with which the Father sent Christ?

“In turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

A. The Greek text here is very clear that it is God’s servant Jesus who turns us away

from our iniquities in order to impart the Father’s blessing to us.

B. Thus we read in Jeremiah 31:18-20 how Ephraim learned to say under the chastising hand of God: “Restore me and I will return, for you are the Lord my God.” And: “Surely after my turning I repented, and after I was instructed I struck myself on the thigh. I was ashamed, yes even humiliated.”

C. God is the first mover, and yet, there is no more important work we may seek and ask for in prayer than our being turned to the Lord. With such prayers God is well pleased. Listen to the voice of the Father as He speaks of His rebellious son Ephraim: “Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? Though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still. Therefore My heart yearns for him. I will surely have mercy on him, says the Lord.”

Two dangers to guard against:

1. That we regard ourselves as already turned sufficiently.

2. That we believe the Lord will not turn us.

- Look at unbelieving and rebellious Israel in Jeremiah.

- Look at the generation that Crucified Jesus to which He came to bless them.

One truth to set your heart on:

That Jesus has come from the true and heavenly temple in His Church; in His word, and in the Holy Spirit, to bless you with the fullness of the Father's blessing, in turning you from your iniquities.