

Sermon Notes

Psalm 118:27-29

"Christ Is All"

Easter Sunday - April 21, 2019

Introduction

- 1) For this Lord's Day (i.e. the Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, the day our Lord resurrected from the dead) we are going to go back in time and look at an Old Testament liturgy. Ex 20:8-11;
Matt 28:1; Mark 16:2
Heb 4:1-11
- 2) "Liturgy" means "an order of worship," the structure of how God is worshipped.
- 3) Since all of the Bible is about Christ, you can hear our Lord in this order of worship. Luke 24:25-27; Acts 13:27;
John 5:37-47; Rev 1:8; 22:13
- 4) Unlike New Covenant worship, Old Testament (OT) worship is about geography and places.
 - a) If we want to get closer to the Lord, we have to go to where He dwells.
 - b) And that means to go to Jerusalem (literally "city of peace"), the sacred capitol city of God's OT people, Israel, which was declared the capitol by the great King David, whose lineage is prophesied to last forever. 2Sam 7:13,16
1Chr 11:4-9
- 5) The most important building in Jerusalem is God's OT Temple. 1Chr 22:1-19
 - a) It was built by David's son, Solomon. 2Chr 3:1-22
 - b) It is the center of worship for the nation of Israel.
 - i) The most important ritual of the priests sacrificing offerings (animals & grains) to the Lord happens at the Temple. see book the
of Leviticus
 - ii) It was a special work of piety for any Israelite to make a pilgrimage to the Temple during one of the great feast holidays (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles). Ex 12:3-20; 23:16; 34:22;
Num 29:12-38;
Ps 84:5; 119:54
 - c) The Temple is where God dwelt in a special way. Ex 25:17-22; 26:31-33; Lev 16; 2Chr 5:1-14
 - i) The most sacred place in the Temple is the "Holy of Holies," a small room behind a large veil where the Ark of the Covenant is kept.
 - ii) It is from the mercy seat, on the top of the Ark, that God would "meet" with His people. Ex 25:22
 - iii) Only the high priest could enter this room once a year, during the Day of Atonement. Lev 23:26-44

An Old Testament Liturgy - Psalm 118:19-26

- 1) In Psalm 118 we read of a great liturgical song of worship for God's Temple.
 - a) In Ps 118:1-4 those who know the Lord is good, and fear Him, gather to go to God's Temple to worship and give Him thanks.
 - b) In Ps 118:5-18 the gathering hears a report of how the people have been delivered from their enemies by the work and will of the Lord.
 - c) This can only lead to, and in end with, the worship of God.
 - d) So we read in Ps 118:19-29 a liturgical procession is going to go to the Temple to worship the Lord, to praise and thank Him for the deliverance He has wrought.

- 2) The procession begins with the request: *“Open to me the gates of righteousness; I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD.”* Ps 118:19
- a) As the procession approaches the Temple they call for its **gates** to be open so that they may go in and participate in worship of the Lord by the **Temple** rituals God has proscribed in His Word. Ps 42:4; 68:24-25; Neh 12:27-47
- b) Only the righteous may enter, which are those who fear the Lord. Ps 118:4,6; Eccl 12:13; Prov 1:7; 9:10;
- c) The gatekeeper affirms this and responds: *“This is the gate of the LORD; The righteous will enter through it.”* Ps 118:20
- 3) The procession enters into the inner courtyard and publicly worships: *“I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, and You have become my salvation.”* Ps 118:21
- a) The LORD *has* heard their cries and has delivered them. Ps 18:40; 30:12; 86:12
- b) The procession then probably quotes an old Jewish proverb, *“The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone.”* Ps 118:22
- i) At the very least this refers to how foolish and small the Temple looks compared to the *“great”* temples of the pagan world. Deut 7:6-8
- ii) But those who fear the Lord, and know He alone is God, trust not in the world. Ps 118:9; 146:3
- iii) This is also a royal prophecy, but more about that later.
- c) The procession rejoices, *“This is the LORD’S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”* – Ps 118:23-24
- d) Though the people rejoice in God’s deliverance , and in this time of worship, they know they will continually need God’s mercy and provision, so they cry out: *“O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!”* – Ps 118:25
- 4) Remember, we are in the Temple complex, right outside the Temple itself, so God’s priests respond and bless the procession because they have been ordained by God to lead worship. They proclaim: *“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.”* – Ps 118:26

Today’s Sermon Text – The Conclusion of this Liturgy – Psalm 118:27-29

- 1) The priests continue and state a simple but profound truth, *“the LORD is God, and He has given us light;”* – Ps 118:27a
- a) Note that *“LORD”* is all in capitals.
- i) In the OT this is done because it is the name of God.
- ii) It means *“I Am”*; the name God gave to Moses. Ex 3:13-14
- iii) So this isn’t some generic god of our imagination, but the God of the Bible.
- iv) If you are not following the God of the Bible (and all the Bible, Genesis through Revelation) then you do not fear the Lord and are directly and overtly violating the first four of the Ten Commandments, and are under God’s judgment. Ex 20:1-12

- b) Ps 118:27a, is a blessing however, and faithful Israelites, who know their Scriptures, would hear this being a condensed version of the priestly benediction commanded by God to Moses.

*“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to Aaron and to his sons (i.e. the priests), saying, Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: **The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.** So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.’”* – Numbers 6:22-27

- c) For the righteous know God *“has given us light.”*

i) This is a profound and deep statement that could take up dozens of sermons.

ii) The very first thing created is **light**, which of all the physical creation is most like God, and is the foundation of all creation and life itself. Gen 1:3-5; Ps 104:2; 1Tim 6:16; James 1:17; 1John 1:5

iii) At the very least, this is about how God has taken His people out of the darkness of oppression and brought them into the marvelous light of His favor and grace. Is 9:2; 42:16; 1Pet 2:9

- 2) The **priests** then command the central part of worship be performed: *“Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.”* – Ps 118:27b

a) There is a large bronze **altar** in the inner court, right in front of the Temple, where the priests give burnt offerings. Ex 27:1-8; 38:1-7; 2Kgs 16:14; 2Chr 29:18

b) It is the center for the standard worship of the Lord.

i) Burnt offerings are a whole **sacrifice** (whether a slaughtered animal or grain) unto to the Lord and burned in this altar, showing that God is the Lord of everything and everyone.

ii) Thus the priests would offer sacrifice every morning & evening. Ex 29:38-42; Lev 1:1-17; 6:22

iii) Since this is a “continual” **offering**, it teaches Israel that their sinfulness requires a complete and continual offering for atonement.

c) There is another altar, a golden one inside the Temple right before the **veil** at the **Holy of Holies** were the priests burn incense for the Lord. Ex 30:1-10; 40:5 1Kgs 6:20-22
The procession is not allowed to go in there!

- 3) The procession closes with confession of **God**, worship and thanksgiving: *“You are my God, and I give thanks to You; You are my God, I extol You. Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.”* – Ps 118:28-29

Christ in Psalm 118

1) Are any of you thinking: *“I thought this was supposed to be an Easter sermon?”*

2) Did you not hear the risen Christ in this Psalm?

3) This Psalm is all about “Holy Week”; the Christian holidays between Palm Sunday and Easter:

a) In Ps 118:26a, we read *“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD”*

i) This verse was directly proclaimed by the people as Christ entered Jerusalem during that first Palm Sunday. Matt 21:9; Mark 11:9; Luke 19:38; John 12:13

- ii) As we read in Matthew 21:9 – *“The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!’”*
- b) Psalm 118 was probably part of the song sung by the Lord Jesus and His disciples right after the first Lord’s Supper, right before His arrest, on that first Maundy Thursday.
 - i) *“After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”*
– Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26
 - ii) Psalms 113-118 are viewed by ancient Jews as a special collection of praise songs.¹
 - iii) They were used at the great annual Old Testament festivals, especially the joyous ones of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.²
 - iv) During the Passover, the gathering would sing Psalms 113-114 before the meal, and Psalms 115-118 after the meal.
- c) That proverb about the *“stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone”* in Ps 118:22 is a prophecy about Christ.
 - i) It refers to Christ and His death (rejected by the world) and His resurrection (the foundation of all God's work of salvation).
 - ii) See: Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1Pet 2:7.
- 4) But our Lord is much more in this Psalm, in fact every aspect of worship is about Him.
 - a) Remember, the things of the OT (priests, sacrifices, the Temple, etc.) are but figures, shadows, and copies of the reality we have in Christ and His New Covenant. 2Cor 5:17; Gal 3:23-25;
Col 2:15-17; Heb 7:22; 8:4-8;
Heb 9:15,23; 10:1; 12:24
 - b) As Paul writes, *“things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.”* – Col 2:17
- 5) So Christ is all! Col 3:11; Eph 1:22-23
 - a) Christ is the Gate by which we enter. John 10:1ff
 - i) Christ commands, *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”* – Matt 7:13-14
 - ii) Christ Himself is the door: *“I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”* – John 10:9

¹ They are called “Egyptian Hallel” psalms because of Ps 114:1. “Hallel” is the Hebrew word meaning “to praise.” It’s the name given to several collection of psalms of praise used during worship at the Temple and the synagogue. Besides the “Egyptian Hallel” of Ps 113-118, there is the “Great Hallel” of Psalms 120-136, especially Ps 136, and the “Final Hallel” or “Hallelujah Psalms” of 146-150.

² There are three great pilgrim holidays in the OT: Passover, Pentecost & Tabernacles.

Passover (or Pesah, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread) celebrates the exodus out of Egypt in March or April.

(Ex 12:3-20; Lev 23:6; Deut 16:1-8)

Pentecost (or Shabuot, or Feast of Weeks, or Day of Firstfruits, or Feast of Harvest) celebrates the completion of the barley harvest in May or June. (Ex 23:16; 34:22; Num 28:26; Lev 23:16)

Tabernacles, the Feast of (or Sukkot, or the Feast of Booths, or the Feast of Ingathering) celebrates the end of the year and happens in September or October. (Lev 23:34; Num 29:12-38)

Though there are many other minor feast days, the other major holiday is **Yom Kippur**, the Day of Atonement, which was a holy convocation where Israel made offerings for their sins in September or October. (Ex 30:10; Lev 23:26-31).

iii) Because He alone is the Way: *“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”* – John 14:6

b) Christ is the true Temple.

i) *“Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ The Jews then said, ‘It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.”*
– John 2:19-21

ii) It is the church, Christ’s spiritual body on earth, that is the true Temple here today, because the Holy Spirit dwells within the assemblies of the faithful. Rom 8:9; 2Cor 6:16; 1Cor 3:16; 6:19; Eph 2:21; Rev 3:21

c) Christ is the Light of the world.

John 9:5; 12:35

i) *“Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.’”*
– John 8:12

ii) *“In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.”* – John 1:4

d) Christ is our perfect High Priest. Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-16; 5:5; 6:20; 7:26-8:3; 9:7,11,25; 13:11-14

i) This is the central message of the Book of Hebrews.

ii) *“Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man . . . But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.”* – Heb 8:1-2,6

e) Christ is the altar.

Heb 13:10-14

f) Christ is the perfect sacrifice / offering.

i) *“By this will we have been sanctified (declared holy/righteous) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time,”* – Heb 10:10-12

ii) And because we are under the perfect sacrifice, we can go through the veil into the Holy of Holies.

g) Christ is the veil by which we enter the Holy of Holies.

Heb 6:19; 9:3,23-28

i) *“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God,”*
– Heb 10:19-31

ii) Remember on that first Good Friday the veil torn in two when our Lord died on the cross. Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45

iii) This means we have full access to God and His forgiveness because of Christ and we worship Him now in “Spirit and Truth.” John 4:23-24

iv) It also means God’s Spirit has left the Temple and gone into the church. Eph 2:19-22

6) How do we know this? Because Christ is God, He has fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and He has resurrected from the dead. 1Cor 15

Conclusion

- 1) We are under a New Covenant, so places, cities, buildings, priests and sacrifices no longer apply, because we have Christ!
- 2) We have Christ's perfect righteousness credited/imputed to us, which we receive by faith alone, through grace alone.
- 3) It is in this Gospel that we truly worship and say, *"You are my God, and I give thanks to You; You are my God, I extol You. Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."* – Ps 118:28-29
- 4) But like the Psalmist, we do daily say, *"O LORD, do save, we beseech You;"* – Ps 118:25a.
 - a) Not in the sense that we need more salvation, for Christ's saving work is finished, perfect and complete.
 - b) But that we are called to remain faithful, always trusting and resting in Christ as our only hope and assurance.
 - c) As Hebrews 13:10-14 teaches, *"We have an altar (Christ!) from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat (i.e. those trying to earn their righteous by keeping the Law). For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come."*
- 5) God is merciful and good, and He feeds us the Gospel in His Supper.

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