

The Psalms of Ascents

Week 8 – Tuesday

Matt. 17:5-8 – Footnote 8¹

There is no one else in the church but Christ. Moses has no place here; Elijah has no place here. Only Christ has a place here! We all need to see this. We need to hear the voice from heaven: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” (Matt. 17:5). Christ is the unique person in the church. We only hear Christ, not the regulations of the law nor the prophecies from the prophets—these have no place in the New Testament. In the tabernacle (in the church life), everything disappears but Christ; we see no man but Christ. When the Lord was on the Mount of Transfiguration, the Bible says, “When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only” (v. 8). This needs to be the final stage of the church’s growth and building up. Only in this way can God be satisfied, and only in this way can God look at the church and say, “This is My testimony, and this is My dwelling place.”

In the Old Testament, the ark entered in God’s temple, into the Holy of Holies. The temple had the outer court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies is where the ark dwells. There are three items in the ark. Hebrews 9, verses 3 and 4 say, “and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant.” The pot that contains the hidden manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the two tablets of the covenant were all in the ark. When we speak of Christ, of what the ark represents, we need to include these three items.

When Korah rose up with many others to rebel against Moses, they were judged by God with fire (Num. 16:35), but the earth opened up and swallowed the two and their families who refused to come before God at all (vv. 31-33). After that incident, the Israelites murmured against Moses and God allowed a plague to strike the people. Then Moses told Aaron to take the golden censer with fire from the altar and stand between the living and the dead and the plague was stopped (vv. 46-48). The plague was spreading among the people until Aaron took the golden censer to redeem the people.

Then chapter 17 tells us that God did something in order to stop the murmuring among the Israelites. He had the leader of each tribe bring their rod, write their name on it, and put it in the tabernacle. God said, “And it shall be that the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you” (v. 5). So Moses took the 12 rods and put them in the tabernacle of the testimony. The next day Moses went into the tabernacle and Aaron’s rod had budded, produced blossoms, and yielded ripe almonds. After that, Moses put Aaron’s before the testimony as a sign.