

Lenten Devotional Reflection
23 March 2020 (Lent Day 23)

Scripture: Hebrews 9:1-14 New Revised Standard Version

¹ Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. ² For a tent was constructed, the first one, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence; this is called the Holy Place. ³ Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Holy of Holies. ⁴ In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which there were a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; ⁵ above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot speak now in detail.

⁶ Such preparations having been made, the priests go continually into the first tent to carry out their ritual duties; ⁷ but only the high priest goes into the second, and he but once a year, and not without taking the blood that he offers for himself and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people. ⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing. ⁹ This is a symbol of the present time, during which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various baptisms, regulations for the body imposed until the time comes to set things right.

¹¹ But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), ¹² he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

Message

The author of the Book of Hebrews hoped eagerly, through the aspects of history, culture and religion that they could prove the coming of Christ. And in a nontraditional manner they revealed the salvation of God. It was beyond all conventional thinking.

The relationship between the first sanctuary and the more perfect tabernacle, was like a complete replacement of a new relationship.

The building of our spiritual life is the same. There's no doubt that we are built on the perfect tabernacle which Jesus Christ has become the cornerstone. We are no longer be ruled by the norm of the sanctuary, nor to follow the old Law in front of our belief. Instead, we need to renew and be molded.

In this chapter, the Book of Hebrews reminds us again, Christ has built the unshakable foundation to cleanse the believers' conscience and removed their deadly deeds so that they can better serve the Lord. This is also a reminder to our spiritual life. We need to take the first sanctuary as a reference, not to build on another sanctuary, adding the unnecessarily rules, like putting freedom into the jail of traditions. When we are witnessing the salvation of God and the final redemption of the Lord, we need to walk parallel with the times, not to be contained by the times. To revise but not to yield. Thanks to the Lord, He has cleansed our conscience, he took away our sin, shall we go back again?

Reflection

1. Are we enjoying the "earthly sanctuary"? Without thinking, without reflection, we do in the old manner?
2. Are we sure that we are in the perfect tabernacle? Does the spiritual life come from the cleansed conscience?
3. Are we a moving castle or a thousand years old tree? Are we moving towards the world or standing still?

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