**In The Presence Of God**

Prepared by Nathan Morrison for Sunday May 26th, 2019

Text: Hebrews 9:2-5; 10:19-25; James 4:8

Intro

1. Memorial Day is a time for citizens of the U.S. to remember the fallen, those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms. *Saints recognize freedom isn’t free (Eph. 1:7)!*
2. When one remembers fallen soldiers, great men and women of history, or family loved ones, etc., it is a way to be in their presence, or to feel like one is in their presence – By drawing near to their memory.
3. As saints we remember Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice (Heb. 10:10-12) every week by sharing in His body and blood when we partake of the Lord’s Supper (I Cor. 10:16; 11:26) – in His presence!
   1. Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Lk. 22:15; I Cor. 11:23-25)
4. As saints we are told to “draw near to God” – Heb. 10:19-25; Js. 4:8
   1. The imagery given is that of the Tabernacle! (Heb. 9:2-5)
   2. Physical Tabernacle a shadow and copy of heavenly things, a shadow of the “True Tabernacle” – Heaven! (Heb. 8:1-6).
5. In the context of drawing near to God, let us examine the contents of the Tabernacle! (Heb. 9:2)
   1. The table of the bread of the Presence (KJV: “Shewbread”) – Ex. 25:23-30 (right side)
   2. The golden lampstand – Ex. 25:31-40 (left side)
   3. The incense altar – Ex. 30:1-10 (straight ahead)
   4. Veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies – Ex. 26:1, 31-34 (blue, purple, scarlet, with cherubim)
   5. Beyond the veil in the Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant – Ex. 26:33-34; 40:21
6. The parallel of the Tabernacle and the church shows us: We are in the presence of God!
7. **Table of the Bread of the Presence**
   1. Ex. 25:23-30; 40:22-23 (NKJ: “Showbread”) – According to the “pattern” (Heb. 8:5)
   2. The first item in the Holy Place is the Table that the KJV calls the “Table of Shewbread.”
      1. Literally translated is “the table of the bread of the Face” *(H3899 H6440).*
   3. There are 12 loaves of unleavened bread on this table and they represent the 12 tribes of Israel *(Lev. 24:5-9).* What God is telling His people is: they are always before His PRESENCE (Face). He cared for them and He was constantly remembering them.
   4. We have entered the “holy place” (Heb. 10:19; 9:2)
      1. Under the Law, only the priests could enter the holy place (I Pet. 2:9: Saints are priests!)
      2. I Cor. 10:16-17: When we take communion: we share *(partake, fellowship, G2842 koinōnia)* in the body of Christ.
      3. At the Lord’s Table we “identify” with Christ… and He with us.
      4. And we become ONE in Jesus every time we eat together at this table
   5. The table of the Bread of the Presence/Lord’s Supper:
      1. Table of Showbread: God remembered His people, through His mighty works in making them a nation!
      2. Lord’s Supper: Jesus remembered us, in His death, burial, and resurrection!
      3. Table of Showbread: The people were in God’s Presence
      4. Lord’s Supper: We are in the Presence of Jesus.
      5. Table of Showbread: The Showbread was changed every Sabbath.
      6. Lord’s Supper: Observed every Sunday.
      7. Table of Showbread: A memorial for Israel to all that God did for the 12 Tribes of Israel
      8. Lord’s Supper: We remember Jesus and proclaim His death till He comes again! (I Cor. 11:23-26)
   6. At this table – with its focus on the death of Christ for us – we draw nearer to God in “SHARING in the body of Christ!”
8. **Golden Lampstand**
9. Ex. 25:31-40; 40:24-25 – According to the “pattern”
   1. Across from the table is the Golden Lampstand
   2. The priests’ job was to make sure its lamps are constantly filled with oil and that its wicks are replaced when they burn down. Oil used was Olive Oil – Ex. 27:20
   3. Every morning and every evening the High Priest would light the wicks (Leviticus 24:3) so that there is always light in the Holy Place.
   4. At first glance it appears that the lampstand’s primary purpose is to shed light in this room so that the priests could see in order to do their service for God.
   5. On closer examination, we find that it is positioned directly across from the “Table of the Presence,” and is designed so that it sheds its light on that table.
10. It’s made of one piece of pure gold.
    1. There’s a central staff that ends in a lamp at its top with 6 branches – 3 on each side.
    2. Each branch has a lamp at the top and each lamp has a unique decoration.
    3. They are “shaped like almond blossoms, its bulbs and its flowers.” (Ex. 25:33-34)
    4. Branches, buds, fruit, and flowers – this lampstand represents a LIVING thing!
11. Heb. 4:12: God’s word is LIVING and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword!
    1. Just as the lampstand gave light to the worship held in the Holy Place so also God’s Word sheds light on what we need to know about our worship of Jesus.
    2. David wrote: “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path” *(Ps. 119:105)*
12. The lampstand highlighted the table of God’s presence – God’s word highlights Jesus!
    1. This table represents the table we use for the Lord’s Supper (Christ’s sacrifice).
    2. Thus the Lampstand’s purpose was to illuminate that table!
13. The lampstand could also represent Jesus, as Jesus is the Word of God! (Jn. 1:1, 4-5)
    1. Jesus uses the “lampstand” imagery to also define the churches that belong to Him! (Rev. 1:12, 20; 2:5: The 7 Lampstands are the 7 churches)
14. We draw nearer to God when in the presence of His word (study), for its light makes it possible for us to SEE and understand what God has done for us – and to lead us to eternal life!
15. **Altar of Incense**
16. Ex. 30:1-10; 40:26-27 – According to the “pattern”
    1. The last article of furniture in the tabernacle is the altar of incense
    2. The priests’ job was to bring incense for the High Priest to burn on the altar.
    3. Every evening and every morning – after the High Priest sees to the lamps – he brings fire from the altar of sacrifice (outside the Tabernacle) and lights the incense before God (Lev. 16:12-13; Num. 16:46).
17. This incense is used elsewhere in Scripture to refer to our prayers being lifted up to God.
    1. Ps. 141:2: David prays, “May my prayer be counted as incense before You.”
    2. Rev. 8:3-4: Correlates the incense from the golden altar with the prayers of the saints!
18. Every time we pray we are offering up to God a sweet smelling offering!
    1. It’s an “incense” that gives Him great pleasure.
    2. *Heb. 13:15:* As priests of God, “Through Him (Jesus) then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.”
19. That should be the main focus of our prayers – giving praise to God!
    1. It’s this type of prayer (that focuses on praise) that changes the nature of our requests from being a “wish-list” to becoming the petitions of a grateful servant of God.
    2. And notice, this kind of “incense” prayer is done THROUGH Jesus *(Heb. 13:15).*
20. Just as the altar of incense was lit by the fires of the sacrifice, so also our prayerful incense is made acceptable to God, because our prayers are based upon the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus!
21. We draw nearer to the presence of God when we spend time with Him in PRAYER!

### Conclusion

1. Drawing near to God “in the Holy Place” (the church!):
   1. The Table of His Bread: When we assemble together around the Lord’s Table we are in the presence of God as we remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us!
   2. The Light of His Word: When we assemble together to study or study on our own, we are in the presence of God!
   3. The Prayers of His Praise: When we assemble together to pray or when we pray alone, we are in the presence of God!
2. That’s exactly what the early church focused on – Acts 2:42: “They devoted themselves to…”
   1. “The apostles’ teaching (the lampstand) and to fellowship,”
   2. “to the breaking of bread (table of showbread)”
   3. “and to prayer (the altar of incense)”
3. Our service (offerings) here (Holy Place) will confirm our entrance into the Holy of Holies:
   1. Physically, at His death, Jesus tore the veil separating the Holy Place & The Holy of Holies in two – Mt. 27:51
   2. Heb. 6:19-20: The Holy of Holies was a type of heaven.
      1. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and that once a year!
      2. Jesus, our High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, entered the Holy Place, offered Himself on the altar, appointed priests, then entered the Holy of Holies, “within the veil” – straight ahead in physical Tabernacle.
   3. Heb. 9:6-12: There in the most holy place was the ark, the ultimate expression of God’s presence!
   4. There in Heaven (the most holy place) Jesus, our High Priest, awaits the faithful! (Look ahead to goal of Heaven – Col. 3:1-3)
4. Let us remember Jesus and His sacrifice as we draw nearer to God each day through study, prayer, and as we partake (share) in the Lord’s Supper weekly!
5. If not a Christian, you need to be. Repent & be baptized!
6. If a child of God who has erred, draw nearer to God! Repent and seek forgiveness!
7. Whatever your requests, let them be known ***NOW*** while we stand and sing!