

Understanding Worship – Part Ten

October 24th, 2010

Adapted from John Herbert's Notes; Presented by Ralph Alley

1). Throughout our study of worship we have witnessed a process of separation. And that *separation* is an essential part of our journey –

2Corinthians 6:16-18

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate," says the Lord. "Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." 18 I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."

- We had to first begin by separating ourselves from the traditional concept of worship as a style of Christian music, embracing instead the fact that worship is faithful obedience. We are to subject our will completely to God's will, taking on the role of a bondservant – and this is pictured for us in the act of prostrating ourselves before our Master.

2). We have also seen how "worshipping in spirit" necessitates a complete separation from our flesh. Obedience can only be accomplished *in the spirit* because our flesh--our old man, our sin nature--is by its very definition in opposition to the commands of God. Worship in spirit requires sacrifice, a dying to self –

3). We have also seen how our "worshipping in truth" necessitates a complete separation from the wisdom of this world in order to embrace that which alone is truth – the scriptures.

4). Also, in our study of "understanding worship," we talked about how our faithful obedience to God is dependent upon us having the correct scriptural relationships with each other within the body.

- Our love for God cannot exist apart from our love for each other (*cf.* I John 4:20). Additionally, the love that we are to have for one another (as described in 1 Corinthians 13) must include forgiveness. We simply cannot have love for one another without forgiveness, or have forgiveness without love.
- And in order for love and forgiveness of this nature to be a reality within our lives, we must separate ourselves from the hurts we have received at the hands of other Christians in the past...and separate ourselves from our traditional view of what 'church' is supposed to look like. This must be done in order to embrace what God has set in place for us.

- All of these examples of separation come about as a result of the process we go through, as we die to self and embrace obedience. They are not automatic – they are things we choose to work on. Just because we know this to be true doesn't make it individually a reality in each of our lives. We must make a conscious choice, time and time again, to do what God says to do. We must choose to love...even when we don't feel like it; we must choose to forgive...even when (and especially when) we don't want to. Our flesh will not want to do this. Our spirit will.
- This morning we will be examining another aspect of this process of maturing, and what it looks like one with another.

5). We are going to look the metaphor of 'building' – a metaphor that has a number of facets, with its foundation in Genesis and its completion in Revelation. This idea of *building* has to do with God's dealings with eternally saved human beings for the purpose of perfecting them so that they may be found worthy to occupy a position with Christ on His throne to rule with Him during the Millennial Kingdom.

6). The *building* metaphor begins in Genesis with this-

Genesis 2:18

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make [literally, 'build'] him a helper comparable to him."

- Adam and the Woman, we know, are our foundational picture of Christ and His Bride.
- The means which God employs to bring them into existence though are entirely different from each other. The Man is *created*, but the Woman is *built*. She is built from a part of the Man, in order to be a helper to the Man, so that together they can accomplish God's purpose for bringing them into existence – 'to have dominion' in the stead of Satan. The pattern set here in the beginning cannot be changed.
- And right here in Genesis Chapter 2 is the very first mention of the 'Church', although the word itself is not used. Rather, the 'Church' is introduced in a type so that as we study the scriptures we will be able to put the pieces together, concluding with the antitype.

8). Then that which is laid in foundation is further opened in by the words of Jesus Himself-

Matthew 16:16-19

Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not

prevail against it. 19 "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

- Here we have the Second Man, the Last Adam, the One who the first Adam typified, declaring that His church, and therefore His Bride, would be built upon the foundation of His being 'the Christ, the Son of the living God', a Messianic declaration that speaks of regality, rulership and a coming Kingdom - truth that can only be revealed by the power of the Spirit, not through human understanding.
- Then after Christ's death, in fulfillment of the type in Genesis -

[John 19:34](#)

[But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.](#)

- And here we have both the process and the elements by which the Bride of Christ, in the antitype of the Woman, is to be built - providing the detail for us in the statement Christ makes in Matthew 16:18, "*He will build His church.*" And again we would want to compare scripture with scripture to get more information on this picture.
- In order to do this we can go back into the OT, to the Book of Ruth, to see her necessary preparations for meeting with Boaz (the one she was to marry) on his threshing floor -

[Ruth 3:3](#)

["Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor;](#)

- And we can go forward into the NT Epistles to read more about this picture –
 - about our High Priest providing cleansing for the sins of the saved through His blood on the Mercy Seat...
 - to the command to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly with all wisdom...
 - to the good works that have been prepared beforehand for us to walk in them, which are the righteous acts of the saints, which are our wedding garment.
- This whole picture is seen clearly in the relationship between the church and Christ, described for us by Paul –

[Ephesians 5:25-32](#)

[Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot](#)

or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

9). The metaphor of *building* to describe the process leading to spiritual maturity through dying to self, through the child training of the Lord, is also presented through the church being *built* as the body of Christ. The building of the Bride and the building of the body are just different ways of looking at the same thing.

Ephesians 4:11-16

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastor-teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- Look at verse 11 -- the ministry (of the Word) is given to the church to accomplish a specific purpose:
 - SPECIFIC PURPOSE #1 '*for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry*' – This takes us right back to where we have been the last few weeks. This is the work of the Word in our lives that will enable us to minister to one another in 1 Corinthians 13 love, and in forgiveness.
 - SPECIFIC PURPOSE #2 '*for the edifying of the body of Christ*' – That word 'edifying' is the Greek word 'oikodome,' which literally means house-building. The God-given leadership within the church is to minister to the church in order to build up the church into the house of the Lord. (To clarify, the building up of the church is not a reference to the number of attendees and members – rather it is referencing the spiritual maturity within the believers themselves.)
 - SPECIFIC PURPOSE #3--'*till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God*' – Our unity comes through a common embracing of **the faith**, realizing that there is one hope of His calling, and that we are all heading in the

same direction, all striving for the same prize – not in competition, but in cooperation. All in faithful obedience to the word – both in knowledge and application.

- SPECIFIC PURPOSE #4 --'to a perfect man' – It is the work of the Word that alone will bring us to a place of completion where we may experience the measure of the fullness of Christ –

Colossians 1:28

Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

- SPECIFIC PURPOSE #5 -'that we should no longer be children' – If no longer children, then sons – and sons, because they are led by the Spirit, will not be blown here and there by every wind of doctrine but will be steadfast and resolute in the faith, speaking the truth-- *the scriptures* -- to each other so that we might grow up into the image of Him who created us.
- And it is from Christ, from the Word (as Christ is the Word made flesh) that the body is joined and knit together – there is a connectivity between us. The growth of the body here at Cornerstone is relational and we will only grow up as a body if the Word works effectively in us so that we each do our share. Now, this '*every part does its share*' has nothing to do with the allocation of jobs within a church setting. Rather, it has to do with each of us, as a result of the ministry of the word, doing our share of dying to self through faithful obedience so that we relate to each other in love and forgiveness... and of necessity this body, as any other, can only grow towards maturity to the extent that we will all do our part in this process.

Colossians 2:18-19

Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

1Corinthians 1:10

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

10). We see then the metaphor of *building* used to describe the process of spiritual maturation that will take place in those who will be the Bride. This same metaphor, with the same group of Christians in view, is also used with regards to the building of the body of Christ.

- The metaphor then continues further, still with the same group of Christians in view, only this time it is used with regards to building the *temple* of God.

11). Ephesians 2:19-22

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

- Here in Ephesians we see that we, fellow citizens/members of the household of God, have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets – and this foundation would be the truth of scripture taught by the apostles from the prophets, the Psalms and Moses. And Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of this building/household. Note that the book of Ephesians is written to a faithful, local gathering of Christians, who were maturing and overcoming. This book cannot be applied to Christians in general. As with all the epistles, they are written to a specific group of believers with certain characteristics; therefore, we must read them with that same mindset as to whether or not we belong in that category.
- And we will notice that the building is being joined together, thereby growing into a holy temple in the Lord. And that which is being joined together is *individual Christians in the process of dying to self and embracing faithful obedience*.

12). The idea contained here, in Ephesians, can be seen during the ministry of John the Baptist –

Matthew 3:9

"and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones."

- John is telling Israel's religious leaders not to be complacent in their physical descent from Abraham, as God has the ability to raise up children to Abraham from the stones. This is a prophetic statement, speaking of Christians, particularly those who would make up the Bride –

1 Peter 2:4-6

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

- Now we can understand the use of the word 'house' here in the sense of a family, as in the 'house of Israel', but also, in relation to God, as the habitation of God. Which takes us back to our opening scripture - As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

Hebrews 3:6

...but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are *if* we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

- I am sure we can see the process here – we as spiritual stones are being built up into a spiritual house.
- There is an individual work taking place in each of us that will enable us to 'fit together' in right relationship with each other now... AND will have its ultimate expression in that Coming Day, when a group of individuals (*called out from the called*) will come together in the power of the Spirit as the Bride of Christ, as the dwelling place of God--as He will dwell in them and walk amongst them.

13). Now this building of a habitation for God should cause us to think about the Tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness and the Temple of Solomon.

- Let's just consider something here with regards to the Tabernacle of Moses –

Exodus 25:1-8

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. 3 And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; 4 blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair; 5 ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; 6 oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; 7 onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. 8 And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.

- As God is looking for Israel to make a sanctuary for Him so He can dwell among them, we can see that it is to be constructed with materials that are offerings - offerings that they give willingly, with their whole heart.
- So let's bring this over into our own experience to see if there is anything we may learn. To begin, the materials to be used, the gold, silver, precious stones, fine linen, etc. should remind us of the materials we are to use to build on the foundation of Christ –

1Corinthians 3:11-14

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

- As we know, the works of gold, silver and precious stones cannot be done apart from the spirit – they cannot be done apart from dying to self. And dying to self is an offering that we make to God entirely of our own free will. It is an act of worship.
- This would be the spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, that we make as a living sacrifice.
- Do you see the direct parallel here between these two events? The first involves Israel with a Theocracy in view, the second involves us with a Theocracy in view.

14). So let's add another dimension to this particular facet of the metaphor by witnessing the construction of the Temple of Solomon –

1Kings 6:7

And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.

- Do you get the picture? The stone is finished off site and is then put together without further finishing work taking place.
- And so *we*, as living stones, are being finished 'off site' --as it were--and in that glorious day, at the rapture of the church, we shall be brought on site and put together as a habitation of the Lord without the need for the hammer, the chisel or the iron tool to be heard further.
- Isn't this a picture of the metamorphosis? The outcome of our child training?
- And, as we have now seen time and time again, our finishing in the quarry of this world does not happen in isolation...it is *relational*. In the natural, we can imagine the stones in the quarry of Solomon's Temple being picked out and fitted together...and as the work of fitting them together takes place, the imperfections, the rough places, the ridges and bumps would be revealed---these imperfections would have to be worked on in order for the stones to fit perfectly together. And this must be our experience also – only as we

come together and relate to one another will the imperfections that prevent us from being fit together be revealed so that they can be worked on -

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

- How is the sharpening done? It will be the work of the Spirit bringing about the metamorphosis-- as a result of the implanted word---as **we choose** to die to self and walk in faithful obedience.

Psalm 127:1

Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it;

- The working of the stones cannot be accomplished by our flesh, it can only happen through the power of the Spirit as we are continually 'born from above'.

15). And finally for today, a secondary application from scripture as an encouragement to those who feel that as a stone, they are part of a ruin. And for this we go to Nehemiah Chapter 4, and look at the rebuilding of Jerusalem -

Nehemiah 4:1-2

But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. 2 And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish, [even the] stones that are burned?"

- Can you hear the taunts of the enemy of our soul in the words of Sanballat?
- But let us be encouraged by reading further in this same chapter--

Nehemiah 4:9-18

Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night. 10 Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall." 11 And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease."

12 So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, "From whatever place you turn, they will be upon us." 13 Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

14 And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."

15 And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work. 16 So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah. 17 Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. 18 Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

- And this is further said by Paul to the church –

Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

16). In conclusion, we are the temple of God in which worship (that is, faithful obedience) is to take place in this age.

- We are also collectively being built together as a temple of God--the body of Christ--so that relationally we may worship God through faithful obedience, again taking place in this age.
- And ultimately, those who have been true worshippers individually and collectively in this age, through faithful obedience, will become the dwelling place of God in which worship (obedience in its ultimate form) will take place during the age to come.
- There will be a physical Millennial temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem during the time of the Kingdom, which will be a habitation of God.
- And there will be a spiritual temple in the New Jerusalem in the heavens, constructed of living stones, which will also be a habitation of God.

John 4:23-26

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." 25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ).

"When He comes, He will tell us all things." 26 Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

I ask you and encourage you and exhort you – that if you have heard anything at all that is resonating within you, perhaps something that the Holy Spirit is trying to get your attention with, please do not go home and ignore Him, please do not forget what you have been hearing here week after week. Please allow God to work in your life, to work on you to shape you – to chisel and hammer off the rough spots, to smooth away the bumps, in order to build you into that spiritual temple. The Day is coming in which there will be no more work done, and I pray that that Day does not come upon you like a thief, but that you are ready, awake, sober, looking for it. I hope that it will be a day of rejoicing for us all.