

#### #4 Tabernacle: Ascending to God's Purpose

In every generation since the reformation and many before, there were sincere men and women of God that spent much of their life seeking after God. Their lives were an ascending relationship and understanding of God. This ascent is not theology but a life-union with the Creator. The same spirit of hunger for God is seen in both David and in Paul.

PHI 3:10 **that I may know Him**, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; PHI 3:11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. PHI 3:12 Not that I have already obtained {it}, or **have already become perfect**, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. PHI 3:13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of {it} yet; but one thing {I do}: forgetting what {lies} behind and reaching forward to what {lies} ahead, PHI 3:14 **I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

1JO 2:12 I am writing to you, **little children**, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. 1JO 2:13 I am writing to you, **fathers**, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, **young men**, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, **children**, because you know the Father. 1JO 2:14 I have written to you, **fathers**, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, **young men**, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

The Christian life is made up of a series of growth experiences by which we ascend in our knowledge of God. This is not, however, automatic and is not measured by the number of years we have been a Christian. These growth experiences come to us because we have sought God. Spiritual maturity is not something that happens all at once but is a matter of stages or degrees. We all must begin as "children" and grow into "young men" and hopefully become "fathers" before we become corpses.

PHI 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. PHI 3:8 More than that, **I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that **I may gain Christ, PHI 3:9 and may be found in Him**, not having a righteousness of my own derived from {the} Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which {comes} from God on the basis of faith, PHI 3:10 **that I may know Him**, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; PHI 3:11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

We should be able to feel Paul's stretching out and reaching for Christ, Himself. What Paul is referring to is certainly not a static relationship but a growing up into Christ. The true Christian life is characterized by continual progression and advancing toward the "goal" of "the high calling" of God for our lives. Paul calls this the upward or ascending call of God. Paul was certain that there was much more than what he had already attained. Every member of Christ's body should have this same attitude.

PHI 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; PHI 3:16 however, let us keep living by that same {standard} to which we have attained.

It is entirely possible to have a different attitude than Paul had about pressing on into God and the full knowledge of Jesus Christ. All those who remain static in their spiritual growth must have an attitude adjustment. If we have no vision and definite goal to press toward, we will see no reason to advance.

Before Israel left Egypt God told them their goal was Canaan, their promised land, that was promised to Abraham and his descendants. Israel had camped and moved forward 14 times between Egypt and the wilderness of Paran where they decided to stay until they had sent in spies to check out the land of Canaan. This mistake cost them Canaan and the promised land. There were 33 camps in 33 different locations and then Aaron died. At the 40th camp Moses died. Israel camped the 41st time and then crossed Jordan.

There was a continuous forward progress from Egypt to Kadesh-Barnea over a period of about 400 days. After the evil report of the spies, there was 40 years of wandering. This could hardly be called forward progress but a static wandering in the wilderness until death overtook the unbelief and disobedience. Since it was only a 10 day march from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea, it is clear that God expected them to keep the first Pentecost in Canaan. However, Pentecost came and went while the spies were spying out the land. There was still much to do and many battles to fight after they would have entered Canaan but all that died in the wilderness missed the opportunity and were forbidden by God to enter.

All this is a picture for us of the danger of not advancing within the time appointed for us by God. To take one man from Egypt to Canaan is one thing but to take a corporate group of over 600,000 men who were able to make war, plus women and children and old men, is quite another. Our ascent into God's upward call is not only individual but also corporate. This presents a great problem for us, the same as for Israel.

We should be aware that private worship ascends up to God and his presence is manifest. By now we should also be aware that corporate worship intensifies His presence. While God is always seeking for those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth, He is always expecting a corporate group that is defined as His body, the church. One seeking God is good but not the goal.

Jacob's vision of the ladder that ascended into heaven and to the throne of God was an invitation to Jacob. However, his attitude and character was unsuitable for heaven and God's purpose. God's dealing with Jacob was a progressive preparation to bring Jacob to God's desired end. Jacob was much different at the end of his life than he was at the time he saw the vision. David was confronted by many trials in preparation for an earthly throne. After he became king, he was confronted with many other trials to prepare him for a throne in heaven. The Old Testament has several examples of this kind of advancement, as well as several examples of those that went backwards and not forward.

The Tabernacle of Moses is a graphic example of what it means to advance into the Truth of God, into the presence of God, into the purpose of God, and into the Life of God. For example there are 7 outer court experiences before we reach the second veil which is the doorway of the tent of meeting. All these experiences are under natural light of the sun, moon and stars. They are all preparatory for the Holy Place life and ministry. The goal is not the Outer Court or the Holy Place but is the Most Holy Place and the throne of God, to God, Himself. The total number of experiences is irrelevant but the picture is of ascending toward the upward call of God, in Christ

Jesus.

Basically we could say there is the beginning stage of new birth where we begin as babes in Christ. Then the joy of forgiveness of sins. Following is the process of deliverance from the former manner of life. The children stage is recognized by the desire to play church and act grown up. There are genuine desires for spiritual growth but there is not the maturity to support it. This is still a defensive stage. We should not try to vault over the power stage of being filled with the Holy Spirit, because of certain manifestations, or we will be too weak for the young men stage. In this stage it is essential to become strong through the experience of the word of God abiding in us. Otherwise we will not be able to overcome the evil one.

The offensive stage, where we set out to kick in the gates of hell and release the captives, requires a purification of carnal desires, personal reputation, desire for big ministry and personal recognition. When the Devil can find something of himself in us he has grounds to afflict us. The next stage might be the abiding life of full dependence upon Christ to fulfill His desire in us. This is a fruit stage that prepares us to become fathers and living examples for the children and young men. This stage is recognized by a personal knowledge of God and His eternal purpose that He purposed from the very beginning. Man has always been drawn to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil rather than the tree of life. For that reason he has tried to ascend into God by his natural life rather than by the imparted life of God. The crucifixion of the natural life through the application of the cross is God's way of lifting us into living by His Life. When Paul said "It is no longer I who live but it is Christ Who lives in me" he is referring to these two kinds of life. Paul's life was crucified with Christ so that he might live by the higher Life of Christ. It is through this higher Life that we learn to know Him and not through education.

The third veil of the Tabernacle of Moses represents the veil that was torn when Jesus gave up His psuche life on Calvary. The only Life that can live in the Most Holy Place is His Life. The ascent into God requires that we make the transition from our life to His by the application of the cross experientially in our natural life. LUK 9:23 And He was saying to {them} all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself ( his natural life), and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. LUK 9:24 "For whoever wishes to save his life ( natural life) shall lose it, but whoever loses his life (psuche) for My sake, he is the one who will save it. JOH 12:25 "He who loves his life (psuche) loses it; and he who hates his life (psuche) in this world shall keep it to life (zoe) eternal. This transition must be a reality to participate in the Most Holy Place "Life" and ministry. As Jesus laid down His psuche life so also must we if we are to gain that Life of the New Jerusalem.

There will surely come a time in our ascent into God when our natural life will become a great hinderance. Most have not the knowledge that serving God in the natural life (the flesh) is not acceptable to God. For that reason most are not concerned about which life is used but focus only upon serving God some way.

The Tabernacle then is an unfolding of various experiences where God changes us from what we are to what we ought to be in order to live our life wholly for Him and to bring joy to His heart.

There are, most likely, hundreds of other experiences that are all related to these various stages of development. There is a continuous weaning away from the things of this world that are just temporal and a continuous drawing toward the eternal things. The weaning is a subtraction so

that Christ may be formed in us and be manifested through us.

When a high rise building is constructed a strong foundation is laid with all kinds of reinforcing steel and concrete. However, no one lives in the foundation after all that work. The foundations are to hold the dwelling places or sanctuary. The same is true of our spiritual life. Many foundations are necessary but God has not designed the foundations as a place for us to live. The Outer Court is a picture of the various foundations but it is a great mistake to think that God has designed it as a place for us to dwell. No! God has designed the sanctuary as our dwelling place.

JOH 14:2 “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; **for I go to prepare a place for you.** JOH 14:3 “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; **that where I am, {there} you may be also.**

In the Father’s house all the dwelling places are inhabited by the old testament saints. Jesus is now preparing a place for the new testament saints. It is a different place and is pictured as the Most Holy Place or in the Tabernacle of God as the New Jerusalem. The dwelling place for the old testament saints is pictured by the Holy Place because the way into the Holiest was not available to them. The reality of the Holy Place is New Heaven. Those who advance in their ascent into God no farther than the foundations will take up their dwelling place on the New Earth. The Tabernacle of God will be complete and everyone will have a dwelling place but not all will be in the same place.

REV 21:1 And I saw **a new heaven** and a **new earth**; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer {any} sea. REV 21:2 And I saw **the holy city, new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. REV 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “**Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men**, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them,

God has designed our ascent into God to continue until we have been made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. That means prepared as the New Jerusalem with all that beauty, transparency and perfection.