

The Tabernacle

The Preeminence Of Christ As Seen In The Candlestick - Part 1

Readings

Exodus 25:31-39

Introduction

The word Preeminence is used twice in the New Testament:

- a) "That in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18)
- b) "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence" (3 Jn. 1:9)

The Preeminence of Christ Itemized

While we often repeat the statement of Paul to the Saints at Colossae: "that in all things he might have the preeminence", yet at times he might not enter into the full enormity of that statement. We would never speak all the preeminence of a piece of cloth but would reserve that statement for a person who, because of achievements or position, deserves such dignity. Some of the ways in which the Lord is preeminent are:

Distinction

The candlestick had seven distinct branches with the central one taking preeminence over the others, a truth that would indicate the preeminence of the Lord. Particular notice is drawn to the central shaft, but this is not just my idea or that which we see in pictures, but from the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit emphasizes the uniqueness of the central shaft along several distinct avenues of thought.

1) The Centrality Of The Branch

- a) This will remind us of the Lord as always being in the midst. For instance:
 - i) When He was in the midst of the doctors (Lk. 2:46)
 - ii) When He was on the cross (Jn. 19:18)
 - iii) When He is among His own (Matt. 18:20)
 - iv) When in the midst of the church it is recorded: "I will sing praise unto Thee" (Heb. 2:12)
 - v) He is also in the midst of the seven candlesticks (Rev. 1:13)
 - vi) Gloriously, He is in the midst of the Throne and the four and twenty elders (Rev. 5:6)

2) The Singularity Of The Branch

- a) It will also be noticed that it is always spoken of in the singular, whereas the branches, except when dealing with each in particular, are always called the branch, as that is plural. Thus bringing before us areas in which the Lord is seen in connection with us, but distinctly different. For instance:
 - i) He is the branch and we are the branches. "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (Jn. 15:5)
 - ii) He is the priest and we are priests. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the son of God" (Heb. 4:14). Concerning us we read: "And hath made us . . . priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. 1:6)
 - iii) He is the King and we are kings. "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:16)
 - iv) He is the Son and we are sons. "Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33). "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (Jn. 1:12)
 - v) He is the Light and we are the lights: "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12). Regarding us we read: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15)

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- vi) He is the Living stone, we are lively stones (1 Pet. 2:4, 5)
- vii) He is the Fellow of God and we are fellows (Zech. 13:7, Heb. 1:9)
- viii) He is the chief Shepherd, and while the leaders of the local church are not expressly called “shepherds”, it is clear that they are viewed as such. We are shepherds (overseers) (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:4)

3) The Imperativeness Of The Branch

- a) Attention is also drawn to the imperativeness of the central shaft (Ex. 37:18). The other shafts were dependent on it. They appeared to be growing out of it. This indicates that the central shaft was not dependent on them but the six branches were dependent on it. Observing what it says we read: “And the six branches shall come out of one side of it” (Ex. 25:32), that is, they all developed/came out from it. Just as Eve was dependent on Adam (Gen. 2:21-23), in that way they became a living example of the union and dependence of the saints on Christ.

4) The Descriptiveness Of The Branch

- a) We can also observe the descriptive list of the branch for it is distinctly different from the others.
- b) In the consideration of the candlestick, it is easy to observe that the central shaft, while the other branches are similar to it, yet it is distinctly different. The other branches are all identical to each other in the number of flowers, buds, and knops which they have. The central branch has more than they do as individual branches. (Ex. 37:19).
- c) While the six branches are simply called “branches”, there are three descriptive names given to the Central branch. It is called:
 - i) A shaft (Ex. 25:31). The word for shaft comes from the Hebrew word for the thigh which is the place where all life springs and is translated “loins” (Gen. 46:26; Ex. 1:5). It is the place of the oath (Gen. 24:9; 47:29). It is the place of declared and manifested power (Psa. 45:3; Song of Sol. 3:8; Rev. 19:16).
 - ii) A branch. We read, “his branches” (Ex. 25:31), which ought to be “his branch”.
 - iii) The candlestick. Please observe the wording, “And in the candlestick” (Ex. 25:34 is contrasted with verse 35 which says “out of the candlestick”.

5) The Superlativeness Of The Branch

- a) In this central branch there is a fourfold cluster of ornamentation on it. We read, “The candlestick, four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. The other branches had three bowls, knobs, and flowers (Ex. 25:32, 34). It tells me of the all-encompassing glories of Christ.

When all these tools are presented together they present the preeminence of the person of the Lord.

Liberation

- 1) The scriptures bring to our attention a number of great liberators. It is impossible to read the book of Judges without noticing the words, “Deliver” (Jud. 4:7; 10:11, 15; 11:9, 30; 13:5; 20:28), and “deliverer” (Jud. 3:9, 15). The history of Israel was marked by its great deliverers, but no deliverer was greater than our blessed Lord. The deliverance of Israel was from the bondage of other nations. That which the Lord delivers from is the spiritual darkness and power of Satan.
- 2) Paul the apostle wrote: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free” (Gal. 5:1). By the power which raised the Lord from the dead we have been delivered free from:
 - a) Religiosity which enslaves and blinds (Acts 15:10)
 - b) Sin's domination (Rom. 6:18)
 - c) Fear of death (Heb. 2:15)
 - d) The fear of banishment from God eternally (Jn. 3:16)

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- 3) Because the Son has made us free we are positionally and effectively, if we so desire, practically freed from:
 - a) Satanic blindness (2 Cor. 4:4)
 - b) The power of darkness (Col. 1:13)
 - a) Indwelling sinful inherited nature (Rom. 5:11-7:7)
 - b) The power of sin in me (Rom. 7:8-8:39)
- 4) We are freed at the present to be able to:
 - a) Become the “servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:18)
 - b) Be freed “from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2)
- 5) That which in the present we can live in the prospect of:
 - a) Ultimately brought into the full liberty of being saved from the power and presence of sin in perpetuity, for we shall dwell in a holy non-defiling sphere of God who is Light. (1 Jn. 1:5)
 - b) Saved from the wrath of God to come (Rom. 5:9) and that which is to come in this world (1 Thess. 1:10).
- 4) How great is the person who could give such liberty?
 - a) He must never be blinded by religiosity
 - b) He must never be under sin’s domination
 - c) He must be master of death

Qualification

When the cry goes throughout Heaven, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” (Rev. 5:2). There is no one. All the purposes of God seem to have come to a stand still, seem to have been thwarted, then John is told not to weep and hears the wonderful news: “Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Rev. 5:5). He alone is fully qualified morally, legally, and by effectively providing redemption. With such an awareness the citizens of Heaven begin to erupt in praise saying: “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:9). Well may we sing Issac Watt’s hymn:

Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power,
That ever mortals knew,
That angels ever bore:
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too poor to set my Saviour forth.

. . . . *To be continued in December*

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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