

Midtown Messenger

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Issue 17

Full Atonement — Can It Be?

By: Kevin Rhodes

The Jews journeyed to Jerusalem for several feasts every year—each having a special significance. As they traveled and approached the city and especially the temple, their purpose in drawing near grew clearer and clearer. This developed not only from their proximity to their ancient capital but also due to their practice of singing psalms as they approached, songs designed to remind them of their identity, of their need, and of their purpose in coming to worship in the temple on that occasion. While obedience to the Law—especially following their captivity in Babylon—motivated and directed them, the focus and content of the psalms shows that other concerns also drove them. The third feast commanded, the Feast of Ingathering, began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Ex. 23:16); however, the LORD designated a solemn Sabbath just five days before this on the tenth (Lev. 16:29-33), Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Reflection on this day and its meaning permeates Psalm 130 thereby giving it a deeper meaning and tone.

Depression and despair, regular themes in the psalms, take on greater gravity when placed in a spiritual context. *Guilt*—properly felt due to sin—is a serious cause indeed. And experienced fully, it produces a separation and loneliness like no other (Isa. 59:1-2), making the opening cry of the psalm even more forlorn: “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.” (Psa. 130:1). Sinful man needs a holy God—desperately. It is essential that man knows it, realizes it, feels it. Sadly, many feel their *guilt* and ignore it, feel their

guilt and dismiss it, or feel their guilt and misinterpret it. But those who recognize it as the offspring of sin, turn to the LORD as He desires and seek pardon for it (Psa. 130:2). The Lord knows our sins—every one. But He is also longsuffering and does not act on them immediately due to His loving forbearance (Psa. 130:3). The LORD wants to forgive; He longs to forgive. Therefore, He has created a plan to forgive. And this should produce a deep reverence in all who realize the extent to which He is willing to go to have a relationship with us (Psa. 130:4). He does not need us as slaves or anything else, but He still wants us as His children. What a marvelous thought!

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (Rom. 8:15).

The relationship God desires is personal, spiritual, and character driven. He has given His Word and offered promises to create hope in those who read and gain faith with the design that the message within will create a spiritual longing for the LORD in return (Psa. 130:5). However, spiritual longing for the LORD should surpass some casual interest but turn into a grand expectation rooted in the full consideration of His character and thus building a confident expectation that assures all of the certainty of the fulfillment of every promise (Psa. 130:6). Having then

gained full assurance of the great extent of the LORD's desire to forgive, the psalmist called on all of Israel to adopt the same confidence. The answer to all matters of guilt and the sin that created it depend on an understanding and expectation of the depth of mercy bestowed upon man by the Yahweh (Psa. 130:7). Because He has reached out His hand in mercy rather than striking out in anger, He has placed His character and love on display, supplying the purchase price necessary to provide redemption in the face of despair. In doing so, He does not address a fraction of trespasses practiced or remove a portion of sins committed but the whole, addressing and redeeming Israel from "all his iniquities" (Psa. 130:8).

Spiritually-minded people seeking God's forgiveness today should marvel still at His longsuffering (2 Pet. 3:9) and be drawn to turn their hearts back to God in faith (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6). However, God's plan today, rooted in the atonement made possible through the sacrifice of His Son (1 Jn. 2:1-2; Heb. 7:26-27), demands more than simple prayer but rather convicted repentance (Acts 17:30), confessed allegiance (Matt. 10:32-33), and committed obedience (Acts 22:16; Heb. 5:8-9), thus calling on the name of the LORD (Acts 2:16-38). We must never take forgiveness lightly, for what it cost God or what it requires of us. But once received, we should sing about it often, with words similar to the psalmist's.

Lord, Open Our Eyes

When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

2 Kings 6:15-16

Don't you love this story! After Elisha prays for the eyes of his servant to be opened, he sees the mountain of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha protecting him (v 17).

What does this story say to you and me?

1. We're never outnumbered. It may feel like we're few in number. We may even think we're all by ourselves in our fight against evil. But as long as we are standing for truth, God is standing with us!
2. Our eyes can be deceived. The devil is good at minimizing the spiritual and maximizing the temporal before our eyes. We're made to believe that the physical horses and chariots that oppose us are all that there is. But those weak and pitiful weapons are nothing compared to the fiery chariots and heavenly horses that stand ready to come to our defense.
3. We must never be afraid. We can't let the devil intimidate us. We have more than chariots of fire. We have the King of kings and Lord of lords riding on a white horse, whose eyes are a flame of fire, with a sharp sword coming from his mouth, and who is leading the armies of heaven in victory over all the hosts of wickedness (Rev 19).

Why should we ever be afraid?

-Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of April 26, 2020

Sunday Morning:

Announcements:
Scripture Reading:

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread:
Fruit of the Vine:
Offering:
Assist:

Sunday Evening:

Prayer

A.M. Opening:
A.M. Closing:
P.M. Opening:
P.M. Closing:

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.:
Sun. P.M.:
Wednesday:

Ushers:

Wednesday Devotional:

Open/Close Building:

Sound System:

Greeters:

Prepare Communion:

****Per the Men's meeting held Wednesday evening, March 18, 2020, it was decided to suspend all services effective immediately due to the Coronavirus and resume services on Sunday, May 3, 2020 if the CDC guidelines have been lifted. ****

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Please pray for the country during this time of the Corona Virus Pandemic.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Joseph Sheeran, Nikhil Verma (19); Jill Powers, McKinley Jacobs, Anthony Scherffius (20); Nicolette Garcia (21); Caley Hunter (May 1).

Paul Purswell and his family would like to thank everyone for your prayers, calls, offers of help, and potted plant given to them during their hour of grief. Please keep them in your prayers.

**Sermons are available on
our website
www.midtowncoc.org
under Resources**

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Janice FitzSimmons
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Faye Henderson
Charlie Mabe
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of April 19, 2020

Bible Class.....
A.M. Worship.....
P.M. Worship.....
Wednesday Bible Class.....

Offering week of April 19, 2020.....\$3,210

Reading for this week:

When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

2 Kings 6:15-16

SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli

Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore

Southwest School of Bible Studies - William Pedigo

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