

July 16, 2017

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

The Title of the Message: "The Law Is Your Tutor"

—The Characteristics of the Old Covenant—

Text: Hebrews 9: 1~10

9:1 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary.

9:2 A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place.

9:3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place,

9:4 which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

9:5 Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

9:6 When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry.

9:7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

9:8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning.

9:9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.

9:10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings — external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

Introduction

• <Illustration>

Everyone receives *an education in their childhood*. We have the right to equally receive an education in Japan. Education is very important to make the person, home and society (country).

- My friends, please don't misunderstand what I mean. I'm not referring to the higher intellectual education. What I mean is the minimal amount of education (what we must study) as a human being. In that sense, I think that an early childhood education (a preschool education) is very important. It is important when a child receives an education from whom and in what environment.

- When I remember the days of my elementary school, two faces of my teachers comes into my mind.

① It was the postwar era and the whole nation led poor lives. My family was also poor. However, one of my classmates lived in an extremely poor situation His father was a drunkard and jobless. Therefore, he couldn't eat enough food. His parents couldn't pay money for school. On top of that, he couldn't take a bath so he was very stinky. (It is unthinkable in the Japan of today.)

- One teacher (a male teacher) spoke evil of his parents before us. It was a painful experience for me. I clearly remember it still now even though it happened 60

years ago.

- ② **The other teacher (a female teacher) was Ms. Yamagami, who was my homeroom teacher. I was a naughty boy. I must have troubled her (I don't remember, but people around me say so.). However, she was very good to me. When my mother went to school to apologize for me causing her trouble, she said, "He is a good boy. You will surely be proud of him someday." My mother said that she was very encouraged by the word of an well experienced teacher. (It is questionable that I became a respectable man).**

- **My friends. Children are educated by teachers and they grow up. Therefore, every single word from the teachers greatly affects children. They should take care of children and make them grow. Therefore, it is very important for children what sort of condition and education they have.**

- The Bible teaches us about bringing up a child. Chapter 9 comes to the essential theme that is the central teaching of the Epistle. Aaron, Moses' brother, was chosen as the high priest and his descendants continuously served as high priests for generation after generation. God taught His law through a man of God (priests, the high priests). The priests (the high priests), who must have followed the law as the leaders of the people, could not complete it. They couldn't completely make atonement for people's sins through religious rituals.
- Then, how was *the fulfillment of the law* achieved?

The Epistle to the Galatians teaches as below –

3:23 we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed.

3:24 So the law was put in charge of us until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.

3:25 Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

- The Scripture above demonstrates the essence of Christian faith.
- The Epistle to the Galatians teaches that the old law was the supervision (the tutor) that brought the people to Christ. It means that the law that was given to the Israelites was impossible to follow. Its purpose was to bring them to Christ. In the days of the Roman Empire, wealthy families employed tutors to teach and take care of their children. The purpose of the tutor was to make the child grow and mature.
- My friends. If we don't understand the nature of the law, the tutor, we don't realize the necessity of *the new law* that came after the old one.

The author of the Epistle discusses on the vital question as described below.

Main Points

1 The Sanctuary and Worship of the First Covenant

9:1 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary.

Fellowship with God in the days of the old covenant time was within the limitation: regulations for worship and in a sanctuary.

1) The Place to Meet God

- The place that the Israelites met God was limited. The place was called the tabernacle. It was the portable worship place for the people who were traveling in the wilderness. It consisted of two parts, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

9:2 A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place.

- *The lampstand* was made of pure gold. The lamps must have been lit all night. According to Josephus, a Jewish historian, four lamps were lit all night and three lamps were lit in the day time. The sanctuary was lit all day long. The priests must have lit lights mornings and evenings. They also must have burnt incense. They must have set the bread of the presence on the table on the Sabbath. The priests served at the sanctuary by taking turns. It means the presence of God. He is the One of light.
- *The table* was made of acacia and overlaid with pure gold. A batch of 12 loaves of bread was laid on the table every Sabbath. Exodus 25:23~30

9:3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place,

God ordered Moses to make the tabernacle (a tent to worship God).

The Israelites who left Egypt wandered for 40 years in the wilderness. However, God was present at the tabernacle and protected them.

- Therefore, the tabernacle was the most precious thing for the Israelites. The Most Holy Place was made in the Holy Place of the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant was placed there. (Exodus 26:31~35)

9:4 which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

The ark of the covenant was overlaid with gold inside and outside. (Exodus 25:10~16, 37:1~5) It contained the following three things.

- ① The gold jar: The bread manna was in it. (Exodus 16:31~34)
- ② Aaron's staff : The staff that had budded. (Numbers 17:23~26)
- ③ The stone tablets: The two tablets that Ten Commandments were written on. (Exodus 25:16, 31:18)

9:5 Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

The cherubim are said to be a kind of angel that has a human face and an animal-like body. It reveals the presence of God. (Exodus 25:18~22) The cherubim give a warning humans to not come close to God .

Genesis

3:24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

- *The atonement cover* is the cover of the ark of the covenant in Verse 4. (Exodus 25:17~22)
- Like this, the tabernacle that the Israelites could meet God was ordered to make in detail. We study what kind of people could come close to God as the next point.

2) The Man Who Could Meet God

- In the days of the Old Testament, most people could not directly meet God. They needed priests who interceded for them. The priests entered the Holy Place regularly to carry on their ministry.

9:6 When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry.

- And the high priest entered the Most Holy Place only once a year and offered animal sacrifices for the sins the people committed in ignorance.

9:7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had

committed in ignorance.

- The high priest put on the sacred white garments and entered the Most Holy Place. He had to offer the bull for himself and his household and then slaughter it. Then, he took some of the bull's blood and sprinkled it on the front and the side of the atonement cover of the ark of the covenant for himself.
- He then slaughtered the goat for the sins of offering for the people. He took its blood to the Most Holy Place and sprinkled it in the same way. He laid his both hands on the head of the live goat and "confessed over it all the sins of the Israelites. And he released another goat into the wilderness in place of them." (Leviticus 16:21) This was the duty of the priests who entered the Most Holy Place once a year to make atonement for the sins of himself and the Israelites.
- Even though they continued bringing offerings to God according to regulations, their sins were not cleansed and they were not freed from the pangs of conscience. Their worship in the days of the Old Testament was merely representative of worship in the days of the New Testament. We can say that the true worship has begun when Jesus died on the cross and completed redemption.
- Therefore, it is said that worship in the days of the Old Testament is just like a shadow of worship in the days of the New Testament. The Israelites were allowed to be forgiven of their sins by offering animal sacrifices. However, they had to do it every year.
- Now, Jesus Christ, who is the perfect One, sacrificed Himself once, and the salvation was fulfilled. The people who worshiped by offering animals were not cleansed in their conscience. And now, those who are saved by Jesus have their consciences made quite new.

The Bible: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come."

2 Corinthians 5:17

- By the way, God wanted to have a good relationship with human beings from the beginning. God had decided ① the place to meet God and ② the people to meet God. It taught the important thing that they were allowed to come to meet God after they became cleansed from sins.
God's will was to have a relationship (have fellowship) with people.
- However, as I said before, the Israelites couldn't follow the law. As they could not fulfill the law, the law became their tutor and its purpose was to lead them to the perfect law.
- My friends. Now we understand the purpose of the law. The worldly people try to follow the law (rules, regulations). However, they are mere human beings. No one can perfectly follow the law.

2 The Characteristics of the Old Covenant

9:8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning.

- **"The way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed"** means that they could not freely enter the Most Holy Place at any time. It means that they had not given peace with God. There are many religions in this world. However, none of them can open the way to the Holy Place where they can get peace with God. We can first worship God only through Jesus Christ, the High Priest,

9:9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.

- “An illustration for the present time” means that it is just like *a temporary example*. That is that even though man tries hard to be cleansed by training eagerly, following the law, *he cannot make his conscience perfectly free*. He cannot get true salvation or peace.

9:10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings – external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

- “Until the time of the new order” means “until the better thing comes” that is “until the time of reform”. It refers to the time that Jesus comes. As Jesus has come to this world, the old law finished being the role of the tutor. Like this, the old covenant provided lot of detailed rules and ordered people to follow them. *The first law* was indispensable until the genuine thing comes.

- We studied the regulations and the Holy Place according to the first covenant.

* Let’s summarize up what we studied now.

- ① The law, *the old covenant*, was the tutor. The center of the old covenant was the law.

The stone tablets that the law was written on were placed in *the ark of the covenant* in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle . The people greatly valued it. At that time, they could not ignore the ark of the covenant that referred to the presence of God.

- The author of the Epistle demonstrated that they were the example of *the new covenant* that comes later. It was the tutor (a teacher who guides). The tutor had the purpose.

- ② When the people wanted to have the correct relationship with God, they needed the law and offerings according the old covenant.

- The people’s sins made them separate from God. The people had to give offerings to God through the priest to be forgiven. They were forgiven by shedding an animal’s blood. However, it was just *an example of Jesus* who was the perfect offering.

- ③ “The new covenant” was made by Jesus Christ.

- The new covenant was quite different from *the old covenant* that required the special rules and the limited place. The high priests no longer need to perform religious rituals with animals blood. Jesus Christ, the perfect High Priest accomplished every thing so *the old covenant*, that was shadow of the One who was coming later, was abolished.

- Therefore, we are not saved by following the law. We don’t need to offer animals to be saved. We are saved by *faith* in Jesus Christ. We live in the days of grace. How precious the grace of God! God has done this for us. It was an amazing and unbelievable God’s work.

Conclusion

The Title of the Message: “The Law Is Your Tutor”

—The Characteristics of the Old Covenant—

- We studied the characteristics of *the old covenant* according to the law.

The Lord taught us the following points today.

1 *The old covenant* according to the law and offerings was abolished.

2 *The new covenant* in faith has started.

- How about today’s message? What do we trust in? Do we still follow the old covenant? Or, are we already living lives in the new covenant?

* God bless you!