

Sent: Wednesday, 14 December 2016 1712
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Hebrews 10:1-18

How appropriate it was that our last MOB study for the year, last nite, just happened to be on Hebrews 10:1-18, which, among other things, can be seen as the ultimate "advent" lesson for this Christmas season! Reaffirming the basic purpose for the coming of Christ as the perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world--and as a fulfillment of all that was pictured, depicted, and prophesied in the Old Testament writings! The hope for all mankind! For all eternity!

The author of Hebrews describes it as the "consummation of the ages" when Jesus Christ was "manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself!" (Heb. 19:26) Therefore, all that we have studied, that the author of Hebrews cites, and recites, about the Levitical priesthood, and the earthly sanctuary, and all the sacrifices, ceremonies, and rituals under the Old Testament law were but "shadows of the good things to come"! (Heb. 10:1)

We learned it was all part of God's plan and purpose from all eternity, first announced to the serpent (Satan) in the garden--after the fall of Adam and Eve--that it would be through the "seed of a woman" (clearly implying the virgin birth!) that salvation, and the defeat of Satan and victory over death, would be accomplished! Therefore, there followed the calling of Abraham, and the founding of a people (the "children of Israel"), and of a nation, and of a kingdom (David)--as well as the prophecies and promise of a Savior, to be born of the tribe of Judah, in a little town of Bethlehem, etc. However, there was also a continuing disobedience to God's commands--leading to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities and the destruction of the temple--and, for many, the loss of hope! You can almost hear the somber words of the hymn: "O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel..." Then! After 400 years of silence! It happened! Gabriel comes to announce the miraculous birth of Jesus! The shepherds watch, the wise men bring gifts! We see the manger scene--and the rest of the Christmas story all finally coming together! Paul later wrote in Galatians 4:4 that "when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons"!

The author of Hebrews (in Heb. 10:5-7) interprets the words of Psalm 40:6-9 as being the words of Christ Himself, at the time of His coming into the world, in the form of a man (a "body") when He declared: "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God!" Willington's Study Guide to the Bible suggests that these words might actually be "Christ's first recorded words in reference to His earthly ministry, uttered perhaps as He left the ivory palaces of glory to join Himself to that tiny mass of human flesh within Mary's womb"!

And so, we realize, that it was necessary that Christ would come into our world in the form of a man (the Incarnation!) for the very purpose of shedding His blood and becoming the "final," the "definitive," the "only all-sufficient" sacrifice for sin! Hagner puts it this way: "Christ's sacrificial death on the cross is the very essence of the new covenant and the Christian faith--and the decisive turning point between the old and the new; it is the fulfillment of all that preceded, and brings us to a new stage--indeed a turning point--in salvation history"!

That is the central message of Hebrews! Which just happens also to be the real story of Christmas and the ultimate "advent" lesson!

Merry Christmas men!

Lowell