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Levitical service in the wilderness

Carrying the holy vessels and the tent of meeting

'Their duty included the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, the screen, and all the work relating to them. And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest was to be chief over the leaders of the Levites, with oversight of those who kept charge of the sanctuary'
(Num. 3:31-32).

'Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the LORD'
(Isa. 52:11; cf. 2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4).

'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel'
(Acts 9:15).

Christians themselves are sometimes compared with silver and gold objects (or: vessels). See 2 Timothy 2:20, when it comes to our responsibility to be a vessel for honor to the Master. We have received the divine nature (gold), and are saved by the work of atonement accomplished on the cross (silver). Therefore, in the practice of daily life, we must also pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

In another respect, we are also bearers of the sacred vessels that belong to God's sanctuary. These objects speak of Christ and the Spirit, and the heavenly position of the Church. By this we mean in the first place the ark of the covenant, the gold lampstand, the table for the showbread and the altar of incense. Just as the Levites carried these objects through the wilderness, so we are the bearers and witnesses

of the spiritual realities represented by them. What a testimony has been entrusted to us: the divine testimony concerning the Person of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the true worship in spirit and truth that we are to show forth in the world and uphold in the sanctuary.

For all these objects speak of Him:

1. The ark speaks of the exalted Lord as the Throne of Grace.
2. The lampstand shows Him to be the Giver of light, the Bearer of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the sanctuary.
3. The table of showbread shows Him as the Bearer of the people of God in the presence of God Himself.
4. The altar of incense shows that His Person and His work are the only basis of true worship, which is acceptable to God through Him (Heb. 13:10-15).
5. The burnt altar speaks of His obedience until the death of the cross, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma (Phil. 2; Eph. 5:2).
6. The curtains also speak of Him. The veil, 'that is His flesh', is an image of His pure humanity (Heb. 10:20).

With the exception of the lampstand, which was exclusively made of pure gold, the objects in the sanctuary were made of wood, and covered with gold. The wood speaks of the human nature of the Lord, the fruit of the earth (Isa. 4:2), while the gold speaks of His divine nature. He is truly Man, but also truly God.

The testimony concerning the Person of Jesus Christ has now been entrusted by God to His Church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15-16). We carry this testimony around here on earth and represent Him in our service as Levites and our walk as pilgrims, to the honor and glory of our Lord in heaven – who was rejected by the world, but is now crowned by God with honor and glory.

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