

Have You Been to a True Sanctuary?

David Halbrook

Does your church have a sanctuary? What is a sanctuary?

In the Old Testament, the sanctuary (or *the holy place*) was the first part of the Tabernacle/Temple (Hebrews 9:2).

In the New Testament, there is no earthly sanctuary for Jesus is *Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man* (Heb. 8:2). In the Bible, the place where Christians gathered is not called a *sanctuary*. So why do so many religious groups call the place where they meet to worship *the sanctuary*?

Often this is the result of confusion over the old covenant and new covenant (Heb. 8:7). The sanctuary, altar, incense, priesthood, and priestly robes are part of the Old Testament. Jesus' death ended all that (Heb. 8:1-6; 9:6-10:9; Matt. 26:28).

Some people think that since a building is used as a place to worship, then that is a holy place all the time. Israel's sanctuary was holy all the time because the Temple always represented God's presence (in the most Holy place). God has no building like that today, as Jesus prophesied (Jn. 4:21). If your church has a sanctuary, find out why and then study your Bible.

Editor's Note: Most Catholic and Protestant churches refer to some portion of their "house of worship" as a sanctuary. We're not trying to be "nit-picky" here, but help people ask questions they've never thought to ask. Of course, we have no sanctuary here, but by faith, we are trying to join our Minister in the true sanctuary in heaven. Might our article in *Arkansas Weekly* help someone you meet or know this week to recognize the source of this common religious error? Help them find our article.

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, and new Christians among us.

Through an email, Steve Wallace (Sunman, Indiana) expressed his thanks for the funds we sent for his trip to India in January.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*
church of Christ--Quail Valley

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The Importance of Genesis

Steven J. Wallace

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1)

The book of Genesis is foundational for our learning. Genesis means "beginning," and it teaches us about the origin of important things. This is important because the meaning of anything is tied to its origin.

In this book we find the origin of the seven day week. Man has tried in vain to interpret the days of Genesis 1 as long ages by proposing that each day represents millions of years or that there is a supposed gap of millions of years between the first two verses. He has created many compromising conjectures to contort the Genesis record into long ages, something it will never affirm. These attempts are fallacious for many reasons.

For example, each day must be literal because it consists of "the evening and the morning." If the day represents millions of years, then the evening and the day must also be millions of years of darkness and daylight! That Jesus places Adam and Eve's origin at the "beginning of creation" destroys all long age conjectures (Mark 10:6). That it is certain this "male and female" were in fact "Adam and Eve" is due to Jesus quoting Genesis 2:24 in Mark 10:7, 8—which was God's response to Adam's own words in Genesis 2:23! It stands to reason that if each day consisted of millions of years and if Adam and Eve were created on day six, then they were created at the end of the timeline of world history and not the beginning. Long ages make a liar out of the Jesus, the Creator of all things!

Further, if days mean "ages," then how could the expression "for days and years" be understood (Gen. 1:14)? What sense is one supposed to make of years? We ought to also observe that the only pattern which our seven day week is based off of is a literal creation week. Only from a literal understanding of Genesis 1 could the Jews identify and keep the Sabbath Day (Ex. 20:7–11). Other reasons could be stated, but

these are sufficient to abandon any belief that makes the days of Genesis anything other than solar days.

In Genesis we also find the beginning of life, that it is a gift from God. We find the beginning of marriage, that it is between one man and one woman. We find the beginning of sin, that it is rebellion against God's word. We learn that both good and evil exist in our world. We also find the way Satan tempts man, by leading him to lust after what is wrong and question God's word and character. We see how sin affects our relationship to God, to our environment, and to each other.

Genesis teaches the origin of clothing, that such was designed to cover nakedness due to the effects of sin. Genesis shows that man's choice of clothing fails what God prescribes (Gen. 3:7). Despite the fact that Adam and Eve made coverings, they were still too ashamed to stand before God. We (may, *dh*) find the beginning of sacrifice in animal blood in skin coverings (Gen. 3:21). Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). Therefore sin is not only rebellious, but it is costly.

Ultimately this price was to be paid by the Son of God dying on the cross for our sins (1 Tim. 2:5, 6). Have you applied the Lord's sin covering for your sin (Gal. 3:26, 27)?

Genesis—it is important!

Preach Christ and Not . . .

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

One should never underestimate the subtlety of the Devil. I am convinced that one of his more subtle devices over the years has been to convince people that if they are going to give Christ the glory that he deserves that they need to be preaching "Christ and not _____." You fill in the blank with about anything associated with Christ in the New Testament and you will get the picture. Some examples of things we have heard over the years:

1. "Preach the man (Christ) and not the plan."
2. "Preach Christ and not baptism."
3. "Preach Christ and not the church."
4. "Preach Christ and not obedience."

This sounds very appealing, especially when one says this is the kind of preaching the apostles did and points to passages about preaching Christ. And who would not want to give the name and person of Christ all glory and praise? The fact is the results of implementing these suggested preaching styles is to encourage people in their minds to separate Christ from the things he teaches, loves, and cherishes. Preaching a Christ without these things is preaching a Christ other than the one revealed in the

New Testament scriptures. Paul warns the Corinthians against preaching another Jesus, spirit, or gospel (2 Cor. 11:4).

Philip, the evangelist, preached Jesus to the eunuch (Acts 8:35). Somehow the eunuch got the message from this preaching that he needed be baptized (v. 36). Do you suppose that preaching Jesus included preaching about baptism? Earlier in Samaria, as one of those scattered abroad preaching THE WORD (v. 4), Phillip is said to have preached CHRIST to them (v. 5). In verse 12, it says that as he preached "the things concerning the KINGDOM OF GOD, and the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized." He preached Christ AND the church (Kingdom) not Christ AND NOT the church and as a result people were baptized.

The facts are, one cannot preach the Christ of the New Testament without preaching his plan for man's salvation, or baptism, or the church, or obedience to all his commands. Nor vice versa. One cannot preach the N.T. plan of salvation, N.T. baptism, N.T. church, N.T. obedience without preaching Christ. It is not "either, or." It is all of the above.

It is Christ who gave the plan which includes baptism and has revealed it. It is Jesus who is said to have established the church, gave himself for it, purchased it with his blood, loves it, cherishes it, etc. It is Jesus who is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him (Heb. 5:8-9). One is preaching Jesus when he preaches any of those things that one must obey and the results of that obedience.

We grant that not everyone who repeats the catch phrase, "Christ and not _____," means to completely eliminate whatever may be put in the blank. But, by often repeating such may very well encourage their hearers to do so.

One additional thought about the church. Saying, "We need to preach Christ and not the church" is not the same as we sometimes say, "Our loyalty should be to Christ and not the church." The latter is saying that Christ is the source of all truth and not the church. The church is to practice the truth, but it can err from it. If our loyalty is to the church rather than Christ, then we will go with the church into error. But if our loyalty is to Christ then we will remain with Him.