

March 1, 2008

“FLU-Bite-Us”!

Dear [Friends & Family](#),

There is a flu pervading our country at this time, covering every state in the Continental U.S. except FL! It “flew” in to our home over two weeks ago! I find it difficult to recollect when I have been sick for so long! I have been in bed for over a week, with just about every symptom in the book! As with everything we encounter in life, God has promised “good” in it. Despite many prayers, our God has chosen to have me ride this out in its “[natural](#)” course of time. And yet, I have gotten a tremendous amount of reading done in the [Scriptures, theology books, & Church history books](#). Yesterday, I listened to the Book of Revelation on CD. I only dozed off for a few chapters. Forgive me, Lord!

THE INTENSE TENT

Kim & I have never been the “camping” type. Our idea of “camping” is at the [Hilton](#)! In antiquity, sheiks in the Middle East would travel with their entourages & live in elaborate tent-dwellings, bringing many of the luxuries of home to make their excursion as comfortable as possible. However, there was another tent in the desert from antiquity that eclipsed all others, both in design & sheer beauty, not to mention in “atmosphere” & hazard! It was the “Tent of Meeting” which the Lord instructed Moses to build, along with help from certain men He would anoint & enable for the task. It would be Aaron & his sons’ “workplace”. As I’ve written in an earlier newsletter, this workplace had severe “occupational hazards” if procedures were not meticulously carried out. There were numerous, varied, & detailed precautions God’s priests had to observe in order not to “die on the job”. **“...by [GOD’S ‘GOLD-ENCOMPASSED’!](#)”**

Another aspect of the Tent of Meeting was its elaborate design & divinely ordained ornamentation. It gleamed, glistened, & shimmered with the finest of gold, which was everywhere. Gold covered or comprised nearly all of its contents, from the golden lampstand to the table of showbread. Within the veil, in the Most Holy Place, there was the golden altar of incense, along with the most valuable & dangerous artifact in the entire Tabernacle, the gold-covered “[ark of the covenant](#)”. Its lid, called the mercy seat or “propitiary”, was forged of solid gold, with two gold cherubim facing each other on its top. Surrounding all of this gold were ornately colored fabrics of blue, scarlet, & violet interwoven with more gold. Imagine the awe when the priests entered & saw all of these gilded contents of the tent reflecting the light of the seven lamps of the menorah, not to mention the glow of the Lord’s “[Shekinah](#)” presence over the mercy seat, which the high priest alone was privileged to see once a year (Lev.16:2). The beauty surely was breathtaking! Ponder, Beloved, if you will, how captivating the beauty of the LORD, that is, the beauty of His holiness, must have been, if the man-made place, a mere copy (Heb.8:5) where He dwelt was so captivating?!

BLOOD-THE TENT’S KEY OF ENTRANCE

As with anything of value, to partake of it, it comes with a price. How different the scene was from all of this gilded splendor just outside the tent! There were *animal body parts* everywhere! Before the priests could enter this place of awesome & serene beauty, there must needs be **violent death** on behalf of their substitutes! Because the 2,000,000+ Israelites were sinning all of the time, substitutionary sacrifices must needs be made to appease the wrath of their very holy God. On just one day, at the dedication of [Solomon’s](#) temple, 22,000 [oxen](#) & 122,000 sheep were slaughtered (II Chr. 7:5)! In the entire [Levitical](#) system, there were all kinds of sacrifices that had to be made, depending on the occasion, be it sin, burnt, guilt, or peace. These various sacrificial offerings involved goats, bulls, lambs, calves, heifers, rams, pigeons & turtledoves. Throats were slit, carcasses were divided (heads & wings were torn off if they were fowl), with hides, offal, entrails, breasts, thighs, heads, tails, kidneys, fat, shoulders, etc. going to various prescribed places by the multitude of sacrifices & offerings. These were mandatory divine prerequisites & conditions before the priests could enter God’s dwelling place. As for the [blood](#)—well, there was blood

everywhere! Can you imagine the horror the average American housewife would feel if she were allowed to visit the Tent of Meeting in those days? All of the extravagant beauty “ruined” by **spattered blood**! Not so! **“Unless there is the violence of the sacrifice, there can be no partaking of ‘The Presence’”!** The priests were instructed to sprinkle blood on just about everything associated with this elaborate place (Heb. 9:22).

“THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE”

As I read through the “gloriously laborious” chapters of Leviticus, I began to feel overwhelmed with the amount of requirements the priests had to remember & fulfill as part of their duties. There were so many sacrificial rites to observe, not to mention all of the “mess” of gathering & slaughtering the innumerable sacrifices. In my mind’s eye, I saw piles of animal parts, & perhaps because of my heart’s longing as I did, I saw the **Lord Jesus Christ**, God’s Lamb, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, walking through the piles. I felt such freedom & release when I “saw” Him, realizing that He, in Himself, in One Person, The One Perfect Sacrifice, has done exponentially more for men than all of the millions of animal sacrifices through the years combined! Though the animal sacrifices were prescribed by God **for the time**, they were powerless to remove the sins of humans (Heb. 10:4). As violent as it was for the animals, their death occurred in a matter of seconds, as either their throats were slit or they were decapitated. Jesus, however, had a slow, **six-hour**, gruesome, tortuous death! Unlike the animals, HE knew what was coming! Unlike the animals, HE wasn’t forced against His will, but freely laid His life down for His Own. In our finite minds, it’s hard to combine these two necessary divine concomitants: gruesome **carnage**, & indescribable glorious **beauty**. In a very real sense, this is a very depictive “skeletal view” of the gospel! May we never lose sight of the violence Jesus endured, so that we could know His & our Father’s fellowship & embrace. Amen. Kim, Caleb, & I sincerely thank you for all of your support, in the various ways our Lord so moves you.

Michael

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[Please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: Elim Fellowship, 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485. Thanks!]

[Michael is an ordained Elim Fellowship itinerant home missionary, endorsed by his local church. He supports his family & his ministry by faith.]

****[“By faith” means that **for the past 8 years**, we have received no salary, have had no health insurance, have put nothing towards retirement or savings, but have lived entirely on donations from God’s people as He has moved upon their hearts to do so, & from honoraria I receive from my ministry events. As long as our God graces us with the faith to do so, we shall continue this endeavor. For this, we are grateful.]**

Ministry/events for **MARCH & those not listed those in last month’s newsletter:**

Feb. 15: Camp directors’ mtg., Chadds Ford, PA

Feb. 24: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: youth group (preaching)

March 4: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson, PA: camp board mtg//pastors’ mtg//directors’ mtg.

March 9: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Telford, PA: children’s church

March 13: New Covenant Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area pastors’ mtg.

March 16-25: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: **“VIA DOLOROSA”: room captain; **“Pontius Pilate”**: these dates encompass setup, pre-event dramatic announcement, actual performances, & teardown**

NEWS & NEEDS: If there is anyway you & yours can make it to one of our nights of **Via Dolorosa**, it will be well worth your trip! Come visit **1st century** Jerusalem during the tempestuous times

surrounding our Savior's betrayal, passion, & death. It's free, & you'll be so very glad you did! See attached flyer. Thanks! ☺

**Praise the Lord, a gracious couple sold a car to our son in law, Nathan, at a great price, which resulted in me having my ministry truck back. I'm glad for Nathan I could lend it to him!

Have a blessed Easter Season!!!