

Restoration Revisited (2): The Holy of Holies

I. Introduction

- A. We often struggle with, “*What do we do with and how do we use the OT?*”
1. You can get into trouble by indiscriminately applying the OT, right?
 - a. You might burn a goat in church, or build an ark or kill Amalekites
 - b. I was asked for good verse to have tattooed; I suggested **Lev 19:28**
 - c. Is that for us? What about the verse right before it (**Lev 19:27**)
 2. Our problem isn't using it indiscriminately; we use it discriminately
 - a. We use the OT when we need it and dismiss it when it is awkward
 - 1) We began with “*Lord is in His holy temple...*” (**Hab 2**, **Psa 11**)
 - 2) Psalms also mentions instruments or lif hands... *that's just OT!*
 - b. We quote **Lev 18** and **Lev 20** in condemnation of homosexuality
 - c. We're OK ignoring what **Lev 19** says about beards and tattoos
- B. Andy Stanley recently kicked over a hornet's nest with book *Irresistible*
1. Andy argues that we need to totally “*unhitch*” the NT from the OT
 - a. We've held down the gospel by allowing it to be hitched to OT
 - b. Everything is new in Christ; that's what made the gospel *Irresistible*
 - c. The OT gives background, but its unimportant for following Jesus
 - 1) He questions printing them together; it makes them seem equal
 - 2) Hyperbole? Maybe he overstates his case to make it. But note:
The Bible is a book organized around two covenants: one between God and ancient Israel and one between God and you! Focus on the second one. The covenant between God and Israel is obsolete. Read it for historical context and inspiration. But don't try any of that stuff at home!
 2. Andy is great communicator; focused on Jesus. I'm enjoying his book
 - a. He does provide needed warning about our indiscriminate use of OT
 - b. But there is a great danger in ripping the OT out (*actually several*)
 - 1) How many Christians see the God of the OT as a God of wrath
 - 2) God is now loving and forgiving, and not nearly as demanding
 - c. One constant between the OT and the NT is the person of God
 - d. The God we come before today is the same God that shook Sinai
 3. C.S. Lewis reminds us in Narnia, “*God is good, but He is never safe*”

- C. We don't need to get rid of OT; we need to get more familiar with it!
1. At least, we need to move back to a more OT view of God
 - a. He is the God who spoke the universe into existence with a word
 - b. The God who told Moses a single glimpse of his glory would be fatal
 - c. He is the God who reigns forever, who is "*Holy One in your midst*"
God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be glory and might forever.
 2. Wait a minute; that is the NT (**1 Tim 6:16**). Our God is still that God!
 - a. Is that the point of "*Grim Tale of Ananias and Sapphira?*" (**Acts 5**)
 - 1) They wanted the church rep of being big givers (*like Barnabas*)
 - 2) They didn't want to BE big givers; just wanted to be seen that way
 - 3) So, they cooked the books; they claimed to give all and they didn't
 - 4) That's like raising your hand when you didn't do daily Bible reading
 - b. They lied to God right to his face, and God struck them down dead
 - 1) You'd have a hard time convincing them that God isn't God of wrath
 - 2) Why did God do that? Real question, "*Why doesn't He still do that?*"
 - 3) What a strange story! Almost sounds like it should be in OT!
 3. Notice what happened as part of this story (**Acts 5:5, 10-11**)
 - a. This event literally put the fear of God into the church, right?
 - b. Maybe God needed to remind us He is still in his holy temple!
- D. Last week we began a series we are calling "*Restoration Revisited*"
1. Stone-Campbell movement that is our roots sought restore church
 - a. We were back-to-Bible movement, doing Bible things in Bible way
 - b. We wanted to be the NT church, and our pattern was Book of Acts
 - 1) What we largely focused on were forms, formats and formulas
 - 2) We wanted to do Bible things in Bible ways, and never could agree
 - 3) We got more and more side-tracked on issues like "*church music*"
 2. We still want to be a restoration movement (*means we have to move*)
 - a. We still want to look at Acts, but not simply for forms and formats
 - b. We need the power and passion of Acts; that's what series is about
 3. Today what we see in church in Acts is very OT—*fear of the Lord*

II. Restoration and the Fear of the Lord

- A. There's an old saying, *"I don't believe in organized religion; I'm C-of-C"*
1. Actually, I think we stole that from the Baptists (*like a lot of things*)
 - a. Being a bit disorganized is pretty restoration—the patter in Acts
 - b. When you add 3000 members one Sunday, things are like chaos
 - 1) Crisis arose when Grecian widows were overlooked (**Act 6:1**)
 - 2) That wasn't caused by discrimination; it was caused by chaos
 - c. Things got more chaotic when Gentiles started flooding into church
 2. You get the idea reading Acts they didn't many panning meetings
 - a. They did have that meeting in **Acts 15** over Gentiles—more chaos
 - b. What was happening in Jerusalem was not due to plans and policies
 - c. They were flying by the seat of their pants seeking to follow God
- B. There is this interesting connection between fear of God and growth
1. What takes place when fear seizes everyone after Ananias-n-Sapphira?
 - a. There is a statement of the continuing growth of the church (**5:12-14**)
 - 1) OK, apostles did miracles; we generally don't have that going on
 - 2) They had apostles doing the preaching; we don't have that either
 - b. What they did have was a group of people who saw God as awesome
 - c. What was going on among them was the work and power of God
 2. We see this emphasis on the fear of God in story of church in Acts
 - a. Are these part of the pattern for restoring the church? (**Acts 2:42**)
 - 1) We looked at this at length during our series on the story
 - 2) Is this a pattern for the church? But we stop too soon (**2:43**)
 - 3) NIV uses "awe" but it's "fear." And what happened (**2:47**)
 - b. Note connection between fear of God and growth later (**Acts 9:31**)
 - c. Later in the book, the same connection is made again (**Acts 19:17**)
 3. **Point:** The early church lived in the presence and power of God
 - a. They knew God was awesome; they felt Him working among them
 - b. Church wasn't plans but power! It wasn't services but service!
 - 1) When we live as those who fear God, we are changed by that
 - 2) If God makes a difference in us, He makes a difference in world

III. Conclusion

- A. Why did God do all the shock and awe when he gave the Law to Moses?
 - 1. You remember the scene; Israel leaves Egypt and comes to Mt. Sinai
 - a. This was where Moses had first met God in the burning bush
 - 1) But when Israel came to Sinai, the whole mountain was on fire
 - 2) There was thunder and lightning; the place was covered in smoke
 - b. God had Moses tell people, “Don’t try to go near the mountain”
 - 1) That was the one commandment that Israel obeyed perfectly
 - 2) Then God’s voice spoke from Sinai, and scared everyone to death
 - 2. Why all the special effects here? To get their attention (**Exo 20:20**)
 - a. Before they could really see God’s Law, they needed to see God
 - b. Before they took the Law seriously, they had to take God seriously
 - c. Maybe there is an application someone in there for us today
- B. Do we want to restore the church to what it was in the Book of Acts?
 - 1. Do we want God to restore us, our spiritual focus and fervor?
 - 2. We need to start by seeing God as He is... HOLY, HOLY, HOLY