

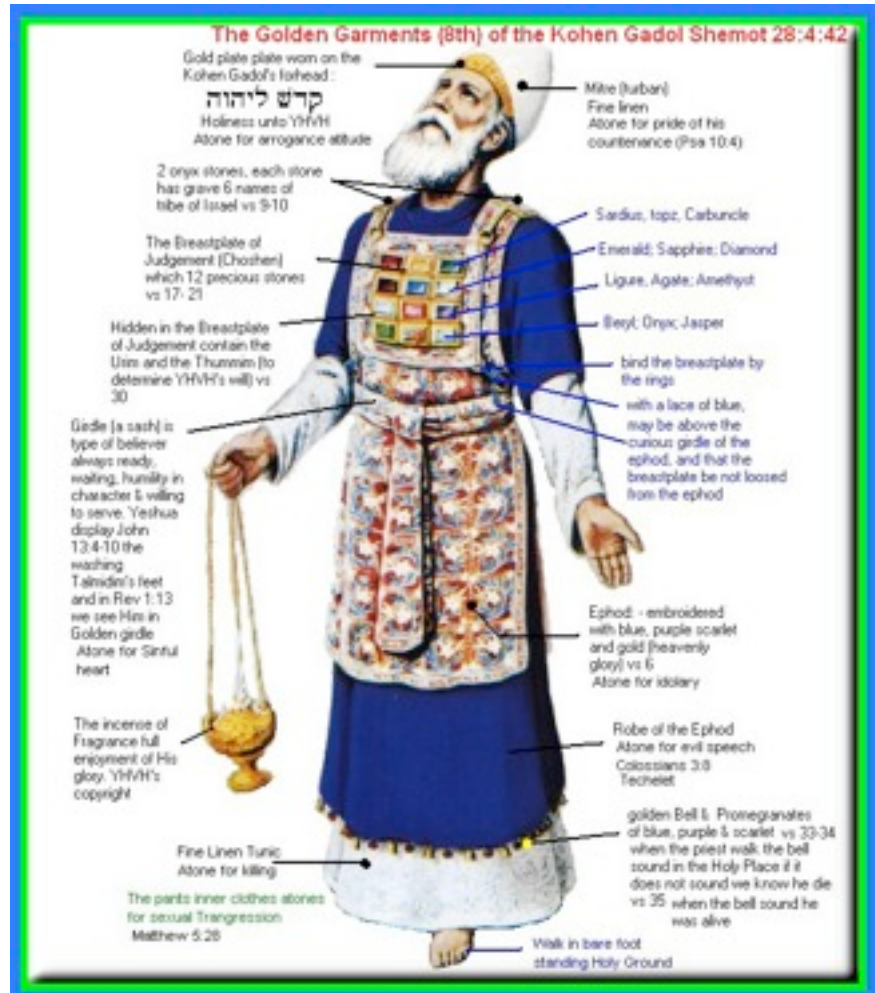
Discourse Three

Hallowed Be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom Come

Shadows and Realities

The Law contains the "shadow of good things to come" (Heb 10:1) prefiguring the truth by means of various types of symbolic riddles. When the high priest is about to enter the Holy of Holies to pray to God, he must first be cleansed through certain purifications and sprinklings. He is then dressed up with the priestly robe adorned with gold, purple and other bright colors. The breast-piece is placed on his chest, while the bells and symbolic pomegranates are hung from the robe's fringes. The upper tunic is fastened with the shoulder garment. Myrrh is richly poured on his hair. His head is adorned with a crown. Only then can the high priest enter the Holy of Holies ¹ to perform the sacred rites in secret.

But the spiritual Lawgiver, our Lord Jesus Christ, strips the Law of its external coverings. He discloses for us the inner meaning of the symbolic riddles. First of all, He does not



¹ The inner sanctuary within the Tabernacle and Temple in Jerusalem when Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple were standing and could be entered only by the High Priest on Yom Kippur. This was the most sacred part of the Temple. It was a small room 10 cubits x 10 cubits (15' x 15') separated from the Holy Place by the veil. It housed one piece of redemptive furniture, the ark of the Covenant, with its mercy seat. There was no created light like the sun and no artificial light but God's own "Shekinah" glory that lit up the Holiest Place. There was no seat for man but here Jehovah sat alone on the throne of glory and righteousness. As the high priest entered once a year, he entered with bowed head, unsandalled feet, and bells. No human voice was heard, only the voice of God.

The Eastern Orthodox Church has received the Tradition of the Holy of Holies in the Temple area. The Holy Table (altar) in an Orthodox temple is in a restricted area behind the iconostasis (icon screen). The entire area behind the iconostasis is known as the "Altar" or the "Holy Place", and corresponds directly to the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple.

separate one man from everyone else in order to lead only him to spiritual converse with God.² He grants this privilege equally to all, presenting the grace of priesthood as common to those who aspire to it. He does not contrive the beauty of the priest from strange ornaments using certain dyes and intricate weavings. He clothes the priest with an intrinsic beauty proper to him. He beautifies the priest with the graces of the virtues instead of the embellishments of a garment. He adorns not his breast with earthly gold but his heart with the beauty of an unsullied and pure conscience. He matches the rays of precious stones on the breast-piece with the radiance of the sacred commandments, as the Apostle Paul indicates (Eph 6:14). He also secures with an undergarment (Ex 28:42) that part of the body for which this clothing is a fit adornment and surely you are aware that the adornment of this bodily part is continence. From the fringes of daily conduct He hangs the spiritual pomegranates³ and bells that signify, according to their proper meaning, the visible marks of virtuous behavior by which the spiritual way of life becomes evident. From these fringes He hangs, instead of the bell, the melodious confession of the faith; instead of the pomegranate, the inner cultivation of the future hope now veiled by the hard cover of the present life.

The spiritual Lawgiver then leads the priest into the Holy of Holies, the innermost part of the sanctuary. But this Holy of Holies is neither lifeless nor handmade. It symbolizes the hidden treasury of the heart, that is, if the heart is truly inaccessible to evil and impenetrable to wicked thoughts. And the head He adorns with a heavenly mind, not engraving the form of letters on golden leaf (Ex 28:36) but imprinting the image of God Himself on the ruling faculty of reason. On the hair He pours myrrh produced inwardly by the soul itself through the virtues. By means of the mystical liturgy He prepares a victim and sacrifice for the priest to offer to God, which is none other than Himself. He who is thus led to this priesthood by the Lord puts to death the carnal mind by means of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"

² Aaron, though he is but rarely called "the great priest," being generally simply designated as "ha-kohen" (the priest), was the first incumbent of the office, to which he was appointed by God (Book of Exodus 28:1-2; 29:4-5).

The succession was to be through one of his sons, and was to remain in his own family (Leviticus 6:15).[1] If he had no son, the office devolved upon the brother next of age.

On Yom Kippur he alone entered the Holy of Holies, to make atonement for his house and for the people (Lev. xvi). He alone could offer the sacrifices for the sins of the priests, or of the people, or of himself (Lev. iv.); and only he could officiate at the sacrifices following his own or another priest's consecration (Lev. ix.).

Yom Kippur, also known in English as the Day of Atonement, is the most solemn and important of the Jewish holidays. Its central themes are atonement and repentance. Jews traditionally observe this holy day with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services. Yom Kippur is the tenth and final day of the Ten Days of Repentance which begin with Rosh Hashanah. According to Jewish tradition, God, or "Yahweh", inscribes each person's fate for the coming year into a "book" on Rosh Hashanah and waits until Yom Kippur to "seal" the verdict. During the Ten Days of Repentance, a Jew tries to amend his behavior and seek forgiveness for wrongs done against God and against his fellow man. The evening and day of Yom Kippur are set aside for public and private petitions and confessions of guilt. At the end of Yom Kippur, one considers himself absolved by God. In the time of the Temple it was the High Priest that held all the sins and made blood sacrifices for all the people.

³ Jewish tradition teaches that the pomegranate is a symbol for righteousness, because it is said to have 613 seeds which corresponds with the 613 mitzvot or commandments of the Torah. For this reason and others, many Jews eat pomegranates on Rosh Hashanah. Some say that the forbidden fruit was not an apple, but a pomegranate. For Christians the fruit, broken or bursting open, is a symbol of the fullness of his suffering and resurrection. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, pomegranate seeds may be used in kolyva, a dish prepared for memorial services, as a symbol of the sweetness of the heavenly kingdom. It is an important symbol in all major religions.

(Eph 6:17). He then enters the Holy of Holies and appeases God, offering himself as sacrifice and "presenting his body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1).

However, is this the obvious meaning of the Lord's Prayer which we are interpreting? Someone will perhaps object that we are contriving these ideas and do not connect the text of the prayer to familiar things. Let us remember, therefore, what the Lord's Prayer has already taught us about approaching God. Who has prepared himself to name God as his own Father with confidence? It is precisely he who is vested with such a spiritual robe described above. He resounds with the ringing of figurative bells and is trimmed with symbolic pomegranates. His breast gleams with the rays of the commandments. He carries on his shoulders the patriarchs and the prophets, not bearing merely their names (Ex 28:9-10) but artfully crafting their virtues into his own beauty. His head he adorns with the crown of righteousness. His hair is anointed with the heavenly myrrh. He enters into the Holy of Holies above the heavens which are truly inaccessible and impenetrable to all profane thought.

How God should be approached, especially by a priest, has been adequately shown by our discourse thus far. Now what remains is to examine the meaning of the petition itself which he who would enter the Holy of Holies is commanded to offer to God. For I do not think that the bare presentation of the prayer's words render their meaning to us easily comprehensible.

Hallowed Be Thy Name

The words are: "*Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come.*" Someone might ask: "What do these words have to do with my needs?" That person might be one who chastens himself through repentance for his sins seeking forgiveness. Or one who wants to ask God to be his ally in order to escape the slavery of sin, being always aware of the enemy who fights us through temptations. In the course of life, from one side outbursts of anger disrupt the steadiness of reason. From another, improper desires weaken the strength of the soul. From still another, greed blinds the discerning faculty of the heart. The remaining list of contrary passions conceit, pride and hatred surround us like a hostile host threatening the soul's final destiny.

If a person then earnestly seeks to escape from these evils through a stronger alliance with God, what most suitable words could he use? Would they not be those spoken by the great David, "*Deliver me from those who hate me*" (Ps 69:14). "*Let my enemies turn back*" (Ps 56:9). "*Grant us help from trouble*" (Ps 60:11), and the like, through which it is possible to gain God's alliance against one's adversaries?

But now what does the Lord's Prayer set down? "*Hallowed be Thy Name.*" If I did not utter these words at all, let us say, would it be possible that God's Name be not holy? "*Thy Kingdom come.*" But what could be beyond God's power? As Isaiah says, God marks all heaven with His span. He holds the earth in His palm and governs the nature of the waters by His hand (Is 40:12). God embraces all creation, both material and spiritual. God's Name is forever holy and nothing escapes the power of God's rule. Rather, He has dominion over all and admits no addition to His holiness. God absolutely lacks nothing and is perfect. What then does the prayer intend with the words, "*Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come?*"

It is perhaps that the Divine Word, through this form of prayer, decrees the following: that human nature is too feeble to acquire anything good and that therefore we can achieve nothing of what we eagerly seek, unless the divine alliance accomplishes the good in us. The sum of all good things is that God's Name be glorified through my life. But for now let us choose to focus on a meaning from a different direction.

I have heard Holy Scripture somewhere condemn those who become the cause of blasphemy against God. For it says, "*Woe to those on whose account my Name is blasphemed among the nations*" (Is 52:5). This saying may be interpreted in the following manner. Those who have not yet believed in the word of truth look to assess the way of life of those who have embraced the mystery of faith. When some of

those who bear the name of the faith, but their way of life contradicts the name whether by lapsing into idolatry by way of greed, or by behaving unseemly through drunkenness and revelry, or by wallowing like swine in the mire of profligacy⁴ then those who are unbelievers resort to a handy accusation. They do not direct their accusation against the free choice of those who abuse Christian life by doing evil, but against the mystery of the faith itself, as if the faith positively teaches to do those kinds of things. For the unbeliever says that any person who has been initiated into the divine mysteries would not do these things. A Christian would not be a reviler or greedy or robber (I Cor 5:10) or display any such wickedness unless sinning was lawful among them. It is for this reason that the Divine Word directs a grievous warning, against such believers applying the following words to them: "*Woe to those on whose account my Name is blasphemed among the nations*" (Is 52:5).

If this meaning is now clear, it is time to understand what can be said on the positive side. For above all, I think, we should pray and regard it as the sum of prayer, that the Name of God should not be blasphemed but rather be glorified and be hallowed through our way of life. In us then, according to the Divine Word, the Name of God and His Lordship, which we invoke, should be hallowed so that others may see our good works and glorify the Father who is in heaven (Mt 5:16).

What person would be so brutish and foolish so as not to be deeply moved when observing a pure way of life among those who believe in God? He would behold a way of life achieved through virtue and cleansed from all stain of sin, a life free from all suspicion of wickedness. Such life shines with prudence, dignity and discernment. It displays fortitude against the attacks of evil passions, being in no way weakened by bodily pleasure. It is separated from such things as luxury, slackness and the delusions of vanity—and to such an extent that it participates in ordinary necessities only as far as is needful, touching the earth as it were with the tip of the toes. It is not submerged in the enjoyment of pleasures accompanying this earthly life but transcends all the deceits that result from the bodily senses. It uses the body to strive for the spiritual life. It esteems one thing as wealth, that is, the possession of virtue; one nobility, that is, the closeness with God; one value and one power, that is, the mastery of self and freedom from human passions. Rather constrained by the length of the earthly way of life, it is eager, as in the case of those distressed at sea, to reach the port of rest. Who, then, seeing such a believer would not glorify the Name invoked by that manner of life?

Therefore, when I pray saying "Hallowed be Thy Name," the meaning of these words apply to me actualizing God's blessings. Lord, through the cooperation of Your help, may I become blameless, just and pious. Abstaining from every evil, may I speak the truth, practicing righteousness and walking on the straight path. May I shine with prudence, be adorned with incorruption, and be beautified with wisdom and discernment. Overlooking earthly things, may I set my mind on the things above (Col 3:2) and be radiant with the angelic manner of life. These and such blessings are contained in this brief petition by one who prays to God, "*Hallowed be Thy Name.*" For by no other means can God be glorified in a person except insofar as his virtue bears testimony that the divine power is the cause of these blessings.

Thy Kingdom Come

The following words ask that the Kingdom of God should come. But what is this? Is it expected that God should become King now, He who is the King of all, who is ever the same, incapable of any change and lacking nothing by which He could improve? What then is the meaning of the invocation for God's Kingdom? The true meaning of these words is known by those to whom the Spirit of Truth reveals the hidden mysteries. For our part, we would interpret these words in the following manner.

There is one true authority and power over all things: that which holds dominion and rules over all things, the Kingdom of God. It rules not by any violence and tyrannical lordship. Nor does it enslave its subjects through fear and coercion, because it is proper for the way of virtue to be devoid of any fear and to be

⁴ promiscuous and unprincipled in sexual matters, lax in morals, disregard of traditional principles.

free to choose what is good by voluntary consent. But the sum of all good is to submit to the authority which gives life, the Kingdom of God.

Human nature was deceived and was led astray from the discernment of the good. The inclination of our free will was directed to slavery. The life of human beings was subjugated by every evil. Death entered nature by a myriad of ways inasmuch as every suggestion of evil turns out to be a form of death against us. Therefore, because we have been entangled in this kind of tyranny and have been enslaved by death through evil passions which assault us like enemies and executioners, it is good that we pray for God's Kingdom to come upon us. For by no other means can we put off the wicked subjugation of corruption except through the substitution of God's life-giving lordship over us.

If we then ask that God's Kingdom should come upon us, we fervently entreat God to actualize in us these blessings: to be released from corruption; to be liberated from death, and to be loosed from the bonds of sin. We pray that the tyranny of wickedness cease its power against us and its war not conquer us, leading us away as captives through sin. We pray "*Let Your Kingdom come upon us*" in order that the evil passions which rule and lord it over us may depart from us, and indeed vanish into nothingness. For "*As smoke vanishes, let them vanish; and as wax melts before the fire, so they will perish*" (Ps 68:2). When smoke dissolves into the air it leaves no trace of its own nature. Nor can wax endure the fire. Rather it evaporates into the air and its smoke disappears into total nothingness.

Likewise, if God's Kingdom comes upon us, all those things which dominate us collapse into nothingness. Darkness cannot endure the presence of light. Sickness cannot exist when health returns. The evil passions are not active when freedom from passions takes hold. When life reigns in our midst and corruption holds sway, gone is death and vanished is corruption.

"*Thy Kingdom come.*" Sweet is the voice by which we bring this petition before God. Let the opposing camp be destroyed. Let the array of the enemy vanish. Let the warfare of the flesh against the spirit be done away. Let not the body serve as a base for the enemy to fight against the soul. Let the royal lordship shine upon me, the angelic powers the thousands of the righteous the myriads of those who stand in God's right hand, in order that the thousands of adversaries arrayed on the opposite side may collapse. The opponents are many. They are fearful and invincible for those deprived of Your alliance, those who stand in battle alone. However, when Your Kingdom appears, "*sorrow and sighing flee away*" (Is. 35:10). Life, peace and joy enter instead.

The Holy Spirit

Let us put it in another way. The Evangelist Luke interprets this meaning more clearly for us. He who prays for the coming of the Kingdom invokes the alliance of the Holy Spirit. For in that Gospel, instead of "*Thy Kingdom come,*" it is written, "*Thy Holy Spirit come upon us and cleanse us.*"

What will those who open their audacious mouth against the Holy Spirit say in the face of those words? By what manner of thinking do they change the dignity of the Kingdom into the lowliness of created nature? For that which Luke calls Holy Spirit, Matthew names Kingdom. How can the enemies of God demote the Holy Spirit to the level of subjugated creation, placing it with the ruled, instead of the ruling nature?

A creation is necessarily under subjection and subjection is not Kingdom. But the Holy Spirit is Kingdom. He is then distinct from created nature. For that which rules is not ruled. And that which is not ruled is not created. An attribute of creatures is to serve. But if the Spirit is Kingdom, how can they not confess the Spirit's true lordship? Such people have never learned how to pray rightly. Are they not ignorant of the Spirit who has the power to purify what is defiled and who partakes of the power of the Kingdom?

Luke's Gospel says, "*Thy Holy Spirit come and cleanse us.*" The Holy Spirit then has the extraordinary attribute and effective power both to purify and to forgive sins as the word of the Gospel attests. He who testifies that the Spirit possesses the power of forgiveness also surely testifies that the Spirit possesses

the attribute of divinity. The same truth applies to the Only Begotten Son according to the Apostle Paul who says, "*When He had made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty*" (Heb 1:3), that is, the Father. The work of both therefore is one and the same, of the Spirit who purifies from sin and of Christ who has accomplished the purification for sins.

Therefore, because they share the same energy, Christ and the Spirit surely also possess the same nature. For every manifestation of energy is the effect of power. If then both the energy and the power of Christ and the Spirit are the same, how can diversity of nature be conceived of those in whom we find no difference in power and energy? Let us take as example the two attributes of fire, that is, illumination and burning. The intimate connections of the two permits no notion of substantial difference as if one could supplant the other. So also in the case of the Son and the Spirit, if one thinks rightly on the basis of Scripture, their common energy permits no supposition of difference in nature.

Of course, devout men of the past have already demonstrated that the nature of the Father and the Son is the same and that what is of a different nature cannot be called by the Name of God. It would not be fitting to call a carpenter's son merely a workbench. Nor would it be proper for a wise person to say that a builder merely constructs a son. However, the Names of Son and Father signify what is conjoined according to nature. It is of absolute necessity that, when the two Persons of the Father and the Son have intimate affinity to the same Person of the Spirit, all three Persons cannot be strangers to one another. The Son is united with the Father according to nature and the Holy Spirit is not alien to the nature of the Son because of the identity of operations accomplishing the same work of salvation. Thus the nature of the Holy Trinity is shown to be one, neither confused in terms of the individual properties belonging to each Person, nor having these distinguishing properties of each Person interchanged between them.

What then is the madness of those fighting the Spirit, who teach that the Spirit is a serving creature of the Lord? Apparently for them not even Paul is trustworthy when he testifies saying, "*Now the Lord is the Spirit*" (2 Cor 3:17). Or do they perhaps think that praying, "*May He [the Spirit] come*" amounts to diminishing His worth? In this regard, do they not listen to the great David who seeks to draw the Father to himself by crying out, "*Come to save us*" (Ps 80:3)? If therefore the coming with reference to the Father is salvific, why is the coming with reference to the Spirit to be spoken against?

Or do they take the cleansing from sins a sign of inferior worth? But then listen to the Jews who did not believe and cried out that forgiveness of sins belongs only to God the Father. For they questioned: "*Why does this man speak blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone*" (Mk 2:7)? If therefore the Father forgives sins, the Son also "*takes away the sin of the world*" (Jn 1:29). In the same way the Holy Spirit cleanses from the defilement of sin those in whom He is born and to whom He gives life. What will the heretics say who fight against their own life?

Truly, let the Holy Spirit come upon us and cleanse us. May He make us receptive of noble thoughts worthy of God. Such thoughts are taught to us by the Lord's Prayer coming from the voice of the Savior, to whom belongs the glory forever and ever. Amen.