



Treasures
for the
Soul

Series 17 Episode 1

**KNOW THAT THE CHURCH IS
THE FIRSTBORN**

Message Date: April 26, 2020

PROLOGUE

Brothers and sisters, today's topic for Treasures for the Soul is **Know that the church is the firstborn.** Hebrews Chapter 12 mentions that the church is "the assembly of the firstborn," which means that the church is the church of the firstborn. Being the firstborn shows that we have an important position in God's eternal plan and love. It also shows the church's honour, glory, blessedness and enjoyment. The Lord is the One foreshadowed in the Old Testament. It's so precious that He has already come. He shed His blood for us and offered up Himself once for all. Therefore, today, we no longer need to offer sacrifices, but we can enjoy the new covenant that He has established for us. The Lord is the mediator of the better covenant.

MESSAGE

Today, I want to especially read with you some Bible verses that are related to the concept of the firstborn. This passage is a very precious way to describe the church.

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven...” (Hebrews 12:22-23)

Let's talk about the phrase: **“The assembly of the firstborn”**: This can also be interpreted as “the church of the firstborn.” Here, it speaks of the noble and glorious position of the church in this whole universe, and in God's will and plan till eternity. Also, this name tells us that the church is composed of the firstborns. As a member of God's household, each one of us is the firstborn, the true child of Abba, closest to Him. It's very clear: The firstborn has the most precious position, blessing, enjoyment, glory and honour in this whole universe, and in God's eternal plan and love till eternity!

The way that the Israelites treat their firstborns is probably the most prominent of any nation in the world. In fact, God calls the entire nation of Israel the firstborn. But we are even more blessed, because we are the church of the firstborn. Isn't it precious? Hebrew Chapter 12 tells us our destination.

The Book of Hebrews was especially written to the Hebrews, the Jews who claimed to believe in the Lord, though some were not so clear about their salvation. In the past, many of the Jewish people persecuted the Lord and the disciples. But it's so precious that when the Holy Spirit came, three thousand men believed in the Lord and were baptized. Later, quite a number of Israelites also believed in the Lord. But they were still influenced by the ideas of Judaism. They could've also been pulled back by the Old Testament, as it is also God's word, and discusses laws, sacrifices, priests, temples, as well as the covenants God made with them.

None of these things could truly set people free from sin! The blood of oxen and sheep could not remove sins. It was impossible for anyone's sins to be taken away by shedding an animal's blood and taking its life. All these sacrifices only foreshadowed that one day the Messiah would come; He would become the Lamb of God. The Bible prophesied many times in great detail about the Messiah. John the Baptist once made such a proclamation: **“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)** The blood of oxen and sheep could never take away sins. But all these sacrifices helped Israel know about the Saviour who was to come.

The Jews of the Old Testament also believed in God and were justified by faith. In a way, they foretasted the fruit of the cross. But now this Saviour has already come! He shed His blood and bore our sins. He suffered the greatest pain and solved the problems of our sins! It's no longer merely a

foreshadowing or foretaste. We don't need any more sacrifices! Our sins are forgiven! We are not waiting for another saviour, but we are waiting for the Lord's second coming. When He came the first time, He died and rose for us. It's so precious that we've already received this Saviour. Recall your own experience: your life has changed since the day you accepted Him as your Saviour. He is indeed our Saviour, the true Messiah. Christ has come! This is a new age!

The Book of Hebrews mentions twelve things that are "better". It's really so much better: He used His blood to establish a better covenant, He's the better sacrifice, His sprinkled blood speaks "a better word than the blood of Abel", He's the High Priest and He continues forever, above all the priests of the Old Testament time. He's incomparable. He offered Himself up as a sacrifice. It's a far better sacrifice than all the oxen and sheep, which can never be compared to Him. It's so precious that He has come! He has truly changed us. It's our true experience.

In the Old Testament time, the Israelites were God's chosen people. They did not understand the Bible well enough, and hence, started to be proud and boastful. There's no doubt that what Israel had was precious, but much of it was only a foreshadow. Paul said that the Jews had the old covenant, but the Lord has established a new covenant. The Lord is the mediator of the better covenant. What would you choose, the sacrifices of animals from the old covenant, or His perfect sacrifice that's once for all?

The Israelites of the old covenant had Jerusalem and the temple. Today, we have the heavenly New Jerusalem. This is different from the past, when they went to Mount Sinai with fear and trembling, not being able to receive salvation. Today, as the Bible says, we **“have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.”**

About

TREASURES FOR THE SOUL

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” (Acts 20:32)

Paul loved the brothers and sisters in Ephesus! However, he could not always stay with them. He longed for them to understand God’s words and to be able to stand firm in the truth.

The Lord has given us precious truths. We want to share these truths in an organized way by producing short messages with clear topics. This way, we hope the listener can absorb the truths more easily. We hope to help brothers and sisters to build their foundation so that we may all know God and His purpose more deeply. Both audio messages and notes are available for download.

Brother Daniel Yu has shared with us the abundant enlightenment that he received from the Lord. We translated his messages with the aim to share them with non-Chinese brothers and sisters. This way we can learn and progress together, and receive the same blessings.



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