

THE ALTAR AND THE RAINBOW

Genesis 8:20; 9:12-16

There is a remarkably close connection between the altar and the rainbow. The same connection exists between the death and resurrection of Christ.

The altar speaks of sacrifice, the rainbow of promise and assurance. Christ died for our sins, and He rose again for our justification.

The Altar

It was an altar built unto the Lord (8:20). The first thing that Noah did in coming forth was to recognize that God's place was the first place.

For the salvation of his household Noah was thankful. But he did not worship the ark as a superstition person would have done. In fact, the ark is never heard of again.

Noah worshiped the Lord God, because besides Him there is no other Saviour (Isaiah 43:11).

The altar is a place of worship and sacrifice. We put God first when we accept Christ's death for our own salvation. As a redeemed people, saved by grace, our worship and praises are acceptable to God on behalf of Saviour's sacrifice.

The Offering

It was a burnt offering of "***every clean beast*** (8:20)." Every clean beast means the combination of every creature excellency. This suggests a perfect offering.

When Christ offered Himself a sacrifice unto God it was an offering without spot or blemish. His was the Holy One. As the perfect sin-atonement, burnt offering Christ was totally consumed for our sake.

The Rainbow

The “rainbow of promise” comes after the altar of sacrifice. Ratification of God’s covenant with Noah was signified by a rainbow.

But notice, it reads: ***the rainbow shall be in the cloud***. In fact, it comes to our attention three times (9:13,14,16). The cloud should remind us of Calvary. The cloud must be understood as the thick, heavy, dark cloud of judgment, discharging itself on the scared head of Christ, our sacrificial Lamb.

A cloud so dark, that even ***at midday, there was darkness all over the earth***, Luke tells us (Lk.23:44).

When the dying Savior amid the darkness cried out, ***“It is finished”*** (John 19:30), God’s everlasting covenant was ratified with His precious blood.

But in the heaviest cloud that ever gathered, the most brilliant and glorious rainbow would appear. The bright eternal beams of God’s eternal love were shining through that awful gloom and reflected in the cloud. On the third day, the Lord Jesus rose from the death in glorious victory!

As all the colors of nature are in the rainbow, so all the promises of God to the believer are in Christ. Every divine perfection was manifested in the resurrection glory of Jesus.

The rainbow is an emblem that proves His grace and mercy. Now we never see a complete rainbow. It is always broken at the bottom, and there is a space there where there is no color. So, none of us ever see all the grace of God for our lives, all His goodness and mercy, and all the perfect plan He has for our lives.

The rainbow of Rev.4:3 is a complete one. There is no break in it. All the colors have disappeared, except the green. Green is the colour which represents praise and worship.

The complete rainbow tells us that in the next life we shall see and understand all the goodness of God to us, all His grace in dealing with us, all His measureless mercy which preserved us. Because of this we shall spend eternity in adoring praise and worship.

To God be all the glory!