



Introduction to “The First Temple: United Monarchical Period”

Review of Previous Article

About 1000 BCE, David and his scholars brought together existing records, oral traditions and legends in the context of a relational self-consciousness that had never before existed. Now those records, traditions and legends could be retold and reshaped in view of a new human self-consciousness. In the Tetrateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers) the Davidic scholars determined to portray human selfhood, not as a possession, but as a relational consequence of the “otherness” of God himself and of other beings. Furthermore, conscious human selfhood was still in the process of “becoming.” YHWH himself determined to constitute such selfhood through ultimate, universal and relational equality among human beings. In instituting democratic biblical law, YHWH therefore moved mankind from the perverse darkness of predatory (possessive) power structures to the dawn of mankind’s self-conscious relationality with God, with each other and, consequently, with oneself.

Overview of This Article

The sanctuary services of the Old Testament are not about ceremonially shuttling “sin” around the apartments and courts of the First Temple. Rather, they are about God’s creative/covenantal actions on behalf of mankind. They convey YHWH’s ultimate *kenosis* — his self-emptying, self-limiting, self-giving. They communicate YHWH’s determination to be humanly embodied and born as the Logos (Word), then to become anointed as the messianic Human One and to effect a transformed Creation. Also, they convey a reciprocal promise for mankind’s future — a promise embracing the creation of a transformed humanity.

In light of the One who was to come, it should now be clear that YHWH was remarkably present and active in Old Testament history. Yet that history was

an encoded history. It embraced symbols and metaphors that could only be truly appreciated in light of their “fillment” in Jesus Christ. Then that which had been present to mankind in the shadows of symbol and metaphor became present to mankind in reality. Tragically, however, the true meaning and significance of that history have been largely obscured. Because the backdrop of Old Testament history is little understood or appreciated, the history of Jesus Christ is likewise little understood or appreciated. But the time has come for history’s unveiling — for a new and true appreciation of YHWH’s human self-creation and manifestation as Jesus Christ.

Copyright © 2001 Worldview Publications