**R824 - Rumination for November 15, 2020 by K.C. Ung**

The **T**heme: **Worship Afar off and Worship Near**[berita-bethel-ung.com](http://www.berita-bethel-ung.com/)

The **T**ext: *- He said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD…and worship ye* ***afar off.***Exo. 24:1

The **T**hots:

1. **Israel to Worship God from Afar Off.**
2. The **C**ommand to Moses to **C**ome up to the Lord to Worship Him. Exo. 24:1

*He said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu,*

*and seventy of the elders of Israel; and* ***worship ye afar off****.*

1. The **I**nhibition **I**mposed: Exo. 24:2

*Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh;*

*neither shall the people go up with him.*

1. The **C**ommitment of the **C**ommunity: Exo. 24:3

*Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.*

1. The **C**ovenant **C**onfirmed by Blood: Exo. 24:4-8

*Moses wrote all the words of the LORD…he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.*

*And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.*

1. The **C**ommandments given to Moses, and his **C**ommission. Exo. 24:12

*The LORD said unto Moses, Come up to Me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.*

1. The people’s **C**ollusion in worshipping the golden **C**alf and God turning them away. Exo. 32:8

*They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto.*

* Thus, *they shall* ***not******come near*** *unto Me…****nor to come near*** *to any of My holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.* Eze. 44:13
1. **Gentiles were Afar Off –** ***ye who sometimes were far off* Eph. 2:11-13**
2. How the **G**entiles were **G**rouped by Israel, …***C****alled the* ***C****ircumcision in the flesh made by hands*
3. They were not **C**ircumcised **G**entiles: *Gentiles in the flesh who are called Uncircumcision* 2:11
4. They *were without* ***C****hrist* and *without* ***G****od in the world:* 2:12
5. *They were not* **C**itizens *from the* ***C****ommonwealth of Israel.* 2:12
6. They were ***S****trangers from the* ***C****ovenants of promise*  2:12
7. They were **C**ategorised as *without hope*. 2:12
8. How the Gentile **C**hristians were Regarded by **G**od: 2:13
9. ***In*** *time past…at that time…* 2:11, 12
10. Their **S**ituation: they *were far off… you which were afar off* 2:13, 17
11. They were like **S**heep **S**trayed Far from the **S**hepherd. Isa. 53:6a

*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.*

1. *But now* ***In*** *Christ Jesus* Eph. 2:13
2. *Ye…are* ***made nigh*** *by the blood of Christ.*
3. *and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* Isa. 53:6b
4. **B**ecause of the **B**lood of Jesus… *Ye…are made nigh by the blood of Christ.* Eph. 2:13
5. We are now ***B****rethren* in Christ to have ***B****oldness* to **W**orship God from Near: Heb. 10:19

*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest…*

1. *By the* ***B****lood of Jesus…by a new and living* ***W****ay, which He hath consecrated for us,*

*through the veil, that is to say, His flesh;* 10:20

1. *And having an high priest over the house of God…* Heb. 10:21
2. *Let us* ***draw near…***Heb. 10:22
* *with a true heart in full assurance of faith,*
* *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,*
* *and our bodies washed with pure water.*
1. **We Can now draw near to Worship God. Jn. 4:22-24**

 *Ye* (the Samaritans)***worship*** *ye know not what: we* (the Jews) *know what we* ***worship****…*

 *But the hour cometh, and now is,*

 *when the true worshippers* (Jews and Gentiles in Christ) *shall* ***worship*** *the Father in spirit and in truth:*

 *for the Father seeketh such to* ***worship*** *Him.*

 *God is a Spirit: and they that* ***worship*** *Him must* ***worship*** *Him in spirit and in truth.*

*Give unto God most high glory and honor, Come with your offerings and humbly draw near;*

 *In holy beauty now worship Jehovah, Tremble before Him with godly fear.* The Psalter

**REFLECTIONS FOR THE WEEK R. 824**

1. For this year, when the Covid\_19 pandemic struck Penang, I was restricted to walking along Gurney Drive for my morning exercise because of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) set up in relation to the Movement Control Order (MCO), and lately further enhanced to a higher level of conditional restriction of movements (CMCO) because of a drastic surge of new cases into the four-figure group.

Along Gurney Drive (a beach promenade) a shrine under a tree on the other side of the road had been set up with an altar apparently with no one to manage it officially as far as I can see. But there are definitely volunteers who come regularly to see that the shrine is kept clean and “sacred” for its deity with a clean altar and a well-kept image for their followers to worship as well as fresh sacrifices of fruits, etc. on the plates before it.

As I walked past it on the other side of the road, often I would see drivers in a car stopping by for a few moments, motor-cyclists pausing a while in front of the shrine, and walkers and passers-by standing for a moment pr two in front of the altar, lifting up their hands to their chests, murmuring a few prayers and wishes probably for the deities’ blessings and then going on with their journey soon after. In almost all cases these worshippers would just go off to carry on with their normal lives being least affected by their worship experience. It was sometimes an act to ask forgiveness from the deity in case they had caused offence unknowingly.

From my experience, before I became a Christian, I would do what these people did also. I would pray before the deity, and around it for fear of missing out any spirit lurking nearby, asking for their forgiveness in case I offended any without knowing. With that I passed on my prayers for myself to the deity, and would continue with living out my life as normally as I could without what I did affecting me in any way after that. It was just a ritualistic pious act without involving a relationship in any way.

This incident at Gurney Drive and my own personal experience remind me of Paul’s experience when he wrote: (Acts 17:22-23)

*Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.*

Could these passers-by at the shrine be worshipping the same *unknown god* that Paul was referring to?

Do you know the God Whom you Worship? Do you worship Him out of ignorance, fear, asking for things and blessings, so that you can have peace (from living in this stressful world), prosperity (in wealth and riches), protection (from the onslaughts of Covid\_19), provision (for your needs), etc. etc. – all centred on yourself and what you want, and nothing as an act of worship of God, for Who He is and offering yourself as a sacrifice for His Service – the great difference between such worship and Christian worship? Is the God you worship, you do so ritually or in reverence of Him Who loved you and gave His Son, Jesus for you? Why do you worship God today, if ever you do so? **REFLECT.**

1. Is the God you worship distant, impersonal and afar off?

Or is He near and personal, being involved in every department of your life as well as in the decisions you make day by day?

Can you say like…

 Paul - *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*? Phil. 1:21

*According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing*

*I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also*

*Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.* Phil. 1:20

 Is Christ this near, real and personal to you? **REFLECT**.

**POINTS TO PONDER: *D****o you know your God enough*

 *To involve Him in every* ***D****ecision of yours and in all* ***D****epartments of your life?*