

Special Grace Ceremony (Part 2)

By Christian Nseka

Sunday, October 23, 2016

Thank you all for coming today. And thank you Pastor Tanya for asking me to elaborate on the sermon that I gave a few weeks ago on special grace. I apologize in advance for the long sermon.

My hope today is that, at the end of this sermon, we can all have an idea as to why we need to register and participate in the Cheon Il Guk (CIG) Special Grace Ceremony, and mostly, why our True Mother asked all of us to drink the CIG Holy Wine and receive the CIG Holy Items box. Because this sermon is limited by my tiny understanding of the providence, I pray that your personal relationship with God can help you understand more than will be conveyed here. So, let's begin.

In the Bible, there are several records of the Israelites drinking water. Two of these instances stand out because the water the Israelites drank didn't come from a river or rain. It came from a rock. The Divine Principle says, "When Moses struck the rock and gave the people water [at Rephidim], this laid the foundation upon which he could receive the tablets of stone and build the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle" (EDP, p. 244). It also states further, "When at Kadesh-barnea Moses struck the rock twice, the dispensation to start the journey to Canaan, which was to have been based on the rock, was not brought to pass" (EDP, p. 259).

Speaking of tablets, sometime last month, I heard my daughter exclaim, "What! Moses had tablets!" Then she looked at me and said, "Dad, how was it possible for Moses to have tablets?" She asked me this because she was reading the Bible and found out that Moses had two tablets. I explained to her that those tablets were not digital.

So, what can we deduce from the Divine Principle as quoted here? From the Divine Principle quotes that we just read, we can deduce that those two instances marked a pivotal moment in each phase of the providence: Rephidim was a pivotal moment within the Second National Course to Restore Canaan and Kadesh Barnea within the Third National Course to Restore Canaan.

Have we ever asked ourselves, “Why did God make them drink from the rock? Couldn’t God just make it rain?” Fortunately for us, we have the Divine Principle.

The Divine Principle explains why God made them drink from the rock rather than make it rain. According to the Divine Principle, each rock that the Israelites drank from represented Adam. In other words, it represented the Messiah. What did Jesus say? According to the Bible, Jesus said, “...but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14). So, their drinking water from the rock was synonymous to their receiving life from the Messiah, the new Adam. In other words, their drinking the water at Rephidim and Kadesh Barnea had to do with more than just their being thirsty. It is my understanding that, through their drinking of the water, God was actually reclaiming them as His people. It was a condition, a spiritual condition conducted physically, might I say, for the providence at hand. God was preparing them, reclaiming them, re/cleansing them for the providence that was ahead. What is it that God reclaimed for?

God reclaimed them as His by re/cleansing them through the water from the rock for the providence of establishing or claiming a nation in the name of God down the road. Using our Unification terminology, we can say that God reclaimed or cleansed them in the hope that they will establish Cheon Il Guk.

According to the Bible, the first time God gave the Israelites water from the rock was at Rephidim. The second time was at Kadesh Barnea. Imagine if someone said, “Water from the rock again? I’m not drinking it. I’m thirsty, but I don’t like the taste of it.” Or, “I’m not drinking it. I don’t see the point in doing it again.”

Drinking water from the rock in the desert was like a special grace ceremony for the Israelites. This is because they were receiving grace from God. God was willing to overlook the mistakes the people made in order to establish a condition for the success of the providence at hand. Whether or not the people understood it is another story. Today, the same thing is happening in the providence.

Through our True Parents, God is preparing us for the providence at hand. Through our True Parents, God wants us to maintain our identity of

God's children. Through the recent Special Grace Ceremony, another attribute was added to our identity: that of CIG individuals or CIG families. We are Cheon Il Guk builders.

This is not the first special grace ceremony that we have participated in. And probably will not be the last one either. We have done other special grace ceremonies before. Each one is different of course. This one is different because it deals with the providence of Cheon Il Guk which is upon us. We are four years away from the year 2020—Vision 2020. What is it that heaven wants from us?

It is obvious in the Bible that most of the Israelites went back to “business as usual” mode of operation after drinking the water. What do I mean by that? They went back to their way of living—Happy when everything was going their way, and blaming God when things didn't go their way. What is “business as usual” for us? What is “business as usual” to you? Are we going to go back to “business as usual” after having participated in the CIG Special Grace Ceremony? What type of attitude are we going to have after having participated in the CIG Special Grace Ceremony? This is something that we need to think about. Are we going to value the new attribute that has been added to our identity or are we going to lay it to waste?

True Mother has asked that everybody—First Gen, Second Gen, Third Gen and single members drink the CIG Holy Wine and receive CIG Holy Items. Why? Why is it so important that everybody should participate in this particular Special Grace Ceremony—the CIG Special Grace Ceremony?

Let us begin with the Holy Wine. Why should everybody drink the CIG Holy Wine?

We have something that no other religion has. Yes, we have many things, but here, I'm talking about the Holy Wine. Take Christianity for instance. Two thousand years ago at the Last Supper, Jesus broke bread with the apostles. They ate bread and drank wine. The bread represented Jesus' body and the wine his blood. Today in Christianity, the practice of breaking bread continues. One truth, however, is that the bread that Christians eat or the communion that they take has no physical connection to the bread that Jesus broke two thousand years ago. And the wine they drink has no physical connection to the one that Jesus shared with the apostles two thousand years ago. Let me explain what I mean.

What happens in Christianity is that a clergy will pray over bread bought from a store to make it holy in the name of Jesus. He/she will pray over wine bought from a store to make it holy in the name of Jesus. All that is good, but, doing so only connects this bread or wine spiritually to the bread or wine of the Last Supper. It does not connect them physically. In other words, doing so only makes the bread sanctified bread and the wine sanctified wine. Hence, the sanctified bread represents the bread that Jesus ate and the sanctified wine the wine that Jesus drank 2000 years ago. This means that they physically do not have anything connecting them to either the bread or wine consumed by Jesus 2000 years ago. In them, there is no trace of the bread that Jesus broke or the wine that he drank two thousand years ago. Hence, there is spiritual connection rather than physical connection. This small reality by itself, brothers and sisters, supports the Unification teaching of spiritual salvation through Jesus. It also underscores the necessity of the Second Advent.

The Holy Wine that we consume in the Unification Movement, however, is different. It is different in that it is physically connected to the Holy Wine that our True Parents drank during their Blessing. How? The difference is in the content of the Holy Wine and in the way it is multiplied, provided that it is multiplied properly. In other words, the Unification Church Holy Wine has in it the trace of the Holy Wine that our True Parents drank. This is why, please, make sure that you follow the recommended steps when multiplying these Holy Items. Multiply only what you are supposed to multiply.

All the seed CIG Holy Items that we received, be it for the Holy Wine, Holy Salt, etc., connect to the original Holy Wine, Holy Salt, etc. that are in our True Parents' possession. This means that, regardless of the brand of the wine that was purchased from a store, the CIG Holy Wine we drank during the CIG Special Grace Ceremony is physically connected to the CIG Holy Wine that our True Parents drank. This is only possible because a portion of the seed CIG Holy Wine was combined with the newly purchased wine. Just praying over wine purchased from a store, either in the name of Jesus or True Parents, does not give it the effectiveness of *Holy Wine*. All the required steps must be followed, including adding seed Holy Wine.

So, because we drank the Holy Wine that has the seed that came from our True Parents, because we drank the Holy Wine that has the same content

with the Holy Wine that our True Parents drank, we are connected to our True Parents. It is not a spiritual connection alone; it is also a physical connection because the content of the Holy Wine that is in True Father's body and True Mother's body is the same content of the Holy Wine that is in my body and your body. Aju! This is a very special connection that only we can claim. Neither the Israelites nor the contemporaries of Jesus could claim such a connection. No existing devout Christian can claim such a connection centering on Jesus. Only those of us who believe in the True Parents can claim it. Furthermore, not God, not the True Parents, and definitely not Satan can break this connection. Only we ourselves can break it.

With the simple gesture of partaking of the Holy Wine, we have been cleansed and claimed by our True Parents as their flesh and blood for the sake of God's providence.

After drinking the water from the rock, the Israelites could make a similar claim only symbolically. After drinking wine that has been sanctified by a clergy, Christians can make a similar claim only spiritually. However, after drinking the Holy Wine, we can make such a claim substantially. Now, this is my understanding as to why True Mother wants everybody to drink the CIG Holy Wine and participate in the Special Grace Ceremony before next year's Foundation Day.

That was about the Holy Wine. Let us now consider the CIG Holy Items box that we received.

Each family received one box. Single First Gen members who participated in the ceremony also received a box. To me, the box of CIG Holy Items has a similar function to the blood of the lamb that the Israelites put on their doorposts when God dealt the last blow to the Egyptians (cf. Exodus 12:7, 12-13).

According to the Bible, every house that had blood on its doorpost was spared. It didn't matter whether it was the house of a devout Israelite or that of a non-believing Israelite. As long as there was blood on their doorpost, the whole household was protected. I see the box of CIG Holy Items to have a similar function. Of course the box that we received cannot be mounted on doorposts, but it is to be kept respectfully in an appropriate place.

In what is now considered part one of this sermon, I used the analogy of E-Z Pass. Let's go back to E-Z Pass. In a sense, having the Holy Items box in our possession is like having an E-Z Pass tag, also called transponder, in one's possession. When you have an E-Z Pass tag in your vehicle, for instance, it doesn't matter where you put it—fastened to the windshield, stored in the glove compartment, in your pocket, or under the seat—an E-Z Pass reader, also called antenna, will still detect and read it. So likewise, it doesn't matter where you put the CIG Holy Items box that you received—in display in your living room, hidden in the closet, or under the bed—heaven will still be able to detect and identify it.

Every first born who was inside a house with the blood of the lamb on its doorpost was spared. Everybody who is riding in a vehicle that has an E-Z Pass tag that is in good standing receives the benefit of being in a vehicle with an E-Z Pass. However, all these benefits do not exclude individual responsibilities.

Let's say that you are driving from New York City to Ontario, Canada. Before you reach the U.S.-Canada border, there is an E-Z Pass toll booth. Everybody in the vehicle will receive the benefit of the vehicle having an E-Z Pass tag. Meaning that because they are in the vehicle, they will pass the toll booth because the vehicle is in order: it has an E-Z Pass tag that is current and valid. If they didn't have E-Z Pass, then the driver would have to stop, find cash or credit card, pay, and probably wait for the change or receipt. With EZ-Pass, you don't have to do anything—not reaching into your pocket or purse for money. Because with EZ-Pass you and your vehicle are in the system. Similarly, if you registered for the CIG Special Grace Ceremony as a family, you and your family are recorded in the heavenly registry. If you registered as a single member, then you have been recorded in the heavenly registry as such at the moment. This is why there is registration. If you haven't completed your registration, find out what is missing.

Now, after passing the toll booth, and crossing the Niagara River, comes the border checkpoint. At this checkpoint, each passenger's identification will be checked. Anybody without proper credentials will be refused entry into Canada. In a sense, passing the toll booth is equivalent to a family's responsibility as a whole. This is because it is the vehicle that is the focus; not the occupants. This also means that as long as one qualified

person fulfills the requirements, the whole family will benefit. However, clearing the immigration checkpoint is equivalent to fulfilling individuals' responsibilities. This is because, at this point, it is each individual who is the focus; not the vehicle.

As you can see, the ideal is for everybody in the family to drink the CIG Holy Wine and fill out the Resolution Form during the CIG Special Grace Ceremony. However, it may just happen that not all the family members drank the CIG Holy Wine and/or filled out the resolution form. What will happen when we reach the providential checkpoint? Are those of us with the right credentials going to leave our family members who don't have the right credentials behind or are we going to stay behind with them and not move forward? Who is going to blame whom?

So, did everyone get a sense as to why True Mother wants everybody to drink the CIG Holy Wine and receive the CIG Holy Items box?

The Divine Principle says, "The Israelites proved faithless in the dispensation to receive the tablets of stone, and hence to build the Tabernacle, but because they stood on the foundation of having drunk the water from the rock at Rephidim—the symbolic root of the tablets—they were given a second chance" (EDP, p. 250). This means that their drinking water from the rock at Rephidim served as the foundation upon which the providence to establish the Arc of the Covenant and the Tabernacle rested on. Furthermore, it marked a demarcation point, a point at which the providence emerged to a different level. It also marked a threshold that God used to prevent the Israelites from falling further back in their faith or lack thereof. I see the CIG Special Grace to have a similar meaning. This Special Grace Ceremony marks a threshold that serves as a bedrock that will keep us from going further below. Every Special Grace Ceremony has this function. The CIG Special Grace Ceremony can be considered as a demarcation point for the CIG providence. Whether we believe it or not, whether we know it or not, we affect our fate when we participate or don't participate in a special grace ceremony.

The Israelites thought that they were drinking water from the rock because they complained of thirst. They didn't think anything more of it. However, as elucidated in the Divine Principle, God attributed a deeper meaning to their drinking water from the rock than they themselves could have fathomed. Today, many of us have participated in the CIG Special

Grace Ceremony without thinking anything more of it. Have we thought about the meaning that God and True Parents have given to it? Have we ever thought about the sacrifice that God and True Parents have gone through to establish the foundation to hold the CIG Special Grace Ceremony? Are we going to go back to business as usual or are we going to use this Special Grace Ceremony as our bedrock and stepping stone to becoming individuals and families of Cheon Il Guk?

So, did everyone get a sense as to why True Mother wants all of us to participate in the CIG Special Grace Ceremony?

Everything that God does—whether with and for the Israelites when they were in the desert, through Jesus, or through the True Parents—is for the sake of claiming victory over Satan. The CIG Special Grace Ceremony that we did recently is no different. It is for the sake of claiming victory in 2020.

One more thing before I close. Not only that we are claimed by our True Parents as those belonging to God through the CIG Special Grace Ceremony, not only that our residences are claimed by our True Parents as Cheon Il Guk residences by our having the Holy Items box in there, our burial plots will also be claimed by our True Parents as Cheon Il Guk burial plots. This is possible because some of the Cheon Il Guk Holy Earth that we received is to be mixed with the dirt that will be thrown on top of the casket during our burial. In other words, our burial sites will be connected to the True Parents' burial sites. This merit of the age is possible only on the foundation of the Wonjeon Ceremony of our True Father and the jeongseong conditions that our True Mother established for the last 3 years. This is a grace like no other in human history. Nobody before us received such a grace. We are very fortunate to live in this moment and have received this grace. This, I believe, is also why our True Mother wants all of us to participate in the CIG Special Grace Ceremony.

For this reason, I personally think that it will be a good idea to once again sanctify our residences—apartment or house—this time, with the Cheon Il Guk Holy Salt. Think about it.

One thing we need to remember is that God and True Parents are striving to establish God-centered nations. For this, they need people who are of God. Just like God claimed the Israelites as His people, today, through the CIG Special Grace Ceremony in which all of us have participated or will

participate in soon, God is claiming us as His people of CIG. He is claiming us as His children who are CIG individuals.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Parent, we pray that we take the right steps that will help us become individuals and families of Cheon Il Guk. I report this prayer in my name Christian Nseka of the Christian and Nikki Nseka Blessed Central Family, and in the name of all the Blessed Central Families gathered here. Aju!