

8. Jesus and the Tabernacle - Part 2

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So far we went over the Curtains of the Outer Court, the Door of the Outer Court, the Alter of Burnt Offering, the Bronze Laver, the Outer Coverings with badger skin, the Coverings of Ram Skin Dyed in Red, the Coverings of Goat's Hair, the Cherubim Embroidered Covering, and the Boards and Bars of the Sanctuary. They all reflect Jesus the Savior and Lord in one way or another.

Let's continue in this awesome study of the connection between Jesus and the Tabernacle.

A. THE DOOR OF THE HOLY PLACE - Ex 26:36-37

The Door of the Holy Place is remarkably similar to the Door of the Outer Court. It has the same coloring: blue, purple, scarlet and the white of the fine twined linen.

This door is reinforced by the presence in front of the curtain of the five golden pillars that give it support. The pillars were made from acacia wood overlaid with gold. The beauty is gold, the structure is wood. This speaks the mystery of Christ's Person.

1) **Gold:** The first mention of gold in the Bible is in Genesis 2:11-12. Because it is precious, gold stands for 'divine'.

2) **Wood:** Because wood grows out of the earth, wood stands for 'human', as in Psalm 1:1-3.

At the feet of the pillars were sockets of bronze, again reminding us of God's judgement.

Hebrews 2:7-8 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

The bronze sockets for the pillars speak to us clearly of total judgement. Such is the strength and magnitude of Christ's victory on the cross.

B. THE SHOWBREAD TABLE - Ex 25:23-30

The Showbread Table was placed on the right-hand side of the Holy Place, the North side, a little way from the gold-covered Boards. It was not very big: approximately 3 ft long, 1.5 ft wide, 2.25 ft high. It was made from acacia wood overlaid with gold.

The Showbread Table had a crown made of gold, unlike the Altar of Burnt Offering. Here in the Holy Place, all is about life, food, light and fragrant incense. In the Holy Place, we see Jesus "crowned with glory and honor".

On the Showbread Table were placed twelve loaves of unleavened bread, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The loaves were replaced every week freshly on the Sabbath. Jesus as the Bread of God who came down from heaven to give LIFE to the world, crowned with glory and honor without leavens which represents sins.

The loaves of unleavened bread remind us of the Lord Jesus.

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

The Showbread is also called the Bread of the Presence. To eat Christ as the Bread of Life, we must be in the presence of God, who is Spirit.

C. THE LAMPSTAND - Ex 25:31-39

Two objects of furniture, the Lampstand and the Mercy Seat, were made entirely of gold. The Lampstand was the perfect symbol of Christ as the Son of God. The Lampstand was handmade, beaten out of a single piece, and was highly ornamented. There was a central shaft with three branches on a side, making seven branches in all. The bowls were to be formed like almonds in blossom. On each of these was placed the olive oil lamps.

The Lampstand was lit permanently, to give light inside the Holy Place. The priests in the Tabernacle were responsible, evening and morning, for topping up the seven lamps with oil and trimming their wicks. Therefore, the Lampstand points us to Jesus Christ Himself, the light of the whole world.

John 8:12 I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

There were no measurements given for the Lampstand of pure gold. That which speaks of His deity cannot be measured.

One technical point about the Lampstand is of interest – it was a lightholder. The olive oil lamps were placed upon the Lampstand. The Lampstand supported the flame, but the flame revealed the beauties of the golden Lampstand. The olive oil lamp is a Scriptural symbol of the Holy Spirit. As the olive oil lamps were supported by the Lampstand and they in turn revealed the beauties of the Lampstand, Christ is the foundation and support for the work of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit in turn reveals the beauties of Christ.

D. GOLDEN INCENSE ALTAR - Ex 30:1-10

The Golden Incense Alter was the place where incense was burned. Sacrifice of any kind was forbidden. But the only incense that God prescribed could be offered. The altar was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was 1.5 ft x 1.5 ft x 3ft. It speaks of Christ again.

Incense is a symbol of prayer and praise in the Bible.

Revelation 5:8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

The Golden Incense Alter is first of all a figure of Christ as our great Intercessor.

There were two articles of furniture which spoke of His work in Heaven for us: the Bronze Laver and the Golden Incense Alter. The Bronze Laver speaks of His work in cleansing His own in preparation for worship, and the Golden Incense Alter speaks of His intercessory work when He protects and perfects us.

A contrast of the two altars at this point will throw light upon our subject. The Golden Incense Alter is where God dealt with a saint. The Altar of Burnt Offering is where He

dealt with a sinner. The Golden Incense Alter speaks of Heaven. The Altar of Burnt Offering speaks of earth. The Golden Incense Alter has to do with holiness. The Altar of Burnt Offering has to do with sin. The Golden Incense Alter, as a figure, represented what Christ does for us in Heaven. The Altar of Burnt Offering, as a figure, represented what Christ did on earth.

There is one final word about this altar. Aaron was instructed to offer a “perpetual incense” upon it. This reminds us of the injunction of Paul to the Thessalonians, “Pray without ceasing.”

Again, “Strange incense” was forbidden to be offered. Also, the formula for the incense was not to be duplicated. The strange Incense speaks of any attempt to worship God which is contrary to His Word.

E. THE VEIL - Ex 26:31-37

The Veil was the third curtain which separated a holy God from sinner man. It separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. The Veil was made using the four colors blue, purple, scarlet and white fine linen in which had embroidered cherubim of gold that correspond with the four Gospels. We have seen these four colors previously at the Doors. It was made of fine-twined linen,

Hebrews 10:19-20 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the Veil, that is, His flesh,

The Veil stood silently reminding man that God would be manifest in human flesh. The Veil was a prophetic picture of the humanity of Christ – a silent symbol of the Incarnation.

As long as the Veil hung in its place it separated God and man. The sinner could come no farther than the Door of the Outer Court. From there to the Holy Place, only priests served. But the priests were forbidden to pass the Veil. Only the high priest could come past the Veil, then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. But he could never enter without blood for the Atonement. All this revealed to man how far his sin had separated him from God.

When Christ died, the Veil was torn from top to bottom, giving us a symbolic way to God. But it required nothing short of the death of Christ. Thus, the purpose of the incarnation is revealed. Christ did not come in human flesh to set us an example, or to teach us about God, or to straighten out a system of ethics. He did all this, but the primary purpose of His coming in human form was to offer that body as a sacrifice for the sin of the world.

F. THE ARK OF GOD - Ex 25:10-22

Now we have come into the Holy of Holies, the most important area of the Tabernacle. As we come in closer to the dwelling place of God, the emphasis is changed from the work of Christ to the Person of Christ. There were two articles of furniture in the Holy of Holies, the Ark and the Mercy Seat.

The chest, measuring 3.75 ft wide 2.25 ft deep and 2.25 ft high, was made of acacia wood, overlaid both inside and outside with gold. It was thus a true symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, setting forth both His Deity, represented by the gold, and His humanity, represented by the wood as we have learned. It was the symbolism pointing to Christ as the God-Man.

The Ark was not merely an empty box. It contained three items which are mentioned in Hebrews 9:4.

Hebrews 9:4 which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant;

The tablet of the covenant speak of the Kingship of Christ. This earth needs a ruler, man needs a king, and some day He is coming as "King of kings and Lord of lords." It also reminded us the law that shows our sins.

The pot of manna speaks of Christ as prophet. He not only spoke of God, but He was God's message to men. At the same time the Manna is representing the Word of God.

Aaron's rod in the ark speaks of the work of Christ as Priest. The prophet spoke for God before men. The priest spoke for men before God. Let's not forget that it reminds us the resurrection of Jesus Christ as we remember that the dead wooden stick brought forth a life of a flower bud.

These trifold functions describe the office of Christ as Mediator.

G. THE MERCY SEAT - Ex 25:10-22

There were two articles of furniture in the Holy of holies. The appearance of them seemed as one, but they have two distinctive identifications. The Mercy Seat was placed on top for the Ark.

I am confident that the Mercy Seat was the more important than anything in the tabernacle. In the instructions God interjects this revealing declaration.

Ex 25:22 And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the Mercy Seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

The Mercy Seat is where God communed with man. There is no anthropomorphic notion that God sat upon the Mercy Seat. He simply made His presence between the cherubim to meet Moses and the high priests once a year. The gold of Mercy Seat, of course, represents the Deity of Christ.

Heb 2:17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

The word, translated "propitiation" is in the Greek the same word for Mercy Seat. Christ is the Mercy Seat today for the world.

We find this picture of the Mercy Seat in the New Testament too.

John 20:12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

H. THE ISRAELITE CAMP LAYOUT

If we were able to fly over the Israel camp in the wilderness, we would find a very interesting formation of set up for their camp. It was not something they decided however they feel like, but by a pacific instruction from God that is recorded in Numbers 1.

The way God designated each tribe's position shapes a formation of a cross. Not only that, but we also find that each main tribe - Ephraim, Dan, Reuben and Judah represent particular animals.

Ephraim represents Ox which coincide with the Book of Mark; Reuben represents Man for the Book of Luke; Dan represents Eagle for the Book of John and the tribe Judah represents Lion, of course, for the Book of Matthew.

If you have read the Book of Ezekiel, you would remember the first chapter that talks about the living creatures in Ezekiel 1:1-12. Ezekiel had a vision of God and he saw these creatures with four faces of each flying around the Throne of God. Each one had faces of Ox, Man, Eagle and Lion with two wing stretched out to heaven in reverence and two wings to cover their bodies as expression of submission. Many Bible commentators believe that they are cherubim. This incredible engineering of God doesn't stop there. You can go to the fourth chapter of Revelation, you will find the description of the scene around the Throne of God. Guess who are flying around the Throne and cry out, "Holy, holy, holy"? Yes, these same four living creatures.

I. APPLICATIONS

1) We must remember that the entire Bible is incredibly engineered to let us know that Jesus is God and the Savior and the only Way to get to the Father.

2) As we have learned, the tabernacle was the foreshadow of Jesus Christ and the copy of the heavenly one.

Heb 8:4-5 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

Heb 9:11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.