

## Class Notes, Exodus -- Appendix # 2

### THE TABERNACLE

It is important to realize that the Tabernacle was a significant part of the Law of Moses. While the Ten Commandments "written and engraven on stone" was "The Law" in the strictest sense, the instructions following, and flowing from it, concerning the judgments, and penalties necessary to its enforcement, were also part of the "Law of Moses." So also were the sacrificial system and the Tabernacle where those sacrifices were carried out. When Stephen accused Israel with the words, "[You] have received the Law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it" the immediate context has in view the rejection of the Tabernacle.

Israel first rejected the Tabernacle in the wilderness. They took up the tabernacle of Moloch instead, worshipping the host of heaven (Acts 7:42, 43). Stephen pointed out that the Tabernacle had been appointed by God, as He spoke to Moses. He reminded them that it was brought by the fathers into the Land (evidently intended to continue as the center of their worship); and that with only the Tabernacle God had effectively worked on their behalf (Acts. 7:45).

He then introduced what he seems to have considered a second rejection of the Tabernacle, replacing it with a more ornate, impressive and permanent Temple. This rejection was not wicked and blameworthy, as was that in the wilderness. God assured David that it was good it had been in his heart -- but it was David's plan, not God's (2 Sam. 7:7). It seems God accepted David's suggestion as an alternate plan, although it rested on David's idea that the Tabernacle was not a fitting place for God to place His name and symbolize His presence. God gave David the design for the Temple and, after Solomon constructed it, He placed His name there and filled it with the glory of His presence. But, in New Testament times, zeal for the Temple had become part of the excuse for rejecting the anti-type of the Tabernacle, -- Christ "tabernacling" among men (John 1:14 -- Greek). This is brought out in Matt. 26:61; Acts 6:13, 14.

It is most interesting that when the writer to the Hebrews wanted to speak of the typology of the place of worship he ignored the Temple and went back to the Tabernacle for that typology (Heb. 9:1 - 5). The footnote on 1 Kings 6:1 in the 1917 edition of the Scofield Bible reads, ***"The typology of the temple, if indeed it has any typical significance, is most obscure and difficult. The NT invariably expounds the typology of the tabernacle, not the temple. --"***

While the typology set forth in the Tabernacle is very extensive, the following major points may serve as a sample -- hopefully creating a desire to study it more thoroughly.

The Tabernacle as a whole was divided into three parts: the outer court, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place (the "Holy of Holies"). It has been suggested that these may indicate the three parts of man (the tricotomy view). The outer court would represent the body, the Holy Place the soul, and the Holy of Holies the spirit. As man approaches God the physical is his first consideration, while God approaches man from the spirit, but reaching the soul and body as well. This is only a possibility, since it is nowhere taught in Scripture.

It seems clear that the white linen fence represents the righteousness of God -- keeping sinful men out from His presence unless they come through the gate, with its Brazen Altar. Brass speaks of judgment in Scripture. Posts set in brass sockets supported the linen fence. The righteousness of God (the fence) demands judgment upon any that would go inside the fence. How, then, can man approach God? The Brazen Altar is the answer. It, too, is made of brass.

Here the sacrifices were offered and their blood poured out. It pictures the Cross where the holiness of God is satisfied by the judgment we deserve being met and paid for by the death of our Substitute. The Laver was made of brass also. It has to do with self-judgment of the believer, so the defilement of his sins may be washed away. It corresponds to John 13:8; 1 Cor. 11:31, 32; 1 John 1:9. It is interesting that the Laver was made from the melted brass mirrors of the women of Israel (Ex. 38:8). The "looking glasses" remind us of the word of God (2 Cor. 3:18; James 1:22 - 25). With this in mind, the word of God is a source of sanctification and cleansing (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26).

The Tabernacle proper -- the holy tent -- rested on sockets of silver (Ex. 36:24). Silver symbolizes redemption. Just as man could not approach God apart from judgment (the brass), so God could not dwell with man apart from redemption (silver). The tent was divided into two parts, the Holy Place (15 feet by 30 feet in size) and the Holy of Holies (15 feet by 15 feet). Entrance into the Holy Place was through a curtain, and another curtain divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

The Holy Place was as near as even the priests could come to the presence of God (as manifested by the Shekinah Glory). Only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies. Even he could go there only once a year -- with the "Glory" shielded from his eyes by the smoke from the incense. As the Brazen Altar spoke of salvation, and the Laver spoke of cleansing for service, the Holy Place had to do with worship. There were three articles of furniture there:

The Table of Shewbread was made of wood (speaking of Christ's humanity) completely covered with pure gold (speaking of His deity). It spoke of Christ as the Bread of Life (John 6:48; etc.). There were twelve loaves of bread on the table, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. This tells us two things: It is Israel, not the Gentiles, who are in view in the Tabernacle; and also the provision was for all the twelve tribes, not just for the Levites who were allowed to enter there.

The Lampstand was formed of pure gold. It represented Christ as the Light of the World (John 1:4, 5, 7 - 9; 8:12; etc.). The oil used for the lamps spoke of the Holy Spirit in His relationship to Christ, as Christ shines forth in testimony before men.

The Altar of Incense was made of wood overlaid with pure gold. It spoke of prayer -- Christ making intercession for us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

Within the Holy of Holies was just one piece of furniture -- the Ark of the Covenant. It was a box made of wood, completely covered with gold (Ex. 25:10 - 22). The Ark had a cover made of pure gold (Ex. 25:17). It was called the "Mercy Seat." On top of it, and a part of it, were two golden cherubim with their wings stretched out toward each other, covering the Mercy Seat. Between the wings of the cherubim and over the Mercy Seat was a supernatural light, manifesting the presence of God, called the Shekinah Glory.

Inside the Ark of the Covenant was placed a wooden ark (box) containing the tables of the Law (Ex. 25:21; Deut. 10:1 - 5) and a golden pot containing an omer of manna (Ex. 16:33 - 35). Later another item was added. When Aaron's rod budded (Num. 17:8) it was placed in the Ark of the Covenant "before the Testimony" (Ex. 17:10). These three items bear a message, even to us today. The tables of the Law speak of the righteousness and holiness of God. Their presence there would have made the cover of the Ark a **judgment** seat, but the blood of the sacrifices sprinkled there made it a **mercy** seat. Today, since Christ has died for us, and shed His precious blood for our sins, the Ark is the "**Throne of Grace**" to which all believers have access. We are even encouraged to come to it boldly! (Heb. 4:16). The rod of Aaron speaks of resurrection (life and fruitfulness out of a dead and dry rod). The manna tells us of Christ as a

source of food for our souls, and emphasizes how precious He is to the Father (the golden bowl).

The veils which kept even the priests out, unless blood had been shed at the Brazen Altar, speak of the "flesh" of Christ (Heb. 10:20). The rending of the veil when Christ died (Matt. 27:50, 51) opened the way into the Holy of Holies -- into the very presence of God. We now "have access into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). This illustrates how the humanity of Christ (His teachings, His example, etc.) could not bring us into the presence of God, it was the rending of His human body which makes this possible. It is not the ministry of Christ (perfect as that was) which brings salvation to sinners, but His sacrificial and substitutionary death.

A great deal may be learned from the structure of the Tabernacle -- its linen fence, the framework, the coverings, etc. It is suggested that a good book on this subject be obtained for this study.

--- William P Heath

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