

WEEK 20

Psalm 27:5 "For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock." (NIV)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TABERNACLE

As we studied the Law last week and saw its importance in laying the foundation to help us understand the love of our Father toward us, we want to look at a deeper study of the Tabernacle for the same reason. The Tabernacle has meaning for the children of Israel, for us today, and also for the future reign of Christ.

There are books written, bible studies, videos, websites, replicas that help us gain a better understanding of the significance and symbolism that is hidden within the tabernacle. I would encourage you to do a detailed study of The Tabernacle on your own. We just will hit some of the high points in this study. It is a rich study in which the Lord will bless you.

Day One: Read Exodus 25:8-9

1. What is Moses instructed to have the Israelites make? _____
2. Why is he making it? _____
3. How is he to make it? _____

God gave specific instructions on how the tabernacle was to be built, what materials were to be used, what furnishings were to go into it. He didn't leave anything to guess work. God is taking the initiative to bring man to the right place where He could meet with him.

The tabernacle would be the tangible dwelling place of the Lord, a place where He could dwell in accord with His character, His holiness. There He would meet with His people, tell them what He is like, and guide them to where He wanted them to be. The Tabernacle was a "sanctuary," meaning "a set apart place." It was important for Moses and all the people to understand that God does not dwell in a place according to man's ideas and standards. Therefore, this place had to be built according to His pattern.

Construction of the Tabernacle took place "just as the Lord had commanded Moses." Its pattern, design and order of worship were God's and God had a definite plan and purpose in what He revealed and commanded. Each piece of the Tabernacle signified some aspect of the nature and character of God and His relationship with His children. God wanted to show and teach the Israelites who He is and who they were in relationship to Him. It is important to note that these instructions on building were included as part of the law-giving that God did with Moses. These weren't suggestions. And there is a reason why God gives us specific instructions to do things.

Read Exodus 40

4. What did God fill the Tabernacle with after it was completed? _____
5. What was the visible sign of God's presence over the tabernacle? _____

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The place of the cloud of glory/pillar of fire was a place of unconditional surrender. When God moved, the people moved. Where and when God stayed, the people stayed.

6. What did this require of the Israelites? _____
7. To what do you submit and surrender? _____

The Israelites used the Tabernacle for over 470 years. After traveling through the wilderness for almost 40 years with Moses, the Israelites moved into Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. For several years, the Tabernacle stayed at Shiloh. It stayed there during the reigns of Saul and David and then was moved to Jerusalem. The Tabernacle was replaced by Solomon with a magnificent temple structure in Jerusalem.

In the plans for the Tabernacle, God was illustrating His way for sinful man to approach God. The Tabernacle represented the presence of God among His people and it pictured the divinely appointed means by which man could approach God. It was also an object lesson to prepare the way for Christ. We know from Rev 13:8 that Christ as the "lamb slain from the foundation of the world", so Christ's sacrifice was the result of a failed Old Testament sacrificial system. God is loving and gentle and teaches us as a Father would teach his children.

PRAYER: *Lord, help me to remember what I have heard from you, and keep your instruction as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you-guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in me. (2 Tim 1:13-14)*

Day Two: FENCE AND GATE Read Exodus 27:9-19

THE FENCE

1. The fence surrounds "the court of the tabernacle." It was rectangular and made of "fine twisted linen." It had only _____ entrance on the _____ side, and was about 7 ½ feet tall, which means it was tall enough to prevent anyone from looking inside.

Isaiah 59:2 may help us understand what the fence represents. It pictures the fact that man is separate from God, who is holy and pure. The Fence served four purposes:

- a) a barrier that prevented unlawful approach
- b) protection, keeping out wild beasts
- c) clear line of demarcation between the world and the holy presence of God
- d) single gate, only one way to approach God

The fence offered separation from the outside, security to those on the inside

2. Read Revelation 3:3-4; 19:8; 19:11-14. What material is listed in each of these passages?

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Rev 3:3-4 _____

Rev 19:8 _____

Rev 19:11-14 _____

White is a picture of righteousness and holiness. We need righteousness and holiness to worship God.

THE GATE:

The Fence may have guarded God's holiness, yet He made a way for us to enter – through the Gate

3. How wide is the gate? _____

4. How does this illustrate John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9 and Rev 22:17 _____

5. Who does this gate represent? (John 10:9) _____

6. Is there more than one way to approach God? (John 14:6) _____

Throughout scripture, heading east is a picture of moving away from God, and going west is a picture of pursuing God.

Prayer: Thank you Lord that you loved me so much that you chose me and called me out of darkness into Your marvelous light that I might proclaim Your praises. (1 Peter 2:9)

Day Three: Read Exodus 30

BRONZE ALTAR

Once entering the tabernacle through the gate, the first item they would encounter was the bronze altar. The bronze altar was also called "the altar of burnt offering" You can read about its use in Leviticus 4. It was the most frequently used piece of furniture in the Tabernacle.

The bronze altar was used all day long as people came to offer their sacrifices. "Altar" (mizbeach) literally means "slaughter place."

There is a Two-fold ministry of the altar:

The first is Expiation – to atone for, or make amends for. These blood-sacrificial offerings made atonement or reconciliation for those on whose behalf they were presented. The idea of a blood sacrifice seems gruesome to us. Yet "without the shedding of blood, there is not remission." (Heb. 9:22)

Leviticus 17:11 tells us that the life of the flesh is in the blood. Sacrifice is essential to relating with God.

Read Romans 3:21-25

Without an understanding of the OT sacrificial system, we can never adequately appreciate all that Christ's death means to us

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The second ministry of the altar is consecration or dedication. Hebrews 5:1 teaches the ministry of the priest was to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Gifts are the dedicatory offerings. This included the meal or grain offerings, the peace offerings, and the burnt offerings. Similar to the expiation-based sin and trespass offerings, the burnt offering dealt with sin, but its main purpose was to indicate a life devoted or dedicated to God.

1. What does Romans 12:1-2 remind us we are to do?
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As the altar pictures our "dying to self", Christians are called to present themselves as a living sacrifice. In the Old Testament sacrificial system, as the fire would burn down, sometimes the sacrifice would shift away from the center of the altar. Just as the priest used the flesh hooks to keep moving the sacrifice back to the center of the altar, as Christians we are called to continually maintain and readjust our yieldedness to the Lord.

BRONZE LAVER

The last component of the outer court is the laver. The laver was a large basin designed for ancient ceremonial washing.

2. Describe the laver: (Ex 30)
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3. Who was to wash in it and why? _____
4. Do you think that God wants us to treat Him as holy when we enter His presence? _____
5. Where did materials for laver come from? (Exodus 38:8) _____

Highly polished copper mirrors were used by the ancient Egyptians and the women of Israel must have brought out with them great quantities of these looking glasses.

For further study, and to see the spiritual application of water, read these New Testament passages: John 7:37-39; Eph 5:25-26; John 17:18; Ps 19:9

While the altar teaches us about the ministry of reconciliation, the laver speaks of the ministry of separation or sanctification. Sanctification needs to be an on-going ministry.

Prayer: Lord help me to be mindful today to reflect your image in a positive way. Sanctify my through and through. Thank you that you are faithful to do the work you want to be done in my life. (1 Thess 5:23-24)

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Day Four: Read Exodus 25; 30:27-38

The Lampstand and The Table

1. Describe the lampstand _____

2. Read John 8:12 and 9:5. To what do these verses compare Jesus? _____
3. Where did the altar of incense set? _____
4. What is suggested by a table set with food in the context of worship? _____

5. What does Psalm 141:1-2 tell us is like incense? _____

Prayer: Lord may I be a sweet smelling savor to you today. Help me to spread everywhere I go the fragrance of the knowledge of You. Let me be the aroma of Christ among those that I come in contact with today. (2 Cor 2:14-17)

Day Five: The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies Read Exodus 26:31-33 and 36:35-37

1. What separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies? _____
2. Describe the veil _____

3. What is the significance of the veil being torn in two from top to bottom in Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45? _____
4. Drawing from your reading yesterday, what do you remember about the ark of the covenant?

5. What was in the Ark? (Deut 31:24-30; 32:44-47; Hebrews 9:4) _____

The "testimony" Exodus mentions is the long version of the Law. It served as a reminder that these words were their life (32:47) and as a witness against them when they were disobedient to the words (31:26)

Prayer: Thank you God for the grace You have given me in Christ Jesus. In Him I have been enriched in every way. Let my testimony about Christ be confirmed in those that I speak to and minister to through my life. Keep me strong to the end, so that I will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 1:4-8)

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FOR FURTHER STUDY: PATH OF PRIEST:

In our study, we went from outside the gate, past the brazen altar and the laver, into the Holy Place with the lampstand and table of showbread. We passed the altar of incense and went through the veil into the very presence of God. In studying the path the priest took as he moved toward the presence of God, we learn about how God desires to be approached. As God laid out his pattern for Moses, he was illustrating that there is a right way to worship God.

We get some insight into that from Hebrews 8.

Verse 2 of Hebrews makes it clear that the true tabernacle is the one in heaven made by God, not man. Verse 5 clarifies that the plans God gave to Moses for the earthly Tabernacle (and later the Temple) were to create a copy of the true Tabernacle in heaven.

What do you learn from these verses about the meaning and purpose of the Tabernacle?

Hebrews 9:23 _____

Hebrews 9:24 _____

Hebrews 10 _____