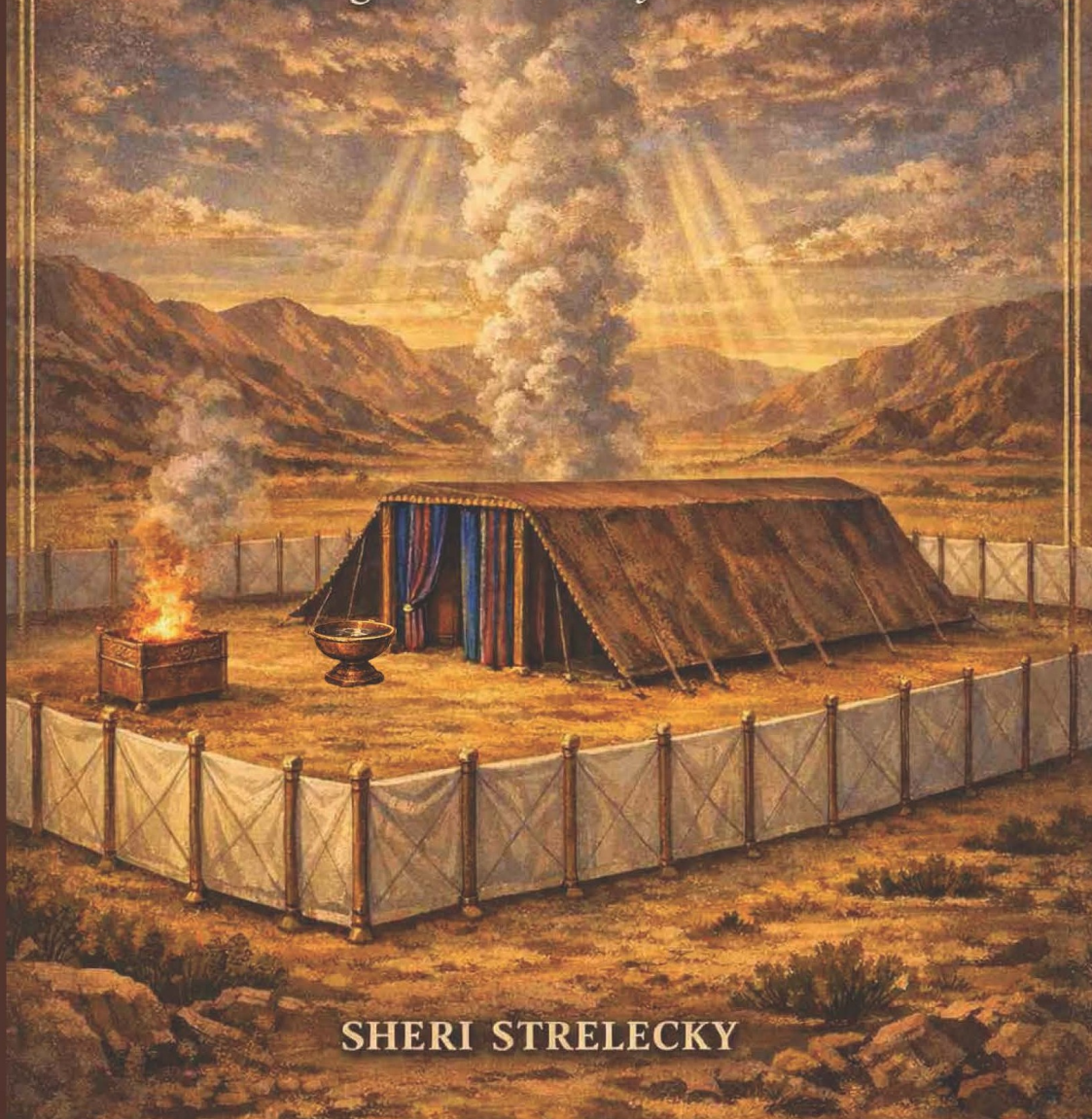


BIBLE STUDY SERIES - VOLUME 6

THE OLD TESTAMENT

TABERNACLE

Revealing God's Plan of Salvation

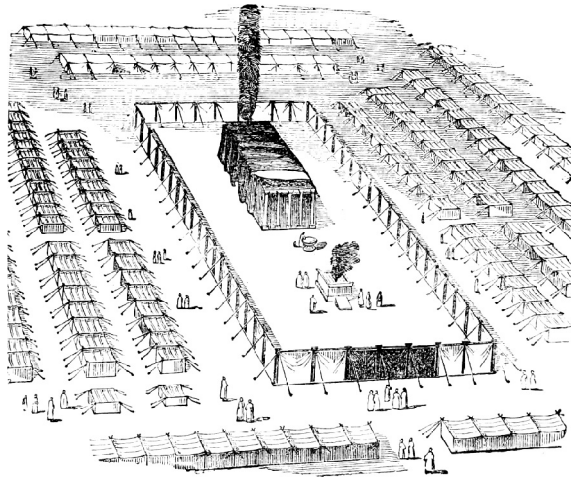


SHERI STRELECKY

BIBLE STUDY SERIES — VOLUME 6

The Old Testament Tabernacle

Revealing God's Plan of Salvation



Sheri Strelecky

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Relationship with a holy God requires a holy life (Leviticus 11:45; 20:7; 1 Peter 1:14-16).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** God gave Moses the pattern for the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-9, 40).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** God desires to be in the midst of His people (Numbers 2:17; Matthew 18:20; Revelation 2:1).
- ❑ **Thursday:** The Tabernacle and Temple were a "shadow" of things to come (Hebrews 8:1-5).
- ❑ **Friday:** God used the physical Tabernacle to teach spiritual realities (Hebrews 9:1-6, 23-24).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Our body is to be a tabernacle, God's dwelling place (2 Corinthians 5:1; 6:16; Revelation 21:3).

God's Plan of Salvation

Many people wonder why they are here and what their purpose is. Studying the Old Testament Tabernacle helps answer these questions. God created people because He wanted a relationship with us. God (who is love) wanted this relationship to be based on love (not obligation)—not because we *have* to, but because we *choose* to. True love comes from choice.

God is holy, and sin separates us from Him. God knew people would sin, so He created a plan to bring us back into a right relationship with Him. This plan is called *salvation*. Because salvation is a spiritual concept, God knew it would be difficult to understand. So God used something physical—the Tabernacle—to help explain it. Through the Tabernacle's design, furniture, and worship practices, God revealed the seriousness of sin, our need for a Savior, and the promise of the coming Messiah (Jesus Christ).

Why Is Studying the Tabernacle Important?

The Tabernacle must have been very important to God. Creation is described in only two chapters (Genesis, Chapters 1 and 2). Yet, the construction and operation of the Tabernacle is described in at least fifty chapters! The Tabernacle and

later the Temple were "holy places made with hands" (Hebrews 9:24). They were physical examples (or models) "of heavenly things" (Hebrews 8:5), teaching us many spiritual lessons.

Jesus said, "Search the scriptures [the Old Testament]; for ... they ... testify of me" (John 5:39). Studying the Old Testament Scriptures reveal Christ, salvation, and the church. To study about the Tabernacle (a visual explanation) helps us understand God's requirement for holy living and why we need a Savior.

What Is a Tabernacle?

The word *Tabernacle* means "a movable habitation." In the original language (Hebrew), the word is *mishkan*, and it means "a dwelling place." God desires to dwell with His people. On Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the Law and a pattern for a Tabernacle. He told Moses, "Copy [exactly] their pattern which was shown you on the mountain" (Exodus 25:40 *Amplified Bible Classic*). God told Moses the purpose of building this Tabernacle. "Make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). This was God's first dwelling place on the earth.

In the Old Testament, God desired to dwell *among* His people, but in the New Testament, God's plan is to dwell *within* His people. John 1:14 (*Amplified Bible Classic*) reads, "And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us." Just as the Old Testament Tabernacle was temporary, Jesus' time here on earth ("tabernacled among us") was temporary. These both teach God's ultimate plan was to "tabernacle" (dwell *with*) His people all the time.

The Old Testament Tabernacle was a literal building, but 2 Corinthians 5:1 explains our body ("our earthly house") is a "tabernacle" (a dwelling place for God's Spirit). The Old Testament Tabernacle and Temple teach many lessons about the New Testament experience of salvation.

Second Corinthians 6:16 says, "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." We are designed to be a dwelling place for God. That is what we were made for.

Important Details of the Tabernacle

God was particular about every detail of the Tabernacle. He told Moses, "Make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee" (Hebrews 8:5). The furniture inside the Tabernacle included:

- The Altar of Sacrifice
- The Laver of Washing
- The Table of Showbread
- The Candlestick
- The Altar of Incense
- The Ark of the Covenant

All these were arranged in the shape of a cross, pointing to Jesus. If Moses or the priests found that inconvenient and changed "the pattern," it would have caused confusion. God's plan must be followed exactly.



The Pattern

God was also precise about the location of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle always faced east—toward the source of light. This teaches that God's people face and walk in the light ("understanding"; Psalm 119:130) God shows them. The Tabernacle was placed "in the midst of the camp" (Numbers 2:17), representing how God wants to be in the midst of His people (Matthew 18:20). The Tabernacle being in the center of the camp meant everything revolved around God. All eyes were focused on Him. Today, God should be in the center of everything we do.

The twelve tribes of Israel camped around the Tabernacle—three tribes on each side. Each tribe camped "by his own [tribal] standard or banner" (Numbers 2:2 *Amplified Bible Classic*). The standard showed people where they belonged. In the same way, God has a standard today that reveals where His true people are. Just as the standard was raised so people could see it, God's high standard of living helps honest hearts find their way to the truth.

God's People

In the Old Testament, Israel was God's "chosen... special people" (Deuteronomy 7:6). They were set apart (sanctified) from other nations. They are an example (type or shadow) of God's people in the New Testament. From them we can learn many spiritual lessons about what we should and should not do.

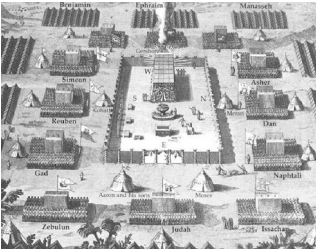
These lessons include: (1) their slavery in Egypt represents being in sin; (2) Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt is a picture of Jesus setting us free from the life of sin; and (3) God's plans for dwelling in the Tabernacle help us understand how God has made a way for His Spirit to live within us today.

Much preparation went into building, maintaining, and transporting God's Old Testament dwelling place. It was to be a holy place. Does God require any less of His New Testament dwelling place?

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ Why did God make mankind creatures of choice?
- ◆ What does being in a relationship with God require?
- ◆ Why is learning about the Old Testament Tabernacle important?
- ◆ Why did the Israelites have standards (banners)?

STANDARDS OR BANNERS



"And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard" (Numbers 1:52).

Each of the four divisions consisted of three tribes. Each division had their own standard: the lion, the calf, the face of a man, and the eagle.



CHAPTER TWO

The Outer Curtains and the Gate

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** The Tabernacle was surrounded by a wall of curtains (Exodus 27:9-15).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** God's people are pillars in the Church of God (Revelation 3:12; Colossians 2:6-7; 1 Timothy 3:15).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** Our flesh must be kept under the Word (Romans 8:8; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Galatians 5:24-25).
- ❑ **Thursday:** God's people are to be witnesses for Christ (John 14:8-9; Acts 3:4).
- ❑ **Friday:** Jesus is the only way to God (John 10:7-11; Acts 4:10-12).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Jesus is Divine (from Heaven), King, and Savior (John 8:23; Revelation 19:13-16; 1 John 1:7).

A Wall of Curtains

The Tabernacle was surrounded by a wall of curtains. God gave Moses exact instructions about their size, color, material, and where to hang them. The curtains were the first thing people saw when they looked toward the Tabernacle. They separated the Tabernacle from the outside world. In this lesson, we will learn why the details mattered, what the curtains represent, and what they teach us about being one of God's people today.



Cubit

The curtains (also called "hangings") were 100 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 5 cubits tall (Exodus 27:9-13, 18). A cubit was an ancient measurement from a man's elbow to his fingertip (approximately 18 inches). This means the outer court of the Tabernacle was about 150 by 75 feet, and the curtains were 7½ feet tall.

Curtains of "Fine, Twined Linen"

The curtains were made of "fine linen," a valuable cloth made from the flax plant. The linen curtains stood out in the dusty wilderness setting. "Fine linen" represents "the righteousness of the saints" (Revelation 19:8). A holy (sin-free) life is a witness to the world, showing them the way to God's presence. The linen

was also "twined," meaning each thread was made of many delicate strands. This made the linen stronger. This teaches a lesson about unity. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "A threefold cord [God, you, and me] is not quickly broken." Unity keeps God's people together. How important to avoid the things that tear us apart!

The distinctive curtains remind us God wants His people to live holy lives and have unity with other Christians. Just as the literal curtains in the wilderness were distinctive, holiness and unity are God's chosen way in which we witness to the unsaved. Some say the outward appearance does not matter because "God looks on the heart," but we are not trying to win God. We are trying to win the lost to Christ. People cannot see our hearts, but they can see "the outward appearance" (1 Samuel 16:7). One song says, "*Your life's the only Bible that some people read.*" Does your life point others to Christ?

Curtains Held Up by Pillars

The curtains could not stand on their own. They needed to be attached to pillars to hold them up. A *pillar* is something strong that does not move or waver. In the same way, when righteousness and unity are working in the lives of God's people, Christ is "lifted up," and others are drawn to Him (John 12:32).

"A pillar" is described as someone who overcomes (Revelation 3:12). You can have victory over sin by becoming "rooted" and "stablished in the faith" (Colossians 2:7). This happens through reading the Bible, studying, praying, and being faithful in worship services. Pillars are not only the older, established saints—God wants younger people to be strong and grounded in the Word too.

When the curtains (a picture of people living in holiness and unity) are attached to the pillars (established saints), they are not blown about (deceived) by "every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). These literal Tabernacle pillars represent "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground [foundation] of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15).

Pillars Made of Wood and Covered With Brass

The pillars were made of acacia wood but covered in brass to protect from decay. The wood represents our human way of thinking and acting. (Mark 8:24 compares "men" to "trees.") This is sometimes referred to as the flesh. God does not want our flesh (human ideas) to be on display. Paul said it is important to keep our body under (1 Corinthians 9:27). What should it be "under"? The literal pillars were covered with "brass." In Revelation 2:18, Christ's feet are described

as "brass."

To put your foot down is to put judgment on something. Any ideas or thoughts that are contrary to God's Word need to be covered (put under) the brass (the judgments of God's Word). When you struggle with human ideas, responses, desires (perhaps thinking, "I am going to give them a piece of my mind"), go to the Word of God. What does the Bible say? Like Paul, you must put your ways under (submit to) what God says. This prevents spiritual decay.

The Fillets and the Hooks of Silver

The tops (caps or "chapters") of the pillars had silver connecting rods called "fillets." Silver often represents the plan of salvation. Joseph (a type of Christ) was sold for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis 37:28), and Jesus was sold for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15). The word *fillet* means "joiners" and "to love." Just as the fillets joined the pillars together, the plan of salvation (which includes God's great love; John 15:13) holds God's people together.

Having ALL the same beliefs does not join us, for not everyone has the same level of understanding. Jesus said our "love one to another" shows the world we "are [His] disciples" (John 13:35). God will bring honest hearts to a greater understanding of the truth in His time.

The pillars ("posts") also had silver hooks for the ropes ("cords") that connected to the tent pegs (brass "pins"). Clasps ("taches") kept the curtains fastened together, and bases ("sockets") held the pillars steady. When everything was joined (by "fillets") and anchored (with hooks, ropes, pins), nothing moved. A life firmly established in Christ is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast" (Hebrews 6:19).

Only One Gate

No matter where someone came from, there was only one entrance into the Tabernacle—the Gate. Today, some people say there are many ways to God, but Jesus said, "I am the door" (John 10:7). Anyone who tries to come another way is a "thief and a robber" (John 10:1). Peter, speaking of Jesus Christ, said in Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other." The one entrance to the Tabernacle teaches the only way into God's presence is through His Son, Jesus.

The curtain of the Gate was to be made of blue, purple, scarlet, and was of "fine twined linen, wrought with needlework" (Exodus 27:16). Each detail teaches spiritual lessons about who this entrance represents (Jesus).

- **Blue** (the color of the heavens): Jesus came from Heaven (John 8:23).
- **Purple** (the color of royalty): Jesus is King (Revelation 19:13-16).
- **Scarlet** (the color of blood): Jesus is our Savior (1 John 1:7).

An experience of salvation (represented by journeying from the wilderness into the Tabernacle) requires accepting the truths these three colors represent.

THE CURTAIN OF THE GATE



"BLUE" — Jesus is Divine

"PURPLE" — Jesus is the King (Lord of your life)

"SCARLET" — Jesus is our Savior

"FINE, TWINED LINEN" — Righteousness & unity

"WROUGHT WITH NEEDLEWORK" — All the truths are woven together

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ What are the curtains of "twined linen" a picture of?
- ◆ Why were the pillars covered with brass? What does that represent spiritually?
- ◆ Some say, "There are many ways to God." What verses in the Bible disprove this?
- ◆ What does the one entrance into the Tabernacle teach us?

DID YOU KNOW?

- The four pillars of the Gate represent the four Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) who wrote about the work of Christ so others could "enter."
 - The Tabernacle's cost (in today's value) would have been more than \$62 million dollars.
 - The Tabernacle faced east (source of light).
 - All the tents faced the Tabernacle.
-

CHAPTER THREE

The Brazen Altar

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** The sacrifice was to be without blemish (Exodus 12:5; 29:1; Malachi 1:14).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Because He had no sin, Jesus was the perfect Sacrifice (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 1:19).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The one who sinned had to bring and kill the animal (Leviticus 1:1-5; 3:1-2).
- ❑ **Thursday:** In God's eyes, sin is very serious (1 Samuel 15:16-23; Romans 6:23).
- ❑ **Friday:** Animal sacrifices taught of a coming better and final Sacrifice (Hebrews 9:23; 10:1-10).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Faith in the blood requires action (Exodus 12:7-13; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 11:6).

A Spotless Sacrifice

The journey from the Wilderness of Sin (representing a sinful life) to the Holy of Holies teaches God's plan of salvation made possible by Jesus. Every part of the Tabernacle points to this plan. After entering the courtyard through the Gate, the first thing one saw was the Altar of Brass. This was the largest piece of Tabernacle furniture (7½ feet square by 4½ feet tall). This Altar was where the sacrifices for sin were offered. The word *offering* in the Hebrew means "to draw near." Bringing an offering (something valuable or cherished) represented a sincere desire to draw closer to God.

To teach people the awfulness of sin and how much they needed a Savior, God required animal sacrifices. There were several kinds of sacrifices ("offering"; Leviticus 1:2), but this lesson will focus on the "burnt sacrifice" (Leviticus 1:3). The animal had to be "without blemish." God would not accept a defective sacrifice ("a corrupt thing"; Malachi 1:14). This points to Jesus who had no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). He was described as "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). Jesus' example and Sacrifice prepared the way for His people today to be "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ... holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

Personal Responsibility

The man bringing the sacrifice had to "put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering" (Leviticus 1:4). Bible commentators explain he placed both hands on the animal's head and confessed his sins. This symbolized admitting his guilt and recognizing that he deserved death—but the animal would make an atonement for his sins. (The word *atonement* means "a covering.") Just as the man laid his hands on the head of the animal (symbolizing the transferring of sins), God laid on Jesus "the iniquity [sins] of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Just as the animal was precious to the owner, when we realize we deserved death, Jesus' great Sacrifice becomes precious to us!



Leviticus 1:5 reads, "And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD." It was not the priest but the man who was guilty of sin who killed the animal. His own sins were the reason it had to die. God designed this to create a hatred for sin (to see sin as God sees it). Too often, we fail to see how serious sin is. Many make excuses ("I made a mistake"; "I messed up"; "It's not a big deal"), but God says, "The wages [penalty] of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Sin is disobedience to God's laws. God calls it *rebellion* (wanting your way instead of God's way). Read 1 Samuel 15:23 to see how seriously God views this. Not seeing sin's seriousness makes it easier to give in to temptations to do wrong. God set up the system of sacrifices to teach important lessons—a just and holy God cannot overlook sin, sinning is serious, and consequences are painful.

The Importance of the Blood

After the animal was killed, the priests sprinkled its blood on "the altar" (Leviticus 1:5). Blood is important because "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). Blood carries nutrients to the cells, removes waste, and circulates white and red blood cells. Literal blood represents physical life. In the same way, spiritual life (forgiveness of sins and salvation) required the shedding of Christ's blood. Without His blood, there is "no remission [forgiveness]" (Hebrews 9:22).

In Leviticus 8:15, Moses put the blood on "the horns of the altar round about with his finger." The altar had four horns, believed to have been facing outwards, pointing in all four directions. This teaches salvation is for everyone, everywhere ("whosoever will"; Revelation 22:17), for all time! God is "not willing that any

should perish" (2 Peter 3:9).

Horns represent power (Psalm 89:17; 18:2; Luke 1:69). The blood being placed on "the horns of the altar" symbolizes that there is power in the blood of Jesus to remove man's sins. An old hymn by Lewis E. Jones says, "*Would you be free from the burden of sin? ... There is power, power, wonder-working power in the precious blood of the Lamb.*"

A Better Sacrifice

The continual animal sacrifices did not make people able to stop sinning. Yet, this was God's method ("a shadow of good things to come"; Hebrews 10:1), pointing forward to when Jesus would pay the ultimate price for our sins on the Cross. When He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30), it was the final Sacrifice. It was "once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). After that, animal sacrifices were no longer needed. Everything the Tabernacle pointed to ("it is coming") had taken place!

What Is Our Part?

Jesus was "a propitiation" (Romans 3:25). *Propitiation* means "a turning away of God's anger." It is also translated as "mercy seat," which was the cover of the Ark of the Covenant (Leviticus 16:14; Hebrews 9:5). The only way to turn away God's anger and receive His mercy is through "faith in his [Jesus'] blood" (Romans 3:25). Exodus, Chapter 12, helps us understand what that means. If the Israelites had faith (believed God's words) and applied the blood to their doorposts, the death angel passed over them. They were saved from the death of the firstborn.

In Joshua, Chapter 6, Rahab and her family were saved by the "scarlet thread" (representing Jesus' blood) hanging in her window. She believed and obeyed. Her faith saved her and her family.

Faith in Jesus' blood requires action. We must "diligently seek" God's will and obey it (Hebrews 11:6). The Israelites were safe by obediently applying the blood. Rahab and her family were safe by hanging the red cord and staying in the house. Not only do we need Jesus' blood to wash away our sins, we must stay "in the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15).

Salvation does not mean we can continue in our sinful ways. Did the Israelites stay in Egypt? Did Rahab stay in Jericho? A life lived for God ("in the house") is to "abide in" Christ and to have His "words abide in" us (John 15:7). We no longer seek our ways (rebellion) but desire to keep the "Father's commandments" (John 15:10).

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

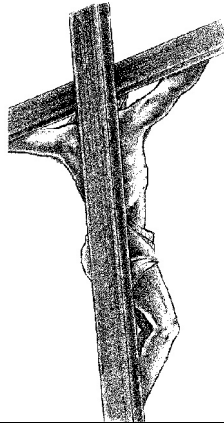
- ◆ Why did God establish animal sacrifices?
- ◆ How does making excuses cause sin to seem less serious?
- ◆ What does the blood placed on the horns of the altar represent?
- ◆ What did Jesus mean when He cried, "It is finished"?
- ◆ What does faith in Jesus' blood require?
- ◆ What does a life lived for God ("in the house") look like?

DID YOU KNOW?

- The fire on the altar was to be kept burning at all times.
- The Brazen Altar was also called "the altar of burnt offering" (Exodus 30:28); "the altar of God" (Psalm 43:4); "the altar of the LORD" (Malachi 2:13).
- "Tetelestai" was often written on business documents in New Testament times to show that a bill had been "PAID IN FULL."



A FORESHADOW



THE REALITY

CHAPTER FOUR

The Brazen Laver

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** God told Moses to make a laver of brass (Exodus 30:17-21).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** The pattern for a straight line represents walking in straight paths (Exodus 40:7; Hebrews 12:13).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** We need God's help in our goings and comings (Psalm 121:8; 1 Kings 3:7; Jeremiah 10:23).
- ❑ **Thursday:** The Word (like a mirror) can keep sin out of our lives (Exodus 38:8; Psalm 119:9-11; James 1:23).
- ❑ **Friday:** Salvation is a "double cure" (Zechariah 13:1; John 19:34; 1 John 1:9).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Salvation includes a change of heart (Ezekiel 11:18-20; Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Relationship With God Requires a Sin-Free Life

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed being in God's presence, but their sin brought a separation. A holy God cannot allow sin in His presence. So Adam and Eve were sent out of the garden. Yet, God had a plan to bring people back into a relationship with Him. The Tabernacle helped explain this plan. God used physical objects and worship practices to reveal what is required to come into His presence. Nothing unclean or impure could enter. For sinful people to approach a holy God, they had to come His way (following the pattern). The only way to God is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

When someone entered the Tabernacle courtyard, the first thing he saw was the Altar of Brass. There sacrifices for sins were offered. This teaches that to be in a right relationship with God requires first dealing with our sins. Jesus paid the price for our sins through His Sacrifice on the Cross. When we are saved, His blood washes away the sins we committed in the PAST. But the journey toward God's presence (symbolized by the Holy of Holies) continues. God does not allow sin in His presence. The Brazen Altar represents forgiveness of PAST sins. So what keeps us from continuing to sin? The next piece of furniture teaches a valuable lesson about living free from sin.

Before the entrance of the Tabernacle Proper stood "a laver of brass"

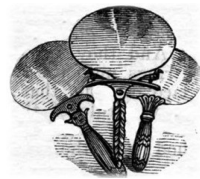


(Exodus 30:18; 40:7). This placement was intentional. The Brazen Altar and the Laver of Brass were in a straight line with the Tabernacle. To reach the Holy Place required walking in a straight line (teaching the necessity of walking in "straight paths"; Hebrews 12:13).

Before entering the Tabernacle, the priests poured water from this round basin to "wash their hands and their feet" (Exodus 30:19). This taught the need for purity. Washing the hands symbolized purity in their *actions*. Washing the feet symbolized holiness in all their daily *walk* and *conversations*. Together, the hands and the feet represent a person's entire way of life. An old Hebrew saying speaks of man's "goings out" and his "comings in." The Laver teaches to live a holy life, we need God's help in all our "comings and goings."

Cleansing of What Caused the Sin—Our Way

The laver was made from polished metal (the women's "lookingglasses"; Exodus 38:8). When the priest looked into the laver, he saw his reflection. James 1:23 compares the Word of God to a "glass" (or mirror). Why is the Word needed when we get saved? Two things must happen at salvation: (1) forgiveness of past sins (not future), and (2) the cause of sin (our way) must be cleansed. Proverbs 14:12 warns that our way ("a way which seemeth right") leads to "death." Our way needs to be removed (cleansed). Psalm 119:9 says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed ... to thy word."



Lookingglasses

The Word keeps sin out of our lives. This is more than daily reading a few Bible verses. We need God's Holy Spirit living in our hearts. He gives us the power to say "no" to sin and live a holy life. This is why the devil works hard to keep people from God's Word. To stay in a right relationship with God (to be His "disciples"), we must "continue in [His] word" (John 8:31). When the "word" is "in mine heart," it keeps sin out (Psalm 119:11).

When the Holy Spirit comes into your heart and life, your desires change. You want to do what is right, and He gives you the power to do it. People in the Old Testament "desired to see" this experience (Matthew 13:17), but it was not available until after Jesus came. They continued to offer sacrifices for sin, but Jesus made "one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Hebrews 10:12). After Jesus returned to Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit (also called the Comforter or the Holy Ghost)

to "abide with you [live within] for ever" (John 14:16).

The plan of salvation includes God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost (often called the Trinity). All are important. God created the plan of salvation; Jesus put the plan into action; and the Holy Ghost manages the plan. Matthew 12:44-45 warns about a heart that has been forgiven but left empty. What happens if your "house" (heart) has been "swept" (sins forgiven by Jesus' blood), is "garnished" (put in order, declared to be in right standing with God), but is "empty" (no Holy Spirit living inside)? When the devil sees this empty heart, he will move back in.

The Double Cure—Blood and Water

Zechariah 13:1 prophesies of "that day" (the Gospel Day) when "a fountain" would be opened "for *sin* and for *uncleanness*." When Jesus died, a soldier pierced His side, and "blood and water" flowed out (John 19:34). Jesus' Sacrifice opened the way ("a fountain") for our sins to be washed away (by the "blood") and to live a holy life (by the "water"). This "fountain" includes forgiveness of "sins" (the "blood") and cleansing "from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9), represented by the "water" (the Holy Spirit; John 7:38-39). The "Spirit is life" (Romans 8:10). These two parts of salvation (represented by the "blood and water") are called *remission* and *regeneration* (Romans 3:24; Titus 3:5). Both are necessary.

Just as both blood and water flowed from Jesus' side, *remission* (forgiveness of sins) and *regeneration* (holy living) must always go together. We cannot have our sins forgiven and then continue living in sin. Salvation requires forgiveness of sins (a finished work) and holy living (an ongoing process). The hymn "Rock of Ages" explains this beautifully: "*Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee; let the water and the blood, from thy wounded side which flowed, be of sin the double cure; save from wrath and make me pure.*" The "double cure" (both parts of salvation) is "the water and the blood." We are saved "from wrath" (the penalty for sin) and can live "pure" (a holy, sin-free life).

A New Heart

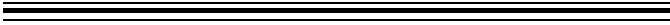
Salvation includes a change of heart. God promises in Ezekiel 36:26-27: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ... and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

- "The stony heart" represents your old, stubborn ways (when you were

led by the devil to do wrong).

- "A new spirit" comes in when God removes the evil spirit and His Spirit moves into your heart.
- At salvation, God gives you "an heart of flesh," a tender, obedient heart that desires to please Him.

Have you experienced the change from a "stony heart" to "an heart of flesh"? From following your way to following the leading of God's Holy Spirit? When you look into God's Word (the "laver"), are you living to everything He has shown you? This is the only path into God's presence and staying in a right relationship with Him.



QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ **What does James 1:23 compare the Word to?**
- ◆ **How does Psalm 119:9 tell us our way can be cleansed?**
- ◆ **Why are animal sacrifices no longer needed (Hebrews 10:12)?**
- ◆ **When the soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear, what came out?**
- ◆ **What is the "double cure"?**

CHAPTER FIVE

The Four Coverings

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** The Tabernacle had four detailed coverings (Exodus 26:1-14; 36:8-19).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Cherubims are described as living creatures (Ezekiel 10:15; Revelation 5:8-9 AMP).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** A spiritual "new creature" will follow Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 14:4).
- ❑ **Thursday:** God has an inward and outward standard (Genesis 3:21; 1 Samuel 16:7; 2 Corinthians 5:1).
- ❑ **Friday:** Worship services are necessary for learning (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:25).
- ❑ **Saturday:** God needs people who will stand up for holiness (Exodus 26:15; 36:20; 1 Corinthians 16:13).

God's Blueprint

God told Moses to build the Tabernacle exactly the way He showed him on Mount Sinai. God included MANY details in this design to teach His plan of salvation. After the Altar of Sacrifice (which represents forgiveness of sins) and the Brazen Laver (which symbolizes the Holy Spirit cleansing what caused the sin), the next step towards God's presence was the Tabernacle Proper (representing God's church). The Tabernacle had four coverings, and each one teaches something important about Jesus. Exodus, Chapter 26, describes them by beginning with the innermost covering.

The First Covering—"Fine, Twined Linen"

The first curtain was made of "fine twined linen," which represents "the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8). This teaches that there is no sin in God's church. The colors—"blue, and purple, and scarlet" (Exodus 26:1)—are the same colors used in the outer Gate. After salvation, God's people are to believe and live out the truths these colors represent (see Chapter Two). God's people wear "garments of salvation," which are a "robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10).

This covering also had "cherubims" skillfully embroidered on it (Exodus

26:1). "Cherubims" are first mentioned in Genesis 3:24, when Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden because of their sin. They could no longer be in God's presence, for God is holy. God placed "Cherubims" at the garden entrance. Some believe this was to keep Adam and Eve OUT of God's presence, but that was not God's desire. With the "Cherubims" was "a flaming [representing the Holy Spirit; Acts 2:3-4] sword [a symbol of God's Word; Hebrews 4:12], which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Jesus said, "I am the way" (John 14:6). The ONLY way back into God's presence is through the Word ("Jesus"; John, Chapter 1).

Cherubims are described as "the living creature" (Ezekiel 10:15), and Revelation 5:8-9 says the "four living creatures" (*Amplified Bible*) sang the song of the redeemed. By paying salvation's price, Jesus is "buying back" we who were lost. When we are saved, we become "a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The Cherubims represent people who have been redeemed, new creatures who "follow the Lamb" (Revelation 14:4). Their song is, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" (Revelation 4:8). The first covering teaches that a holy life (represented by the Cherubims) is important. It points the lost to the only way back to God (through Jesus Christ; the "flaming sword").

The Second Covering—"Goats' Hair"

The second covering was made of "goats' hair" (Exodus 26:7). Goats were often used for sin offerings (Leviticus 16:5; Numbers 28:22). Jesus used goats to represent people who are separated from God (Matthew 25:31-33, 41). Palestinian goats were usually black, and their stubborn, independent nature symbolizes the actions of people who live a sinful life.

Isaiah 53:6 says, "We have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all." The second covering teaches that Jesus took our punishment. He became "sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

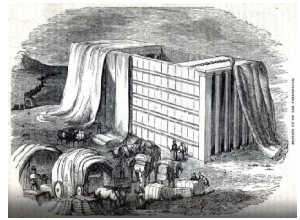
The Third Covering—"Rams' Skins Dyed Red"

The third covering was made of "rams' skins dyed red" (Exodus 26:14). This was placed on top of the black goats' hair curtain (representing sin), teaching Jesus' shed blood fully covered (made "an atonement for"; Leviticus 17:11) all our sins. Just as the ram was an acceptable sacrifice for Isaac (Genesis 22:13), the "rams' skins dyed red" represents the acceptable substitution for sins (Jesus gave His life for us).

The Fourth Covering—"Badgers' Skins"

The outermost covering was made "of badgers' skins" (Exodus 26:14). This could have been a badger, sea-cow, porpoise, or another sea animal. It was the only visible layer to people outside of the Tabernacle. Its purpose was to protect the inside of the Tabernacle from the outside elements (wind, rain, and sun). What is the spiritual lesson? God's people (the redeemed) are protected from the outside elements (world of sin) by a standard of holiness. Though the world may find this unattractive, it draws their attention and serves as a witness.

There was nothing outwardly appealing about this curtain, especially when compared with the innermost curtain. Likewise, living a holy life is not attractive to those living sinful lives. False religion offers more attractive "coverings" (false ways) to supposedly become a Christian—good works, church membership, weekly confession, or baptism alone—without the standard of holiness, which is a protection from sin. Only the covering God has provided keeps our relationship with Him from being destroyed by the enemy.



God's Standard of Holiness

When Adam and Eve made coverings for themselves ("aprons"; Genesis 3:7), God saw they were inadequate. So He made them "coats of skins" (Genesis 3:21). God was particular about Adam's and Eve's physical coverings and also about the coverings of the Tabernacle. He also cares about how we are covered today—both spiritually and physically. God has a standard of holiness for our "earthly ... tabernacle" (2 Corinthians 5:1), which is our body. This standard applies inwardly and outwardly. God sees the heart (inward), but the world can only see our dress, words, and actions (outward). Both are important!

Only after salvation (when you are placed in God's church) can you truly see the beauty of the four coverings: (1) a holy life means we are right with God; (2) Christ became sin (blackness) so we could become holy (white); (3) Jesus' shed blood fully covered our sins; and (4) the standard of holiness is for our protection. As we gather with God's people ("assembling ... ourselves together [in worship services]"; Hebrews 10:25), we will gain greater understanding of these important truths. Many beautiful lessons can only be seen from within the Church of God.

Just as the boards of the Tabernacle were "standing up" (Exodus 26:15), people in God's church stand up for His holiness standard. They do not merely claim to be a Christian or Church of God, but through holy lives, they (like the "Cherubims" at the garden gate) point to Jesus—the only way back to God's presence.



QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ **What does the black goats' hair covering teach?**
- ◆ **Which covering was the only one that could be seen from the outside?**
- ◆ **What protects God's people today from the outside elements (sin)?**
- ◆ **Why is following Jesus unattractive to the world?**
- ◆ **Why were Adam's and Eve's "aprons" inadequate?**

CHAPTER SIX

The Golden Candlestick

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Keeping the light burning requires maintenance (Exodus 27:20; 30:7; Hebrews 2:3).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** There are things that will try to blow out your light (Ephesians 4:14; Proverbs 3:5).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The lampstand represents Jesus and His church (1 Corinthians 12:18; Revelation 1:13).
- ❑ **Thursday:** Beware of Satan's bushels that put out the light (Matthew 5:14-16; Luke 11:33).
- ❑ **Friday:** The high cost of the Candlestick and of God's church (Exodus 25:39; Isaiah 52:14; Acts 20:28).
- ❑ **Saturday:** The world needs to see the light (John 8:12; Ephesians 5:8; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6).

Light Reveals Obstacles

The journey from the Wilderness of Sin to the Gate and through the outer court teaches how to *get* saved. Lessons from the Tabernacle Proper and its furnishings teach how to *stay* saved. The Tabernacle in the Wilderness had no windows to let light in, but God's plan for the Golden Candlestick in the first room ensured there was *always* light inside. Just as literal light helps us see where we are going and keeps us from tripping over unseen obstacles, spiritual light ("understanding"; Psalm 119:130) reveals stumbling blocks that could cause us to fall.

In the Tabernacle Proper (representing the Church of God), the light (understanding God's Word) is bright! That is why attending worship services is so important (Hebrews 10:25). Through preaching and teaching, you can learn of the spiritual obstacles the enemy uses to cause failures in the Christian's life.

Light Requires Maintenance

Every morning, the priests maintained the lamps by adding oil so that the light never went out (Exodus 27:20). With salvation, we are "priests" (Revelation 1:6), and to keep the spiritual light burning in our lives, there is maintenance we

must do. Staying saved requires reading and studying the Bible and praying. How often? The Old Testament priests maintained the lamps *every morning*. Can we do any less? The priests also trimmed the wicks ("dresseth"; Exodus 30:7), removing the burnt edges to make the light brighter.

In our walk with God, as we read His Word and talk to Him, He will show what in our lives is causing our lights to become dim. We cannot neglect the important maintenance of our salvation (Hebrews 2:3).

What Does the Candlestick Represent?



Candlestick

In the original language of the Old Testament (Hebrew), the word for "candlestick" is *lampstand*. A candlestick can easily be blown out by the wind, but an oil-fed lamp is harder to put out. Ephesians 4:14 warns us not to be "carried about with every wind of doctrine." People like that are affected by ideas or doctrines (spiritual teachings) that do not come from God's Word. Just as an oil-fed lamp is not easily affected by a blowing wind, we must depend on God for the oil to keep our lamps burning (John 15:5). When we "lean not unto [our] own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5) or on people's wrong beliefs, we are less likely to lose our light (salvation).

The lampstand had one shaft (the center part), "and six branches [came] out of the sides of it" (Exodus 25:32). At the top of each (the shaft and the branches) were "lamps" (for a total of seven). Lamps represent our experience of salvation (Isaiah 62:1). When we are saved, we become a light to others (Matthew 5:16).

There are "many members [lamps], yet but one body" (1 Corinthians 12:20). It is not God's will that we be alone or independent. "God set the members [each lamp] every one of them *in the body* [the church; Colossians 1:24], as it hath pleased him" (1 Corinthians 12:18). The "body" of Christ is the Church of God.

God wants His people to be united because when our lights shine together, they produce a great light! Just as no measurements were given for the literal lampstand, the Church of God is "a great multitude, which no man could number" (Revelation 7:9).



Lampstand

A Candle Placed Under a Bushel

In Matthew 5:15, Jesus warned about lighting a candle and placing it under a bushel. Often at night, people would cover a candle with a basket if they wanted darkness in their homes. If the basket was left there, the light eventually went out. This shows what happens to our experience of salvation if we hide our light. The devil will provide the bushel.

The devil has many bushels. He will try to separate you from other Christians. He will send discouragement. He will tell you to skip church services, Sunday school, or prayer meetings. He will send confusion through false ideas and doctrines. He will tell you that the outward standard does not matter. These will extinguish your lamp if you allow your light to come under these "bushels." The children's song says: *"Hide it under a bushel—NO! I'm gonna to let it shine!"*

The Lampstand Was "One Beaten Work of Pure Gold"

PURE GOLD: The Candlestick (lampstand) was made "of a talent of pure gold" (Exodus 25:39). A "talent" was about 94 pounds. In 2024, the price of gold was \$2,327.44 (per ounce). Multiply that by 16 (ounces in a pound), and you will get \$37,239.04. Then, multiply that by 94 pounds for a total of \$3,500,469.76. That is the approximate cost of building a pure gold lampstand today. Compare that to the cost of the church, which was purchased at a far GREATER COST! Acts 20:28 says Jesus purchased "the church of God ... with his own blood."

BEATEN WORK: The words "beaten work" (Exodus 37:17) mean the shape of the gold was changed. Part of the great cost of purchasing the Church of God included Jesus being "scourged [beaten with whips]" (Matthew 27:26). Isaiah prophesied of the coming Messiah (Jesus): "His visage [face] was so marred [damaged, disfigured] more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14). Isaiah 53:5 adds, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." The lampstand made of "one beaten work" represents how the church was produced through the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

ONE: The word "one" represents the unity of God's people. To continue shining as "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14), we must have unity with (1) Christ (the central shaft) and (2) other Christians (other lamps). When division works and Christians separate from each other, the light grows dim. Often, it completely goes out. This is not God's will. Jesus prayed that we "be one" (in unity) as He and God the Father are one (John 17:11).

The World Needs Your Light!

It is important that we "walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8). If we are embarrassed to dress, talk, and act like Christians, we are placing our lamps under a bushel. How will the world see the way to God if our lights are hidden? Just as a burning lamp is noticeable in a dark room, the Christian's light will draw the attention of those living in spiritual darkness.

We might be made fun of or criticized, but there are people searching for light. God's people are part of the "city that is set on an hill [and] cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14). "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ **What is the difference between a candlestick and a lampstand?**
- ◆ **What does Isaiah 62:1 say lamps represent?**
- ◆ **Who is in the midst of the candlesticks (Revelation 1:13)?**
- ◆ **Who is the body of Christ?**
- ◆ **What does the lampstand made of "one beaten work" represent?**

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Table of Showbread

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** God gave the exact measurements for the table (Exodus 25:23-28; 37:15).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** The table and God's Word have borders (Exodus 25:25; Proverbs 22:28; Revelation 22:18-19).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The bread was prepared "every sabbath" (1 Chronicles 9:31-32).
- ❑ **Thursday:** The bread was always on the table, representing Jesus (Exodus 25:30; Numbers 4:7; John 6:51).
- ❑ **Friday:** The twelve cakes were placed in two rows and were to be eaten by the priests (Leviticus 24:5-9).
- ❑ **Saturday:** God has prepared a table for His people (Psalm 23:5; John 21:12; 1 Corinthians 10:20-21).

Fellowship Is Sharing Something in Common

In many families, the dinner table is a special place. It is where people gather, eat together, and spend time together. Conversations often include shared interests and what happened during the day. In the Old Testament, sharing a meal also was a social time. To "break bread together" was symbolic of friendship, and being invited to a king's table was a great honor (2 Samuel 9:7). These examples help us understand the meaning of the Table of Showbread (also called "shewbread"; Numbers 4:7).

The word *fellowship* means "sharing something in common." When friends and families gather around a dinner table, they usually share something—family ties, friendship, or gathered for a local event (such as a church picnic). At these gatherings, conversations often include what people have in common.

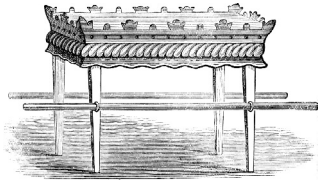
When Adam and Eve sinned, their fellowship with God was broken. The Table of Showbread was another way God taught how He wanted to restore that fellowship. Salvation is not only about accepting Christ into our hearts—it also includes regular times of fellowship with Him.

The Table

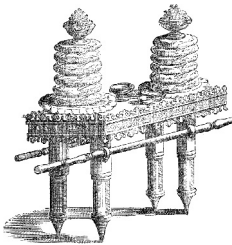
The measurements of the Tabernacle and its furnishings teach spiritual lessons. The table for the bread was only one cubit wide—just wide enough for the bread and nothing else. The table was made of wood covered with gold. The wood represents Jesus becoming human, and the gold represents His divinity. It also teaches that our human thoughts (the "wood") must stay under God's Word (the "gold").

When our ideas take over, our relationship with God is hindered. Have you ever thought, "I do not think God cares about the outward dress standard"? If so, was that the "wood" or the "gold" showing? God's table is only wide enough for His Word. We cannot add our human ideas.

The table had a distinctive border. This border kept the bread from sliding off when the Kohathites carried it through the wilderness. A border is a boundary; it keeps things in their proper place. Just like the rules your family may have for eating at the dinner table, the Word of God also has some distinctive borders. Fellowship with God has requirements.



The Showbread



The Table of Showbread was also called "The Bread of the Face" or "The Bread of the Presence" because the bread was put on the table in the Lord's presence (before His face). The "bread" represents Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, which means "house of bread." Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51), and Amos 8:11 explains "bread" is "the words of the LORD."

According to the Talmud, the family of Garmu prepared the bread "every sabbath" (1 Chronicles 9:31-32). They took their responsibility seriously. They refused to share the recipe. (Their reason was, "Lest some unworthy person will use the secret of the showbread for idol worship.") Also, they would not use this recipe for their common bread (their personal food) so they could not be accused of misusing the Tabernacle flour. How serious are we about the Word of God today?

There were "twelve cakes" of bread (Leviticus 24:5). This represents God

providing bread for ALL the twelve tribes of Israel. The "cakes" (bread), arranged in two rows, represents the two portions of the Bible (the Old Testament and the New Testament). Just as God provided literal bread in the wilderness for all His people ("manna"; Exodus 16:15), He provides spiritual bread for all His people today. The showbread teaches the importance of eating this bread—all of it (Revelation 10:9). We cannot be picky eaters and leave out the parts we do not like.

Numbers 4:7 calls it the "continual bread." There was always bread on the table, just as there is always spiritual bread (the Word) on God's table today. This "continual bread" does not change. Some people try to redefine what the Word of God says, but God does not change (Malachi 3:6). We are warned to not add to or take away from God's Word (Revelation 22:18-19). Just as the Garmu family could not change the recipe, we cannot change the standards of God's Word and expect to continue our fellowship with God.

Eating at the Lord's Table

As Israel traveled through the "wilderness of Sin" (Exodus 16:1), they faced many enemies. Psalm 23:5 says God has prepared a table for us "in the presence of mine enemies." We live in a sinful world, but God has prepared a "table" for us. He invites His people to "come and dine" (John 21:12). When we are "partakers of the Lord's table"—where the bread of life (Word of God) is served—we are in "fellowship" (1 Corinthians 10:20-21) with Christ and with other Christians who eat at this table. To be in "fellowship" means we have things in common. Through salvation, we all have spiritual life in common.

Coming into the Tabernacle Proper represents God's people gathering together in His church (the Church of God). There, the light of the Candlestick reveals the Table of Showbread (the Holy Spirit gives understanding of God's Word). At the table, we fellowship with other Christians—hearing the Word together and encouraging one another.

In the Old Testament, only the priests could enter the Tabernacle Proper, but in the New Testament, with salvation, we are all "made ... kings and priests" (Revelation 1:6). We no longer have to stay in the outer court!

Are You Hungry?

In Luke, Chapter 14, "a great supper" was prepared. Invitations were sent out, but many people gave excuses for why they could not come. When Jesus invites us to "come and dine" with Him—through personal devotions, Sunday school, or worship services—what is our reply? Do we procrastinate or make excuses? Do we dislike what is on the spiritual menu?

Imagine if the priests said they were not hungry or they did not like the taste of showbread, and then they threw it out. Psalm 50:17 warns about people who hate God's "instruction, and casteth [His] words behind" them. If we refuse God's invitation to come or if we come and dislike what is on the menu, that is like casting His bread behind us. God's Word keeps us spiritually alive. How dangerous to refuse it!

There are things that can hinder your spiritual appetite for the Word. The enemy offers spiritual "junk food" to fill you up and take away your desire for God's Word. Paul said we need to have a "VEHEMENT [or intense] desire" (2 Corinthians 7:11)! We will not have this desire if we constantly fill ourselves with the wrong things. God has invited you to His great supper—to the Table of His Presence. It is a great honor! What will your reply be?

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ What does the word *fellowship* mean?
- ◆ Why was the table for the bread only one cubit wide?
- ◆ Who did the twelve cakes represent?
- ◆ Why were the cakes placed in two rows?
- ◆ What does the enemy provide to take away your spiritual appetite?
- ◆ What kind of desire did Paul say is needed?

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Altar of Incense

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** The Altar of Incense was in front of the Veil (Exodus 30:1-10).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Prayer is to be as the "perpetual incense" (Exodus 30:8; Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The Altar's four horns teach there is power in prayer (Psalm 89:17; 18:2; Luke 1:69).
- ❑ **Thursday:** God sees our "tears"; He will heal the brokenhearted (Psalm 56:8; Jeremiah 8:21; Psalm 147:3).
- ❑ **Friday:** Effective prayer requires withdrawing from the things that distract (Matthew 6:6; 14:23; Mark 1:35).
- ❑ **Saturday:** God will work "bitter" trials for your good (1 Samuel 1:10, 20; Psalm 34:17; Romans 8:28).

Why Recipes Matter

Have you ever tried baking something without following the recipe exactly? Maybe you were missing an ingredient and skipped it or replaced it with something else. The result probably did not turn out the way you hoped. Would it have been better with the correct ingredients? Recipes help to make sure the food tastes and looks the same every time. This lesson teaches about a recipe God gave. How important do you think it was to follow His recipe?

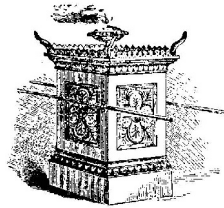
In the Tabernacle, there was a specific recipe for the incense the priests placed on the Altar of Incense. (The incense represents prayer being offered to God; Psalm 141:2.) If God was particular about the prayers of incense in the Old Testament, is He concerned about our prayers today? Could there be a "recipe" we need to follow for our prayers to be effective? Does God hear prayers with the wrong ingredients?

The Importance of Continual Prayer

The Outer Court of the Tabernacle illustrates how *to be* saved, while the first room and furniture of the Tabernacle Proper teach how *to stay* saved. The Altar of Incense was in the back of the first room with the Golden Candlestick and the Altar of Showbread on each side of the room. Its placement teaches that prayer

must be at the center of our lives. We need to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Just as the incense was "perpetual" (continual), our day should begin and end with continual prayer. An attitude of prayer throughout the day will help guide every life decision we must make.

The Altar of Incense stood right in front of the Veil, which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (where God's presence dwelled). In the same way, prayer brings us into God's throne room (Hebrews 4:16). There we can talk to Almighty God. The Altar's design included four horns (representing power). This teaches that there is great power in prayer! Unlike the brass-covered Altar of Sacrifice, the Altar of Incense was covered with pure gold, symbolizing holiness. No sin can be in God's church or in God's presence. Sin will hinder our prayers.



The Smell of Incense

Many smells are unforgettable—pleasant and unpleasant. The stench of a dead skunk is nothing like the smell of baked bread. Certain smells draw you in, while others chase you away. Incense was burned in the Tabernacle every morning and evening. Centuries later, when the sweet incense was offered in the Temple at Jerusalem, historians recorded it could be smelled from miles away. Even after the priest changed into his regular clothes, his family could still smell the incense on him. It was clear he had been before God at the Altar of Incense.

In the same way, Peter and John were recognized as men who had "been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13) through their words and actions. Can your friends and family tell you have spent time in God's presence? Do your prayers affect your attitude and how you treat others? Consider the impact of the incense of your prayers following you all day long, drawing others to God because of your example.

Incense Ingredients

The incense contained special ingredients. It was "the work of the apothecary" (Exodus 37:29). God gave a special recipe, and the exact process was a guarded secret. Like the bread, the incense could only be used in the Tabernacle. Each ingredient teaches what God considers essential for effective prayer. All are necessary; none can be omitted.

STACTE (*stack-tee*): this costly form of myrrh, known as "drops," resembled teardrops. Psalm 56:8 says our "tears" are put "into thy bottle." Myrrh (which

represents suffering and healing) is called the "Balm of Gilead" (a healing ointment). Jeremiah wept because there was no hope, "no balm in Gilead ... no physician there" (Jeremiah 8:22). But Christ (the Great Physician) came to heal the brokenhearted (Psalm 147:3). He understands our tears. *Stacte* represents brokenness (suffering), putting the flesh under (humbleness), and God's healing. God hears our humble, tear-filled prayers.

ONYCHA (*on-e-ka*): a mollusk retreats into its shell in times of danger or during dry periods. The flap that seals the mollusk inside is called the *onycha*. Effective prayer requires pulling away from distractions. "Unplug" from whatever hinders you from talking to and hearing from God. Jesus said, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet" (Matthew 6:6). A prayer closet is not necessarily a closet in your house but a place of retreat where you spend time alone with God. "When thou hast shut the door," when you have removed all distractions, then you can "pray to thy Father."

GALBANUM (*gal-ba-num*): the bitter smell from this plant was used to repel harmful insects and poisonous reptiles. Yet, the bitter galbanum brought out the best smells of the other spices when they were mixed together. It represents the hard trials of life. We might unexpectedly lose a loved one, experience abusive situations, or suffer financial problems. We are tempted to let bitter feelings develop, but God wants us to bring those hard circumstances to Him. When Hannah "was in bitterness of soul" (1 Samuel 1:10), she did the right thing. She "prayed unto the LORD," and God answered her prayer. Romans 8:28 promises, "ALL things [including the bitter trials] work together for good to them that love God."

PURE FRANKINCENSE: this tree was bruised three times and then a spike was driven into the tree to collect the white frankincense. This points to Christ's suffering on the Cross. (He was "wounded" and "bruised"; Isaiah 53:5.) Only the priests could offer incense on the Altar. Because of Jesus' Sacrifice, we can now pray directly to the Father ourselves.

When placed on the coals of the Altar, frankincense did not immediately produce a fragrance. It took some time. Often, it seems God is not hearing our prayers. Daniel felt the same way. God promised Daniel, "Your words [prayers] were heard ... I have come in response to [because of] your words" (Daniel 10:12 *Amplified Bible*). As the frankincense burned, it produced a white smoke. For our prayers to be heard, we must be living a holy life (Psalm 66:18; John 9:31). Not everything that is called a "prayer" is truly a prayer.

The word "incense" in the Hebrew (*qetoreth*) comes from the Aramaic word *keter*, which means "to bond with." Every one of these ingredients work together (forming a bond); not one of them can be left out. Likewise, we must not allow

anything that will hinder that bonding. Things like sin, mistreating others, and asking for things out of God's will can hinder our prayers.

Consider the serious example of Nadab and Abihu, priests who served in the Tabernacle. On Mount Sinai, they saw "a convincing manifestation of [God's] presence" (Exodus 24:10 *Amplified Bible Classic*). Yet later, they "offered strange fire [with the 'incense'] before the LORD" (Leviticus 10:1). They deviated from God's pattern and paid a terrible price! Could it be that Nadab and Abihu had grown careless and overly familiar with their duties? Today, being saved for many years is a tremendous blessing, but it also carries a danger—becoming complacent. If we are not careful, prayer can become a routine, something we just go through the motions of rather than having a serious, reverent prayer life.

Prayers That Are Heard

The high priest placed incense on the Altar of Incense (Leviticus 16:12) along with coals from the Altar of Sacrifice. Through Jesus (our High Priest), our prayers are heard by our Heavenly Father. This is why we pray "in Jesus' name" (John 16:24). The incense recipe reveals the ingredients needed for effective prayer. Just as heat was applied to the incense from the coals, our prayers need to be serious, thankful, reverent, and fervent (James 5:16).

Without effective prayer, the light in our life will go out (Golden Candlestick) and Bible reading will become dull (Table of Showbread). Do your prayers include love and thankfulness for Christ's Sacrifice? Do you humbly bring the brokenness and bitterness of trials into your alone time with God? God is waiting to hear from you!

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ **What does the placement of the Altar of Incense show?**
- ◆ **How does the collection of frankincense point to Christ's suffering on the Cross?**
- ◆ **Does God hear prayers with the wrong ingredients? What three things do the following Scriptures warn can hinder prayer (John 9:31; 1 Peter 3:7; James 4:3)?**

CHAPTER NINE

The Veil

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** The three entrances teach the way to God (John 10:1, 7-9; 14:6).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** The Veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Exodus 26:30-33).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** Once a year, only the high priest could go past the Veil (Leviticus 16:2; Hebrews 9:7).
- ❑ **Thursday:** The Veil represents Jesus opening the way to God for us (Hebrews 10:19-20).
- ❑ **Friday:** The colors of the Veil were blue, purple, and scarlet or crimson (Exodus 26:31; 2 Chronicles 3:14).
- ❑ **Saturday:** When we live the truth of the Gospel (as a "light"), we lift up Jesus (Matthew 5:16; John 12:32).

The Way Into God's Presence

If you were invited to meet the King of England, you would need to learn *proper etiquette*. There are expected rules and behaviors for meeting earthly royalty. Some examples are—dress formally, arrive early, avoid selfies, and speak only when spoken to. Ignoring those rules could lead to serious consequences. If that is true for an earthly king, how much more important it is to come correctly into the presence of Almighty God!

In the beginning, Adam and Eve walked with God, but when they sinned, they had to leave the Garden of Eden. They were put OUT of God's presence. Still, God planned a way for people to return to Him. The Tabernacle teaches spiritual lessons on how to come back into a right relationship with God.

The Tabernacle had three entrances—the Gate, the Door, and the Veil. Each one teaches something about how to approach God. In John 14:6, Jesus explained, "I am the way [the Gate], the truth [the Door], and the life [the Veil]." There are not *many* ways to God, for Jesus made it clear—"No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Trying to come to God any other way (through only good works or joining a church) makes one "a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). The Gate is the "way" into the Tabernacle Courtyard. The Door teaches the "truth" about entrance into the Tabernacle Proper. The Veil (the entrance into the Holy of Holies) teaches how to receive spiritual "life" (1 John 5:12).

The Veil Separated the Two Rooms

Inside the Tabernacle Proper were two rooms—the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (Exodus 26:33). A thick curtain called the Veil separated them. Only the high priest could go past the Veil into God's presence (Hebrews 9:7), and this was only once a year on the Day of Atonement. *Veil* means "hide or conceal," and it kept the Most Holy Place hidden from view. Yet God's plan of salvation was to restore mankind into a right relationship with Him, making it possible to enter His presence once again.

When Jesus was dying on the Cross, it was time for the evening sacrifice ("about the ninth hour"; Matthew 27:46). The priests were going about their duties, unaware of what was about to happen. At the very moment Jesus died, "The veil ... was rent in twain [torn into two pieces] from the top to the bottom" (Matthew 27:51). It was torn from top to bottom (from above to below), showing that the opening of the way to God ("a new and living way"; Hebrews 10:19-20) came from God.



Historians have recorded that the Veil was four inches thick and as much as thirty feet high. No human hands could have torn this apart! When Jesus cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30), God's plan for restoration with man was complete! Jesus paid the price, and the way to God was opened back up. Because Jesus bore our "sin on our behalf," we can now be "in a right relationship with" God (2 Corinthians 5:21 *Amplified Bible*).

The Veil Represents Jesus

The Veil symbolizes the separation between sinful people and a holy God. If we "walk in darkness" (live in sin), we cannot have "fellowship [a relationship] with [God]" (1 John 1:6). Only Jesus could change this! Hebrews 10:19-20 explains, "The blood of Jesus [His Sacrifice for our sins on the Cross]" has opened up "a new and living way" into "the holiest" place (into God's presence). These verses compare Jesus' body ("flesh") with "the veil."

First Timothy 3:16 says, "Without controversy [without a doubt] great is the mystery of godliness: God [Jesus] was manifest in the flesh." Here is the great mystery—Christ came as a human, and His death and resurrection opened the way for man to get back into a right relationship with God. Just as the only way to God in the Tabernacle was through the Veil, the only way back into a right relationship with God is through Jesus Christ.

Description of the Veil

The Veil was made "of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen ... with cherubims" embroidered on it, and it hung on "four pillars" (Exodus 26:31-32). When we are saved and have matured in our experience, we become "a pillar in the temple of my God" (Revelation 3:12). The New Testament temple is "the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15). Just as the Tabernacle pillars held up the Veil, we must hold up (believe and live) some important truths in our lives today. The description of the Veil represents these truths.

BLUE (the color of the heavens): Just as Jesus came from Heaven (John 8:23), when we get saved, we are "born again [reborn from above]" (John 3:7 *Amplified Version*).

PURPLE (the color of royalty): Just as Jesus is King (Revelation 19:13-16), through salvation, we are made "kings" (Revelation 1:6). That means through His power, we are reigning over sin.

SCARLET (the color of blood): Just as Jesus offered His body as a Sacrifice, we are called to present our bodies as a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1). A sacrificial life puts others first (1 John 3:16; Philip-pians 2:3-4).

FINE, TWINED LINEN: Christ makes us able to live a sin-free life (as He did). "The fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8).

CHERUBIMS: *Cherubims* means "living ones." It is only through Je-sus Christ (the Veil) that we have spiritual life.

How Do We Lift Up Christ?

The Curtain of the Gate (the entrance to the Tabernacle courtyard; Exodus 27:16) teaches spiritual lessons about accepting Jesus as our Savior. While the Curtain and the Veil had the same colors with fine, twisted linen, only the Veil was embroidered with "cherubims" (representing the saved of all the ages).

Salvation makes us God's people. What are some ways we (as pillars) can lift up the truths represented by the Veil's colors? Part of being a "living sacri-fice" is having the same attitude as Jesus. He said, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). To be like Jesus is to want God's will to be done. God does not want anyone to "perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Our lives should be a witness (a "light"; Matthew 5:16) to a lost-and-dying

world, pointing the way back to God.

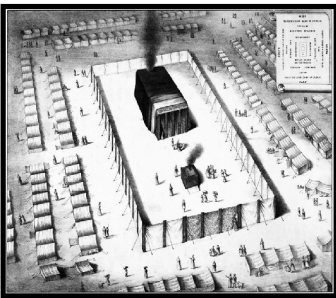
When we live out the truth of the Gospel, we are lifting up Jesus. We are revealing the "mystery ... which is Christ in you" (Colossians 1:27); we are drawing people to Him (John 12:32) by living holy, godly lives. When we are saved, living free from sin, and living a sacrificial life, we make Jesus real to the world. We become His hands and feet. Jesus' hands (that touched a leper and washed Judas' feet) and His feet (that walked miles to help the woman at the well) are our examples. How are we portraying Christ to the world?

The Greeks said, "We would see Jesus" (John 12:21). Today, it is the same. People need to see Jesus!

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ What does the word *veil* mean?
- ◆ What did the Veil separate?
- ◆ What is the purpose of a literal pillar in the Tabernacle?
- ◆ What is our purpose as spiritual pillars?

THE TABERNACLE WAS DISTINCTIVE



- **The Tabernacle (God's dwelling place in the Old Testament) stood out.**
- **As Christians (God's dwelling place today), how will we reach people if we blend in?**
- **We are to be "a city ... set on a hill [that] cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14).**

CHAPTER TEN

The Holy of Holies

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** God gave the exact pattern for the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:9-15).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Arks are places of safety (Genesis 6:13-14, 17-19; Exodus 2:1-10).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The Ark of the Covenant's special contents (Exodus 25:16; 16:33; 1 Kings 8:9; Hebrews 9:3-4).
- ❑ **Thursday:** God's covenants include promises and conditions (Leviticus 26:3, 12; Hebrews 8:6-12; 1 John 2:1).
- ❑ **Friday:** Consider how important mercy is to God (Exodus 25:17, 21-22; Romans 3:25; Ephesians 2:4).
- ❑ **Saturday:** The Cherubims had straight feet to walk in straight paths (Ezekiel 1:7; Hebrews 12:13).

The Ark Represents Jesus

The lessons of the Tabernacle teach the great lengths God took to restore His broken relationship with sinful people. When Thomas asked Jesus, "How can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:5-6). Every part of the Tabernacle points to Christ. These show that His birth, death, burial, and resurrection were all part of God's plan to bring us back into a right relationship with Him.

The second room of the Tabernacle (called the Holy of Holies) was where God's presence dwelled. Inside was only one piece of furniture—the Ark of the Covenant. God gave the exact measurements for the Ark (2½ cubits by 1½ cubits by 1½ cubits). It was made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. Pure gold represents God's holiness and perfection. Notice, the value of the metals increased the closer they were to God's holy presence.

The Ark represents Jesus. The wood represents Jesus' humanity, and the gold overlay reminds us He is God. Acacia was chosen because it is a strong wood that is resistant to decay. This reminds us that Jesus' body did not decay in the tomb; it did not see corruption. He rose on the third day! Christianity alone proclaims a risen Savior whose tomb is empty, affirming the hope of restored fellowship with God. Christianity is the only religion whose Founder (the risen Savior) has an empty tomb.

What Is the Purpose of an Ark?

In Genesis 6:14, God commanded Noah to build an ark. The Flood was coming, and the ark would provide a place of safety, preserving everyone who entered it. Noah and his family were saved because they had faith and obeyed God's Word.

In Exodus 2:3, a Hebrew mother (Jochebed) placed her infant son in an "ark of bulrushes." This was to save him from Pharaoh's order to kill Hebrew baby boys (Exodus 1:22). The baby (who was later named Moses) was protected and preserved because of his parents' faith. In both accounts, an ark was designed to be occupied, provide safety, and preserve its contents.

Another ark in the Bible was the Ark of the Covenant. It too was to be occupied. Hebrews 9:4 records the contents: "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant."

One example of the Ark's preservation is the Pot of Manna (representing the miracle of manna; Exodus 16:14-15). Except for the manna gathered for the Sabbath, manna saved for another day would have "bred worms, and stank" (verse 20). Yet, the manna in the Golden Pot placed in the Ark never spoiled; it was preserved. This teaches that when we are saved from sin, we are "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17). As long as we stay in Christ ("abide"; John 15:4), we are protected and preserved from the dangers of a sinful life.

What Is a Covenant?

A *covenant* is a sacred agreement. The Bible describes two main covenants: (1) the old (given through Moses) and (2) the new (established by Christ). God's covenants include "promises" (Hebrews 8:6), but there were also conditions. The blessing of the old covenant (the Old Testament) is found in Leviticus 26:12. "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Leviticus 26:3 explains the conditions necessary to receive those blessings. "Walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them." A visible reminder of God's covenant with His people (the Ten Commandments) was placed in the Ark of the Covenant.

The new covenant (revealed in the New Testament) also has promises and conditions. The blessing of living in God's presence and a restored relationship with Him only takes place when we meet the conditions (confess and forsake our sins; Proverbs 28:13). To continue receiving this blessing requires living a life free from sin ("sin not"; 1 John 2:1).

The Mercy Seat

The Ark had a cover called the Mercy Seat, which was made of gold. No wood was used, for mercy is a divine attribute. God's mercy was made possible by Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross. God's holiness and justice require sin to be punished. Yet, because of His great love, God made a provision (mercy) for forgiveness (Romans 5:8).

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled blood (from the Brazen Altar) on the Mercy Seat. This symbolized the time when Jesus' blood would be shed for our sins. The word *atonement* means "to cover." Just as the Passover lamb's blood protected the Israelites (because of their faith, the death angel passed over; Exodus 12:13), "faith in [Jesus'] blood" brings "remission [a passing over] of sins that are past" (Romans 3:25).

Jesus is called "a propitiation," a word that refers to the Mercy Seat. Though we deserved "death" (Romans 6:23), because of Jesus' Sacrifice, God's "undeserved mercy" makes us "spiritually alive ... with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5 *Amplified Bible*).

The Bible gives the length and width of the Mercy Seat but does not mention height (or depth). Many see this as an example of God's mercy, which has no limit. The hymn "Deeper Than the Stain Has Gone" says, "*The blood still reaches deeper than the stain has gone.*" No matter how deep sin has taken you, God's mercy goes deeper. Ephesians 2:4 says, "God ... is rich in mercy."

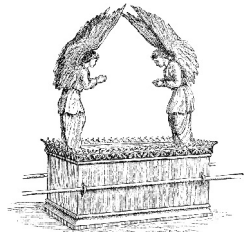
Consider how important mercy is to God. When Revelation 4:3 describes "a rainbow round about the throne [God's presence]," the center color is "emerald" (representing mercy). The fifth Beatitude (in the middle) says, "Blessed are the merciful" (Matthew 5:7). In the plan of salvation, everything revolves around mercy.

The Cherubims

On the Ark, two Cherubims stood at each end of the Mercy Seat. Look at the description:

STRAIGHT FEET: Two Cherubims "stood on their feet" (2 Chronicles 3:13). Ezekiel 1:7 describes them as having "straight feet." Standing up for the truth requires "straight feet" so we can walk in "straight paths" (Hebrews 12:13).

ONE PIECE OF GOLD: The Cherubims and the Mercy Seat (representing God's people and Jesus) were created from one piece of gold (Exodus 25:18).



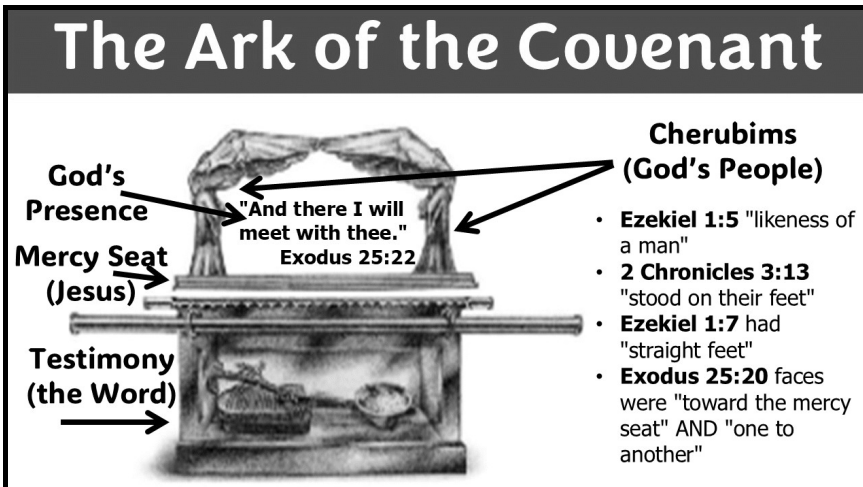
Through salvation, we are one with Christ. We have "the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). We become His hands and feet (doing His will and going where He wants us to go).

FACES TOWARD THE MERCY SEAT: The Cherubims' faces are "toward the mercy seat" and looking "one to another" (Exodus 25:20), teaching our eyes are to be on Christ as we work together in unity with God's people.

When the Word of God (the Testimony in the Ark), the presence of Christ (the Mercy Seat), and God's people (the Cherubims) come together in unity, God has promised, "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee" (Exodus 25:22) Through Christ, the way into the Holy of Holies has been opened, and we can be in God's presence continually!

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ What was the purpose of the arks mentioned in this lesson?
- ◆ What is a covenant and what do God's covenants include?
- ◆ Why was it important that the Mercy Seat not be made of wood?
- ◆ What are some examples of how everything revolves around mercy in the plan of salvation?



CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Ark's Contents

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** We must "abide in Christ" to stay saved (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 2:16; John 15:4).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** In salvation, there is no room for sin, worldliness, or surfeiting (Romans 6:1-2; 12:2; Luke 21:34).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The Testimony, placed in the Ark first, was "the work of God" (Exodus 31:18; 25:16; 32:16).
- ❑ **Thursday:** Manna was daily bread from heaven sent by the Father (Exodus 16:4, 15; John 6:31-32).
- ❑ **Friday:** Rebellion is serious, contagious, and deadly (Numbers 16:20-35, 41-49).
- ❑ **Saturday:** God will make it plain whom He has chosen to be the leader (Numbers 17:1-11).

The Ark Represents Salvation in Christ

Noah's ark, the ark of bulrushes, and the Ark of the Covenant were all places of safety and preservation. When we are saved, we are "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17), and "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). This lesson looks at what the contents of the Ark teach about how to "abide" in Christ (John 15:4). In other words, how to stay spiritually alive. The Ark's contents were only protected and preserved while inside the Ark. Likewise, we are kept safe from the dangers and consequences of sin if we remain "in Christ."

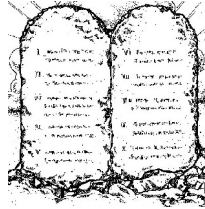
The Ark was a small, narrow box designed only for the contents God intended—nothing more, nothing less. In the same way, we cannot add to or take away from God's plan of salvation. Salvation is a narrow way (Matthew 7:14). It makes no room for "sin" (Romans 6:1-2), worldliness (Romans 12:2), or "surfeiting" (Luke 21:34), which is an excessive, overabundance amount of things. If we try to bring these into the Ark of Salvation, they crowd out the essential, God-intended contents.

The Tables of Testimony

The Ark contained Israel's chief treasures. These items reminded them of: (1) their covenant relationship promises with God; (2) God's love and care; and (3)

the dangers of rebellion, murmuring, and idolatry. Just as the Ark (representing Christ) held physical treasures, God's Word contains spiritual treasures. Jesus is the Living Word (John 1:14, 17). These "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3) teach us how to stay saved. They also reveal God's love and care and warn of the dangers and pitfalls we must avoid.

On Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the Tables of Testimony. These "tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18), were placed in the Ark first (Exodus 25:16). This placement teaches God's Word must be of supreme importance in our lives! The word *testimony* in Hebrew means "witness." The Tables of Testimony served as a witness (visible evidence) of God's covenant with Israel. As Exodus 32:16 says, "The tables were the work of God." God was delivering His Word directly to man.



Under the old covenant, God wrote His Law (with "the finger of God"; Exodus 31:18) on the Tables of Stone. In the new covenant, God's Spirit (called "the finger of God"; Luke 11:20 and Matthew 12:28) writes His laws on our hearts. Just as the tablets were "the work of God," a life changed by Christ is the work of God!



The Pot of Manna

When Israel traveled through the wilderness, God fed them with "manna." It was "bread which the LORD hath given you to eat" (Exodus 16:15). This miracle from God kept them alive. Each person was to gather only "an omer" (Exodus 16:16)—a daily portion of about two quarts. A "golden pot that had manna" (Hebrews 9:4) was the second item placed inside the Ark. Just as the Israelites were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13), we too are "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2:11) on a journey. As they needed physical food to reach Canaan, we need spiritual food to keep us alive on our journey to Heaven.

God promised to "rain bread from heaven for [Israel]" (Exodus 16:4). This "bread from heaven" was sent by the "Father" (John 6:31-32). God has also sent us daily spiritual bread. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (verse 35). Manna teaches the importance of daily Bible reading.

Israel gathered manna "every morning," except on the Sabbath. Can we do any less? Can we neglect daily gathering of spiritual manna and try to live on yesterday's blessings and experiences? What happened when the Israelites attempted to keep leftover manna (Exodus 16:19-20)? For forty years, the Israelites were kept alive by this manna (Exodus 16:35), and it came one day at a time.

"Aaron's Rod That Budded"



God called Moses to be Israel's deliverer from Egyptian bondage. Moses serves as a type (a foreshadow) of Christ, our Deliverer from the bondage of sin. Aaron, Moses' brother, was to be his spokesperson. God told Moses, "Speak unto [Aaron], and put words in his mouth" (Exodus 4:15). Aaron represents the ministry—those who speak God's words to the people. The third item placed in the Ark was "Aaron's rod that budded" (Hebrews 9:4).

In Egypt, God used Aaron's "rod" (staff or walking stick) to perform miracles (Exodus 7:8-12; 8:5-6, 16-17). After leaving Egypt, Korah (a Levite) and others became envious of Moses and Aaron. These rebellious men influenced many people. They accused Moses and Aaron of taking "too much upon you" and of lifting themselves "above the congregation of the Lord" (Numbers 16:3). When Moses heard this, "he fell upon his face" (Numbers 16:4). He understood the seriousness of their rebellion! (This serves as a warning today of the serious dangers when people work against Christ and His ministry.)

God dealt with this rebellion swiftly and severely. "The earth opened ... and swallowed them up," and "a fire from the LORD ... consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense" (Numbers 16:16, 32, 35). This rebellion cost the lives of over fifteen thousand people (Numbers 16:49). Rebellion against God and His ministry is serious, contagious, and deadly! Understanding Korah's rebellion explains why Aaron's rod was included in the Ark's contents. Yet, it was more than just a rod.

God wanted to prevent rebellion from happening again. In Numbers 17:1-11, He performed a miracle to silence the congregation's murmuring. Twelve rods (one for each tribe) were gathered. These ordinary staffs carried by the tribal leaders were tokens (a sign or evidence) of their authority (Numbers 21:18). Each rod was inscribed with the name of the tribal leader, but for the tribe of Levi, Moses wrote Aaron's name.

God told Moses to place the rods "before the testimony" in the Tabernacle "where I will meet with you." The rod that blossomed would reveal God's chosen man. The next day, Aaron's rod had "buds" and "blossoms" and "yielded almonds." Aaron's rod was kept "before the testimony ... for a token [sign or warning] against the rebels." This "rod" maintained its buds, blossoms and almonds (it was preserved in the Ark).

We Must Abide in Christ

When we "abide" in Christ and "the word of God abideth in [us]" (1 John 2:28, 14), we can overcome the enemy. In Christ is our place of spiritual safety. The three items in the Ark teach us how to remain in Him by: (1) keeping God's Word first in our lives; (2) daily reading and obeying what the Word tells us to do; and (3) following a godly pastor who teaches the truth. ALL three are absolutely essential!

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ What lessons can we learn from the Ark's small size?
- ◆ Where did "the finger of God" write His laws in the Old Testament and in the New Testament? Compare the two.
- ◆ What lessons can be learned from the Israelites attempts to keep leftover manna that "bred worms, and stank"?
- ◆ Why was Aaron's rod that budded included in the Ark's contents?

THE ARK HELD ISRAEL'S CHIEF TREASURES



What Treasures Can Be Found in Christ (the Word)?

- "treasures of **WISDOM** and **KNOWLEDGE**" (Colossians 2:3)

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Shekinah Glory

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** When the pattern was followed, the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:31-35).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Examples of the Shekinah Glory (Exodus 24:16; 33:9; 1 Kings 8:10; Matthew 17:5).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The glory of the Lord is a defense (Exodus 14:19-20; Isaiah 4:5).
- ❑ **Thursday:** The glory of the Lord gives guidance (Exodus 33:15; 40:36-38; Acts 8:26-39).
- ❑ **Friday:** Men who failed to follow the pattern (Leviticus 10:1-2; 2 Samuel 4:11; 6:6-7).
- ❑ **Saturday:** The glory of the Lord is a witness (Exodus 25:22; Matthew 5:14; 18:20; John 13:35).

The Importance of Following the Pattern

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed the privilege of being in God's presence. But when they sinned, they "hid themselves from the presence of the LORD" (Genesis 3:8). Sin separated them from God. Yet, God did not give up on restoring that relationship. The journey through the Tabernacle teaches the importance of this to God. He gave Moses a detailed pattern for building it and for how worship should take place. These instructions were not only for Israel, but they were also a *foreshadowing* of what was to come. (The Tabernacle's physical examples were a picture of the spiritual work Jesus would accomplish through His death and Resurrection.) Through the pattern, God was teaching us how to come back into His presence and have a right relationship with Him.

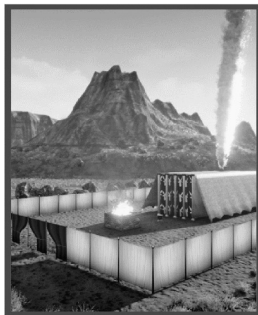
Moses did "according to all that the LORD commanded him" (Exodus 40:16). He followed the pattern exactly (Exodus 25:40). "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34). Numbers 17:7-8 refers to it as "the tabernacle of witness." This was because God's presence (the "cloud") was a witness of His desire to dwell among His people (Exodus 25:8).

Consider, would God's glory have filled the Tabernacle if Moses had ignored any of the details? Many people today think God does not care about the small

details of our lives—how we live, dress, or worship. However, if God cared so much about His Old Testament dwelling place (the Tabernacle), why would He be less concerned about His New Testament dwelling place (our bodies)?

God's Presence Came and Abode

The "glory of the LORD ['the cloud'; Exodus 40:35] abode" (Exodus 24:16). Jewish scholars used a unique word for "abode"—*Shekinah*. It means "Him who dwelled." When God dwelled among His people, it was often called the *Shekinah Glory*. Examples of God's presence in a "cloud" are Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:16), the Tabernacle (Exodus 33:9), Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8:10), and on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5).



Today, God does not dwell in a cloud, on a mountain, or in a physical tent. Jesus opened the way for God's ultimate plan—to dwell *within* His people. "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will *dwell with them*, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:3).

The Glory of the Lord Is Our Defense

The *Shekinah Glory* (the glory of the Lord) provided a defense for the Israelites. Trapped between the Red Sea and the Egyptian army, they were in great danger. Yet, "the pillar of the cloud ... came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel" (Exodus 14:19-20). God's presence provided protection from the enemy. The cloud was "darkness" to the Egyptians, but "it gave light by night" to the Israelites "so that the one came not near the other all the night" (Exodus 14:20).

In the same way, God's presence protects us against the enemy's weapons today. Isaiah 4:5 says, "The glory [God's presence] shall be a defence." Without the *Shekinah Glory*, the Tabernacle would have been just another tent in the wilderness. Likewise, without God's presence in our lives, we will become an empty tabernacle. We may believe all the right doctrines and live by the standard of holiness. But if God's presence is not in our lives, we will lose our protection from the enemy's traps.

The Glory of the Lord Gives Guidance

Moses understood God's presence was necessary for direction (Exodus 33:15). When the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, Israel followed it (Exodus 40:36). When the cloud remained, Israel did not move either (Exodus 40:37). God's presence guided them "throughout all their journeys" (Exodus 40:38).

In the New Testament, God's presence continued to guide His people. The Holy Spirit directed Philip to go "and join thyself to this chariot" (Acts 8:29). Because of God's guidance and Philip's obedience, an Ethiopian official was given an understanding of the Gospel.

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would guide His people "into all truth" (John 16:13). In every decision of life, God's Spirit provides the guidance that His people need. He knows the best way to live, the dangers ahead, and where the enemy is hiding. To be "led by the Spirit of God" as "the sons of God" (Romans 8:14) is to have divine guidance. It is a privilege to hear the Holy Spirit say, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21).

The Glory of the Lord Is a Witness

The Cherubims (representing God's people) faced "the mercy seat" (Christ) and also faced "one to another" (Exodus 25:20). The glory of the Lord in our midst requires God's people working together in unity with our eyes on Christ. God's family is to be "builded together for an habitation of God [God's dwelling place] through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). The glory of the Lord in our midst requires God's people working together in unity with their eyes on Christ.

First Corinthians 12:18 reads, "God [hath] set the members every one of them in the body." Just as the literal body requires all parts working together, so it is with the body of Christ (the church). When God's people work together in unity, the glory of the Lord shines through as a witness to a lost world. Revelation 21:11 describes the church's most outstanding feature is "having the glory of God."

The Bible gives warnings about people who did not follow God's pattern: Nadab, Abihu, Hophni, Phinehas, and Uzzah. Their disobedience resulted in death (Leviticus 10:1-2; 2 Samuel 4:11; 2 Samuel 6:6-7). What happens if we fail to follow God's pattern today? God's people are standing on the Word ("a sea of glass") and have "victory" (Revelation 15:2). To step away from God's Word (His pattern) leads to defeat and the loss of His presence.

When God's people have His presence (the Shekinah Glory) in their lives,

they are "the light of the world." They are like "a city that is set on a hill [that] cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14). If we want the world to see the church, see the truth, and know where to come, we MUST have the glory of God in our midst.

Exodus 25:22 says, "And there [in the midst of God's people] I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee." Matthew 18:20 promises, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

What a privilege to have God's Spirit "in the midst" in our individual lives and also when we gather for worship services. When we have God's presence, we will have the love of God for our brothers and sisters. John 13:35 tells us this "love" is a witness to "all men" that "ye are my disciples."

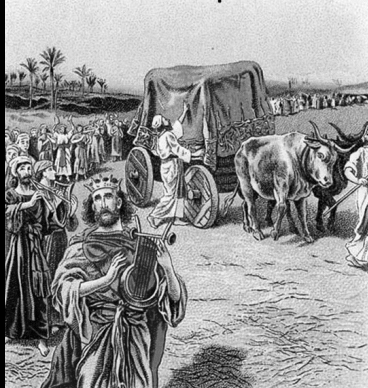
The glory of the Lord is our defense, our guide, and a witness to a world desperately in need of the Savior!

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ◆ What does the word *Shekinah* mean?
- ◆ How was the Tabernacle a *foreshadowing* of what was to come?
- ◆ Why was the Tabernacle described as "the tabernacle of witness"?
- ◆ What does the Cherubims' faces looking toward one another mean?
- ◆ How is the glory of the Lord our defense, our guide, and a witness to others?

Warning!

2 Samuel, Chapter 6



Failing to Follow the Pattern

- Transporting the Ark on a cart
- Following the Philistines' example

Having a Form

- 2 Samuel 6:5 "David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments."
- Good singing & instrument playing does not always mean God is pleased

The glory of the Lord requires following God's "due order."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 2001, I was given both the honor and the responsibility of serving as a book editor. My pastor, Brother Roger L. Decker, asked me to begin editing a series of six books on *The Revelation Explained* by Brother Earl R. Borders. I could not have imagined then the blessings that would unfold through this work. Many books have been published since that time, and several more manuscripts still await their turn in the publication process.

A few years ago, I felt the Lord directing my attention to a set of manuscripts entitled *Treasures of Truth in Tabernacle Types* by Brother Earl R. Borders (unpublished at this time). I do not recall ever studying the Old Testament Tabernacle in great depth before, but as I began to explore this subject, it became a tremendous blessing to me. Brother Borders' writings have proven to be an invaluable resource, and I am deeply grateful for his work.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the support of my pastor and family throughout the writing of this book, as well as the many editors and proofreaders who have faithfully worked with me through each step of the process.

To God be the glory for any good this Bible study book may accomplish!

Sister Sheri Strelecky
March 2026

OTHER PUBLICATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

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The Tabernacle must have been very important to God. Creation is described in only two chapters. Yet, the construction and operation of the Tabernacle is described in at least fifty chapters! The Tabernacle and later the Temple were physical examples (or models) "of heavenly things" (Hebrews 8:5), teaching us many spiritual lessons.

God is holy, and sin separates us from Him. So God created the plan of salvation to bring us back into a right relationship with Him. God used something physical—the Tabernacle—to help explain it. Through the Tabernacle's design, furniture, and worship practices, God revealed the seriousness of sin, our need for a Savior, and the promise of the coming Messiah (Jesus Christ).



Sheri Strelecky is a Sunday school teacher, book editor, wife, mother, and grandmother. In addition to this Bible Study Series, she has written primary and youth Sunday school lessons. Sheri and her husband, Steve, are the youth leaders at the Church of God at God's Acres.