

Church of God

Sunday School

THE TABERNACLE #1 – INTRODUCTION



DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Relationship with a holy God requires a holy life (Leviticus 11:45; Leviticus 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; 2 Corinthians 6:16).

MEMORY VERSE: *"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."* —Exodus 25:8

Why Did God Make Us?

Many young 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 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 Study the Tabernacle?

The Tabernacle must have been very important to God. Creation is described in only two chapters (Genesis, Chapters 1 and 2). Yet, 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]; ... they ... testify of me" (John 5:39). Studying Old Testament Scriptures reveal Christ, salvation, and the church. To study about the Tabernacle (which is 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), it means "a dwelling place." On Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the exact instructions for the Tabernacle. God said, "Copy [exactly] their pattern which was shown you on the mountain" (Exodus 25:40 *Amplified Bible Classic*). God told Moses the purpose of this Tabernacle in Exodus 25:8. "Make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." This was God's first dwelling place on earth.

tabernacle noun

tab·er·na·cle ('ta-bər-na-kəl ◀)

Definitions:

- "a movable habitation"
- "a dwelling place"

Many years later, Jesus came to earth and "tabernacled (lived awhile) among us" (John 1:14 *Amplified Bible Classic*). Both the Tabernacle and Jesus' earthly life were temporary. God had something much greater in mind! In the Old Testament, God dwelled *among* His people, but in the New Testament, His plan is to dwell *within* His people.

The Tabernacle was a literal building, but 2 Corinthians 5:1 explains our body (our "earthly house") is a "tabernacle" (a place for God's Spirit to live). We are to be "the temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:16). God designed us to be His dwelling place. When that happens, God says, "I will dwell in them ... and they shall be my people."

Important Details About 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 of 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.

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). This shows how God wants to be "in the midst" of His people (Matthew 18:20). Being in the center 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.



The Pattern

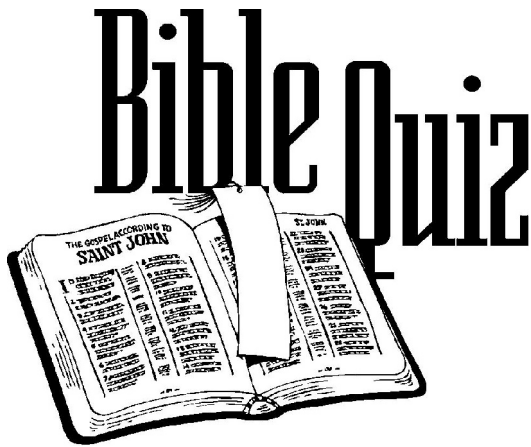
God's People

In the Old Testament, Israel was God's "chosen ... special people" (Deuteronomy 7:6). They were to be different from other nations—set apart for God. 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 today?

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Tabernacle was called "Tent of Meeting."
- The Tabernacle's cost (in today's value) would have been more than \$62 million dollars.

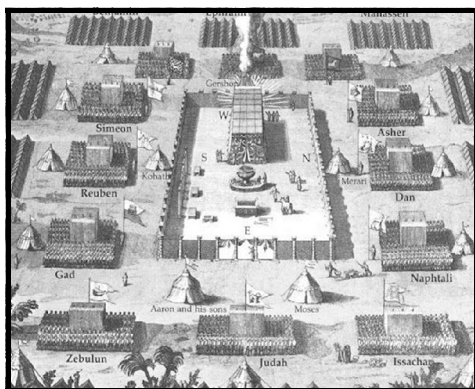


1. God wants us to love Him, not because we have to, but because we _____ to.
2. What separates us from God? _____
3. God's plan to bring us back into a right relationship with Him is called _____
4. The Creation is described in _____ chapters; the Tabernacle pattern is described in _____ chapters.
5. Learning about the Tabernacle helps us understanding why we need a _____ and God's requirement for us to live _____.
6. What does the word *Tabernacle* mean? _____
7. What were the Tabernacle furnishings in the shape of? _____
8. What direction did the Tabernacle face? _____
9. The Tabernacle was surrounded by the twelve _____ of Israel.
10. Why did the Israelites have standards (banners)? _____

STANDARDS OR BANNERS

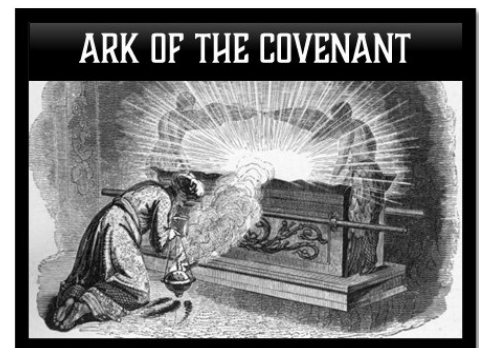
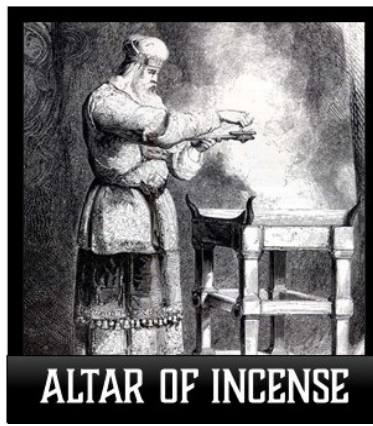
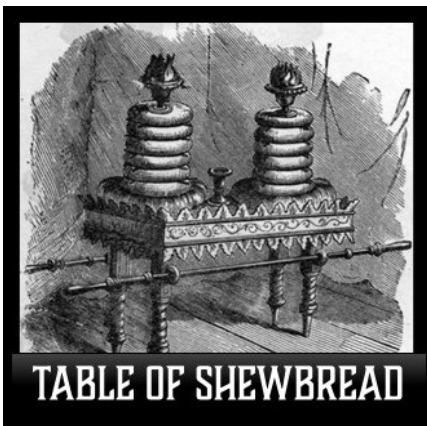
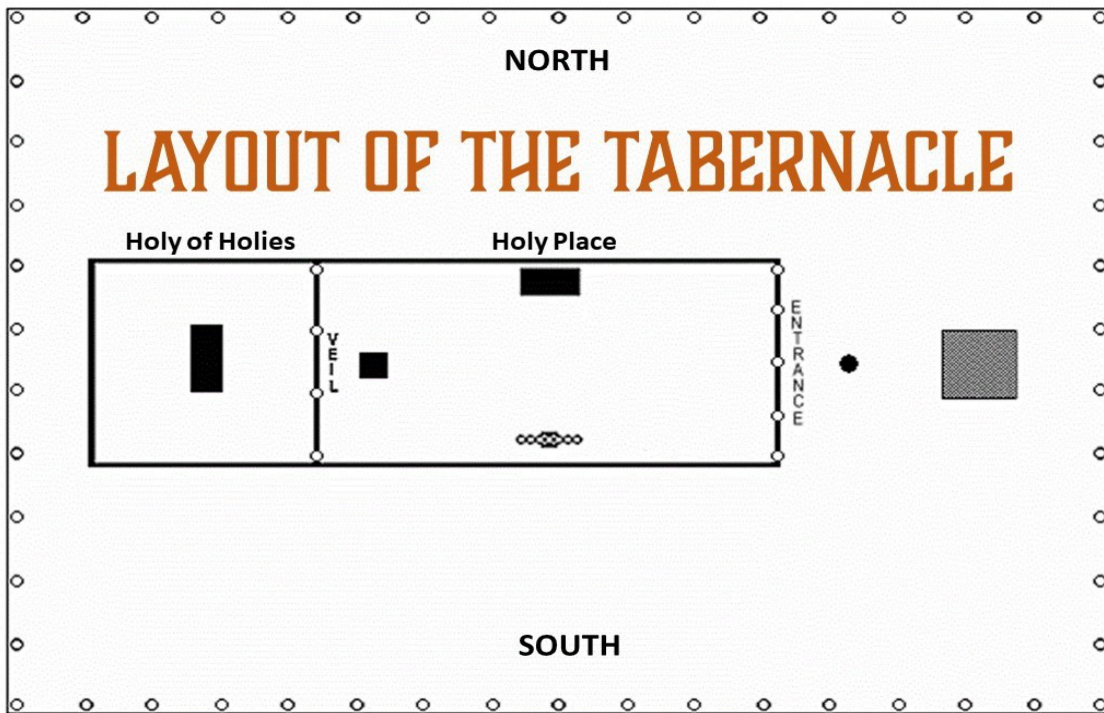
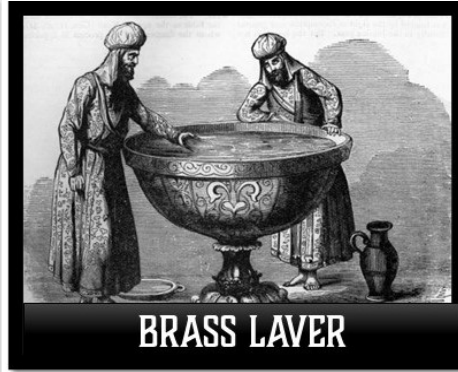
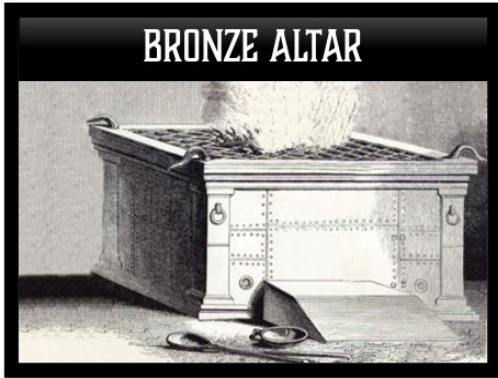
"And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard" (Numbers 1:52).

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.



The Camp of Israel

Draw a line from the furnishings to the location in the Tabernacle.



"In the Old Testament, the New is hidden; in the New Testament, the Old lies open."