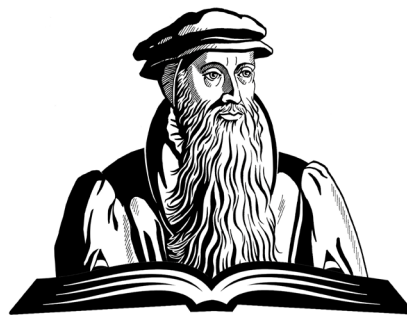


The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series
by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

13 LECTURES



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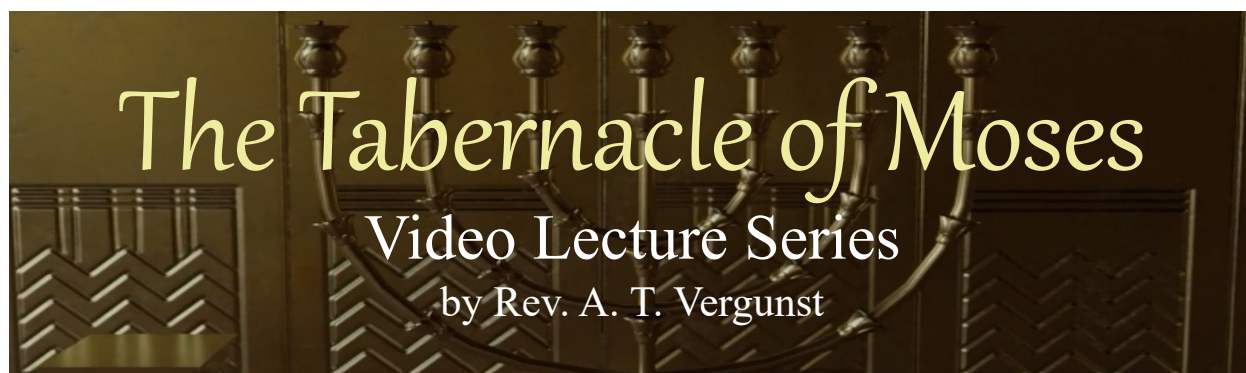
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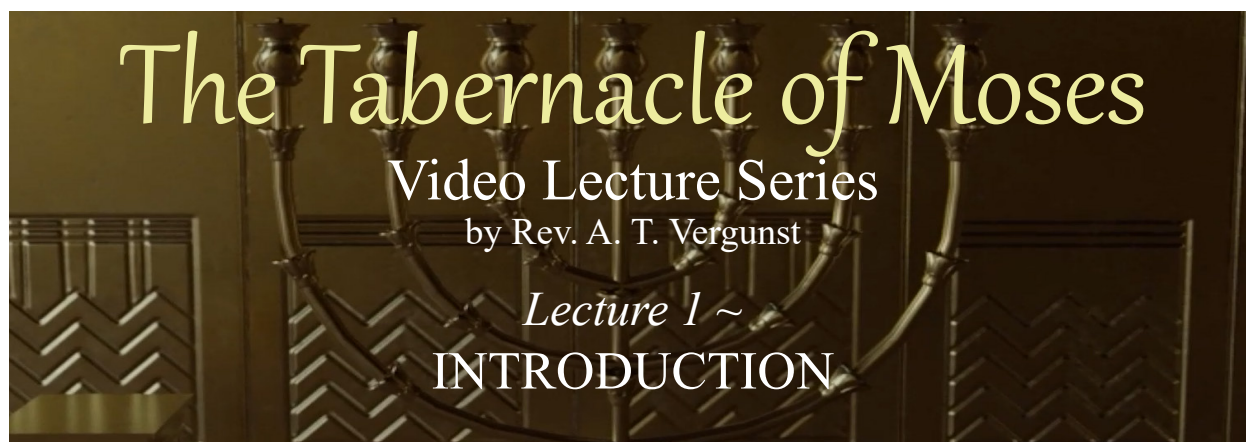
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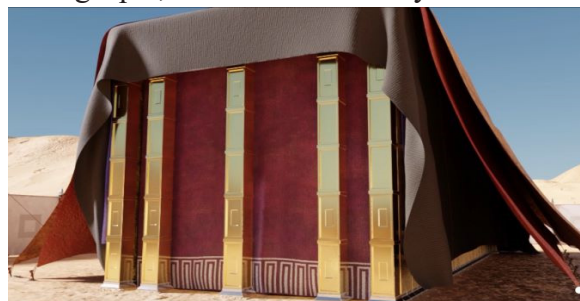
	PAGE
1. Introduction.	1
2. The Temple Theme.	6
3. Setting and Organization.	11
4. The Courtyard Fence.	16
5. The Courtyard Gate.	21
6. The Brazen Altar—part 1.	27
7. The Brazen Altar—part 2.	32
8. The Laver.	37
9. The Tabernacle Building.	42
10. The Lampstand.	48
11. The Table of Shewbread.	54
12. The Altar of Incense.	59
13. The Ark of the Covenant.	64



Well, dear friends, with great joy and desire do I answer the request to make this in-depth study of the Old Testament Tabernacle. Throughout the lectures, you'll be shown a number of images of a life-size Tabernacle which has been reconstructed. And these images will help you to somewhat visualize the Tabernacle that God commanded Moses to build.

The Tabernacle—we can compare that to a children's Bible. In a children's Bible, we try to add pictures of the scenes to help the child remember or understand the story. We all know that a picture is worth a thousand words. And so likewise, God designed the Tabernacle to help the people of Israel to understand his teachings on both the law and the gospel, or on the whole way of salvation.

In a very beautiful manner, the Tabernacle illustrates the main doctrines of the New Testament of salvation in a variety of ways. Let me, for example, think of the general set up, the division of the entire Tabernacle in the Holy, and the Holy of Holies; or, if you look at the finer details and the very placement of the various pieces; or, if you examine the various actions of both the Israelite and the priest. But mostly, you will see that the Tabernacle is one glorious portrayal of the person of Jesus Christ and his ministry, and the importance, the centrality of his work in redemption.



So, what do we hope to cover in this course? First, we'll begin with an introductory study on the Tabernacle, and the temple symbolism as well in the entire Bible. And secondly, we will focus on every aspect of the Tabernacle, beginning of course with the entrance gate, and ending all the way, in the very heart of the Tabernacle, which is the Holy of Holies. And thirdly, as we look at all these individual items, I will weave in some of the teaching on how we, as a believer, experience the various gospel truths that are displayed in this glorious building. And my hope is that the fruit of our study may be, as someone once said with intense joy and solemn impression, "I have been to the mountain of God, and I have seen the glory of the Lord God."

So perhaps the most surprising, we are going to begin our Tabernacle study in the book of Exodus, in chapter 20. Now that chapter records the awe-inspiring giving of God's holy law, by the Lord God himself. And after the Israelites observed God's glory, they were more than awestruck. They were literally terrified. We read in the Scriptures, "And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off" (verse 18). The Hebrews author even added that Moses



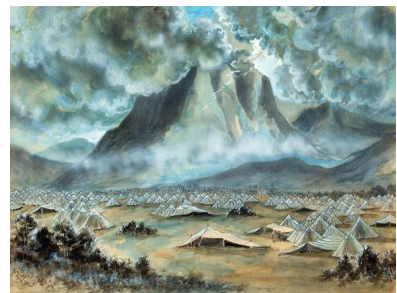
himself was deeply stirred: “And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake” (Hebrews 12:21). Everyone instantly recognized—we cannot dwell in the presence and nearness of this holy majesty, the Lord our God. And therefore, the Israelites fell back, and they begged Moses to speak to them instead of God, for they were afraid to die if God would speak again. (verse 20)

So Moses complied, and he drew near to the Lord on Israel’s behalf in a pleading prayer. In response, God gave Moses the instructions to make an altar, and observe what the Lord promised in verse 24 of Exodus 20: “An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.” This last sentence is most amazing. God promised to come, to dwell with them, no more in that majestic glory as we saw on Mount Sinai. No, he would come and dwell through the means of an altar—an altar with various sacrifices. And his coming was to bless them. The altar Moses built served as a temporary altar until the Tabernacle was completed. So therefore, we could see that altar as the forerunner, the predecessor of the actual Tabernacle.

Now it’s crucial for us all to understand the important connection between the law and the provision of the gospel, as seen in that chapter of Exodus. God, in his holy majesty, is not only unapproachable by us unholy men, no, he also himself cannot dwell among us in his great and glorious holiness. But now to make both possible, for him to dwell among us, and for us to approach to him, God ordered Moses, “Construct this Tabernacle.”

So let’s turn then to Exodus 24, verses 1 and 2. We read there how God summoned Moses into his presence. And though at first, Aaron, and Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders all joined Moses, it is Moses alone who ultimately is commanded to draw near to the Lord on the mount. In verse 15, we read it: “And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount.” For six days, Moses was alone and silent in the presence of this glory of the Lord God, which was still abiding on Mount Sinai.

And then, on day seven, the silence was broken, when the Lord summoned Moses to draw near to him. And we read then, in verse 18: “And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.” It’s in these forty days and forty nights that Jehovah God dictates to Moses the exact details of the Tabernacle building, which we must assume Moses wrote down meticulously then, or perhaps later. He spoke to Moses in Exodus 25, 8 and 9: “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”



So don’t miss the repeat of this very lovely revelation of God’s goodness. He commanded this Tabernacle to be built so he might dwell among them. Nothing—nothing of this Tabernacle was left up to the creativity or the ideas of the builder. It is noticeable that twenty times the record records, “as the Lord commanded Moses.”

What a joy must have swept over Moses, when the Lord unveiled this glorious plan for this Tabernacle he was to build. What a privilege to have Jehovah, the God of the universe, to dwell among them, not in the solemn appearance of that burning bush that Moses saw earlier in his life;

and also not in the majesty of the lightning and the thunder, as witnessed on Mount Sinai. But instead, in the quiet beauty of the Tabernacle of the Lord God.

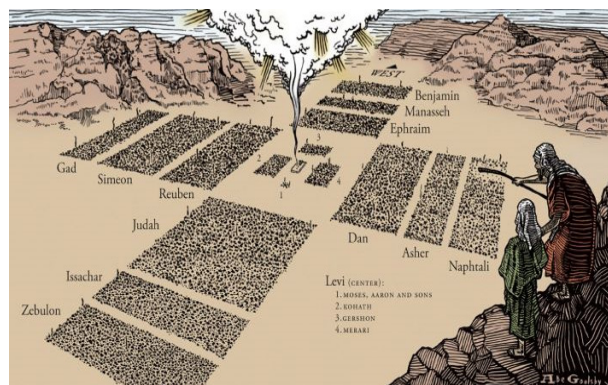
It will be agreed by us all that, for Moses and the Israelites, the Tabernacle was an object worthy of all attention. And we don't know for sure how much the common Israelite understood of all the significance of the Tabernacle. Now that is hard to answer for us. We don't even know whether all the priests and the Levites, who worked in this Tabernacle, grasped the full spiritual significance of the Tabernacle, and later of Solomon's Temple.

But you are right to ask, why should we, living in the New Testament time, devote a detailed study to this ancient building that doesn't even exist anymore. Let me share these five reasons for us to devote our attention to this part of God's revelation. The first is that God himself devoted more attention to the Tabernacle than to any other subject in the Bible. While the Holy Spirit devoted one single chapter to the creation of the universe, there are fifty chapters over all these books devoted to the Tabernacle and its services. God spent six days creating the world, yet it took him forty days to detail, line upon line, the design of the Tabernacle to Moses. I think that even those facts make it clear that the Tabernacle was very important to God, friends, and anything important to God is worthy of our study. And as Paul writes that "all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness," well then certainly, these fifty chapters of God's word should be profitable for us spiritually somehow.

Now the second reason to study the Tabernacle is because it is a visual revelation of God's own glorious character. Friends, ignorance of God's character or his attributes leads to destruction. And therefore, the more attention that we can give to study the glory of God's character, the stronger Christians we will be. Now, many of God's glorious attributes are visualized in the Tabernacle details as much as possible. Approaching the Tabernacle was approaching a place where you could almost breathe holiness. The formidable and the sparkling white fence and then the ever-burning fire on the altar; and the strictly-forbidden access into the Holy by all the common people; and then the inaccessible Holy of Holies, except for the high priest once a year; and on top of that, the pillar of cloud or the pillar of fire—they all underline the same truth: The Lord our God is holy.



And yet, the entire building in the midst of the camp reveals God's love, and mercy, and grace, as well, the attribute of his wisdom. He's made a divine provision to be able to dwell among these people. But love itself cannot cancel a broken law. Love cannot just cancel guilt. Justice and truth demand that a sinner who broke God's law ought to die. The truth that mercy cannot be exercised without God's justice is clearly pictured in the demand of the sacrificial offerings which are consumed by the continual fire in the brazen altar.



consumed by the continual fire in the brazen altar.

We see it in all the details of the grand structure, the sum of God's wisdom in his method of salvation in redeeming sinners. And Paul quotes, in 1 Corinthians 2, verse 9, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Now this truth, though it is true about heaven, in the context of that chapter, it is not speaking about the

glory of heaven. The Apostle referred, in that Scripture, to the wisdom of God, in him designing the way and the method of salvation. No human intellect could ever answer how a holy and just God could pardon a guilty sinner and receive him in his holy presence. None of the princes or the wisest of the world ever came close to answering how God can be gracious to sinners without compromising his other attributes of truth, holiness, and justice. And friends, in our study of the Tabernacle, you see the details of God's magnificent wisdom—how he can exercise mercy, at the same time, maintain justice.

In Exodus 35:31, we read how God filled Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah “with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.” Now, if the workman carrying out the designs God needed, needed such divine enabling, how much more was the wisdom of him who designed it.

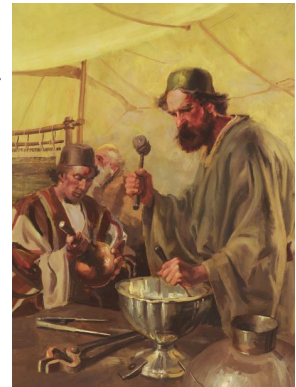
And that brings me to the third reason for devoting our study time to this portion of God's revealed truth. The Tabernacle, friends, is the greatest type of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Well, let me briefly explain what I mean with a type of Jesus. A type can be compared to what we call a silhouette. A silhouette, you know, is a little shadowy portrait of a person. They either picture a person's face, or they picture a person sideways. A silhouette is not a crystal clear picture, but it just highlights some of the main characteristics of a person's face. So let's say you are introduced to a number of silhouettes of a person you don't know. Having become familiar with these silhouettes, you'll easily recognize him or her, once you see them in real life.

Well that scenario describes the case, or should describe the case, for the Old Testament Jews. As they had grown up with the types, or the silhouettes, of Jesus in the Old Testament, they should have been able to recognize him when he finally came. No, it is clear, even then, special teaching was needed, as for example, as illustrated to the couple on the way to Emmaus, in Luke 24. It was only when Jesus opened their understanding that they may have said to each other, “How could we miss what he has now showed us about himself in the Old Testament Scriptures?”

Silhouettes also work the other way. Let's say you are familiar with a person. You'll easily recognize that person you know, when you see him or her in a silhouette, by the shape of the nose, the hairstyle, the chin, the gestures identifies immediately the person you know. You see, that's what we should experience when we study the Tabernacle. Having learned about Jesus Christ in the New Testament pages, you'll begin to see him everywhere, in the details of history, of prophecy, and in the Tabernacle.

For example, with the New Testament light in mind, let me ask you a few questions. What does it mean that the Tabernacle has only one door? Why could you only enter the Tabernacle via the camp of Judah? Or, what is the significance of the four colors that are consistently used in the Tabernacle? They were white, blue, purple, and scarlet. Or, what is the significance that nearly all the pieces of furniture were made of wood and bronze on the outside, or wood and gold on the outside? And why was the one in bronze, and why was the other one in gold? Now hopefully, these questions are just whetting your appetite about delving deeper into the details of this divine building. And the more familiar you become with the Tabernacle, the more familiar you will become with the person of Jesus Christ, and all that he means to us in the work of salvation.

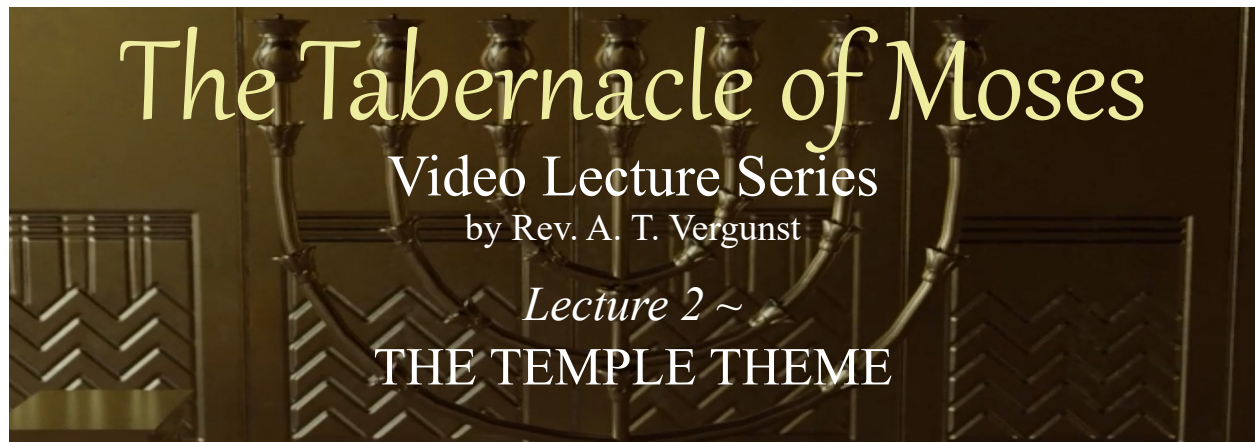
Now the fourth reason justifying a thorough study of the Tabernacle is that it is a visual repre-



sentation of all the great themes in the experience of salvation. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 15, verse 4, that “Whatsoever things were written afore...were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures”—that were written before—“might have hope.” Now, we cannot exclude the Tabernacle from that passage. In the Tabernacle, we see, as it were, before our very eyes, answers on questions like this: How is God’s plan of redemption a provision of one-sided grace? or, How can a holy God receive me, a sinful person? How can I, as an unholy sinner, have communion with God, when I am guilty? or, If we are saved by faith in Christ, what now really is the role of faith? or, How is justification and sanctification related, and yet different from one another? or, What is now the connection between the cross of Calvary, and the intercession of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God the Father? Or, maybe another question is, What is the glory and what is the purpose of the church of God—the assembly of the saints? And finally, What is really the heart, the heart of the glory of God? These are theological questions, and they are all answered in the Tabernacle structure in a very simple, a physical gospel, like a children’s Bible.

And so, fifthly, a very thorough study of the Tabernacle and the ceremonial laws, detailing the various sacrifices—which I will not include in this series—will open your eye for all kinds of passages of the rest of the Scriptures. For example, when we know the various details and the meaning of the Tabernacle structure, it will help you to understand various references and sayings in the Psalms and in the prophets. Like if you want a short example, in Psalm 141, verse 2, David prays, Lord, “Let my prayer be set before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” It will also help you to understand the rich gospel teachings in the book of Hebrews, and much of the symbolism in the book of Revelation. For both of these books are totally built on the imagery of the Tabernacle.

So, you be the judge. Have I made my case for a thorough study of the Tabernacle? Now that is a worthwhile effort, even though the building is long gone. And I am confident that when you walk with me in this tour of the Tabernacle, it will strengthen your grasp of the astonishing and the comforting beauty of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, may God bless us and assist us all, as we go through this study.



Welcome to our next study on the Tabernacle. In this second session of our study, we hope together to cover two main parts. Both will serve as a preparation for the understanding of the various parts of the Tabernacle. Well first, let's review what God calls the Tabernacle himself, in the book of Exodus. And secondly, we'll trace the temple theme throughout the Bible.

God has given five designations to the Tabernacle. The first one is found in Exodus 25, verse 8, where he calls it a "sanctuary." Making sanctuary the first name that God gave to the Tabernacle emphasizes the sacredness of this building. Even if you think about the two names of the main rooms underlines this: the Holy, and the Holy of Holies. In his presence, friends, there is nothing secular, nothing trivial, nothing casual. All is sacred, even to the smallest details of spoons and bowls.



The second name, we find in Exodus 25, verse 9, where God calls it "the tabernacle." This word, tabernacle, reveals that it was the place where the Lord would desire to dwell among his people, and to meet with them. And to do this, he pitched his tent among all their tents, so that their lives may be centered around him. What a beautiful revelation of God is given in this.

Now the third name is given in Exodus 26, verse 36, where it is simply called a "tent." And a tent emphasizes also that it was a temporary, and a movable dwelling. Later, the tent was replaced by Solomon's solid temple. Yet also that proved temporary, until Jesus himself came to dwell among us as the incarnate Son of God.

And the fourth name is Exodus 29, verse 42, where it's called "the tabernacle of the congregation." And that highlights the importance that the Tabernacle was. It was a meeting place. They were to come to him in and through the Tabernacle, to commune with him. What a privilege that such an opportunity is given.

Then the last name, the fifth name, is in Exodus 38, verse 21, where God called it "the tabernacle of testimony." And again, what a beautiful and fitting name. The entire Tabernacle is testimony. All the provisions and all the details was one great testimony to the greatness and graciousness of God's goodness. Really, it was the visible gospel in the Old Testament. In that sense, the Tabernacle in the Old Testament is the counterweight of the version in the New Testament in John 3:16: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,"—that is, he came to dwell, in his Son among us—"that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Or,

to use an Old Testament paraphrase, “that we may dwell with him” forever, in his eternal glory and presence.

Well secondly, let’s trace the temple theme throughout the Scriptures. In studying the symbolism of the temple, as well as other doctrines, we will again and again see the importance of understanding the whole of the Bible as one progressive, expanding, and yet united revelation. Progressive means that God is adding more and more details to his teaching, more and more revealing as the ages move on, as the Bible was written. And yet, one message, united, woven through all the Scriptures. See not the Bible as a collection of books, but look at the Scripture as one book. And in this book God is gradually unfolding his plan, and his provision and thoughts of salvation. Understanding that thought, it will richly deepen your grasp of the message and the comfort of the Bible, as it is written out in the Old through the New.

So let’s have a basic question. What is a temple? Maybe you answered, The temple is God’s house—God’s dwelling place. But how does the Bible define it? What is the most accurate definition? Solomon, when he stands in his newly-dedicated temple, he said this: “But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!” (2 Chronicles 6:18) In Isaiah 66:1, God adds, in addition to that, from his own mouth, “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?” Add to that Jeremiah 23:24: “Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.” Later, when Paul preached to the Greeks, in Acts 17, he states in verse 24, “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”

So, adding up all these Scriptures, we cannot really define a temple as the dwelling place of God, for God cannot dwell in any earthly building. God cannot dwell either in an earthly temple. So the most accurate definition of the temple is God’s meeting place with man. The temple is the means whereby God is able to meet with us sinners. Notice that God himself defines the Tabernacle in that manner. Exodus 25, verses 8 and 22: “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them....And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony.” In Exodus 29, verses 42 to 43, it is added, in connection with the burnt offering: “This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout all your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory.” And then if you go to Leviticus 26: “And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people” (verses 11–12).

Isn’t that beautiful? In the temple, God provides a place or a means, where he could dwell with us sinners. Now, this tabernacle or temple theme is found throughout all the Scriptures, with one exception—Genesis 1 and 2. In vain you look for a tabernacle or a temple in the Garden of Eden. Adam was instructed to dress the garden, but he was not instructed to build a temple. Well, why not? It was not necessary to have a designated place or a means to meet with God. And Genesis 3, verse 8 tells us that they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. The Lord communed on a daily basis with his Adam and Eve directly, though, of course, spiritually. There was no need for a temple. There was no need for a mediator there. There was no unholiness in them. There was no separation, no barrier. Now we know, sadly, that this communion



was destroyed through Adam and Eve's rebellion. Yet, God still desires to meet, and to commune with sinful man. And he did this. He did this through the means of a temple or a tabernacle. In a very, very elementary way, this is already pictured in Genesis 3, when the Lord himself slaughtered an animal to make a new coat for Adam and Eve.

Now this brings us to the first official mention of the Tabernacle in Exodus. However, we are then about 3,000 years after Genesis 1, or 2, or 3. Does that mean that there was no meeting place of God with his people throughout all those centuries, until Exodus? Indeed, in vain you search in Genesis for an officially appointed and specific meeting place, like what we see provided in the book of Exodus. And yet already, in Genesis 4, we read about an altar Abel built, upon which the sacrifice of the firstlings of his flock was brought. So there must have been some revelation of God's will on how to approach, and how to worship him appropriately. For Abel certainly did not invent his own way of worshiping God. Now, you page further through Genesis, we read about altars of the Patriarchs—Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. They were in places where they called upon the name of the Lord God. And each of these altars fit the description God gave of the altar and the sacrifices he later commanded Moses to build, in Exodus 20:24, where he says, "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

So, next we come to the Tabernacle, in Exodus 24 and onwards. The point for us to observe now is that the Tabernacle was not made like any other temple that was built on the earth in the time of Moses. Mind you, Moses grew up surrounded with temples in the Egyptian culture. And notice that the Tabernacle that Moses built was entirely different, designed to the smallest details by God himself. God said, in Exodus 25:9, "According," Moses, "to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of" every instrument, "even so shall ye make it." Impressive is the moment when the entire Tabernacle is completed and set up in the middle of the camp. And then you read in Exodus 40, verses 34 and 35: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation,"—why?—"because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

So as we continue in the Old Testament, we come to Solomon's temple. Now what we see in Solomon's temple is what we see in the Tabernacle already, except in Solomon's is a much larger scale. The Tabernacle was a glorious tent, suitable for a desert, and for a journey. But when they finally settled in the land of Canaan, it was not until the kingship of David, a permanent temple is constructed. Though Solomon's temple was magnificent, it still was not a dwelling place big and glorious enough for God. Remember Solomon saying in his dedication prayer—I said it a moment ago, but let me repeat it—"But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!" (2 Chronicles 6:18)

Now after the destruction of Solomon's temple in the Babylonian conquest, the temple is rebuilt, though on a much smaller and simpler scale. To encourage the elderly who faintly remembered the greatness of Solomon's temple, God revealed a very glorious and encouraging promise regarding Christ coming to that temple. Haggai 2, verse 9 tells us: "The glory of this latter house"—that was just built—"shall be greater than of the former house, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts." Some decades before Haggai, God comforted his people also, through the prophecy of Ezekiel, who describes a new temple. Before

the destruction of Solomon's temple by the Babylonians, Ezekiel witnessed in a vision the most solemn judgment. In Ezekiel 10, verse 18, it reads: "Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house"—God left. No greater judgment can be experienced than when God left his people. But then, to encourage his believing people, then Ezekiel describes and mentions a new temple, in these words: "Moreover"—God says—"I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Ezekiel 37:26–27).

Now the description of another temple in Ezekiel raises many questions. Ezekiel's temple was completely structured after the pattern of what God showed to Moses, except the size of this temple is far exceeding even Solomon's temple. It's not the place here to enter into the discussion of what is meant with this temple. But let us suffice to say that this temple was never literally built. And the safest way to interpret this vision of the temple, according to many, is to see it as a spiritual representation of the living temple of God, in Jesus Christ.

And that brings us then to the next stage of the symbolism of the temple of God, in John's Gospel. John begins his Gospel with, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). And then John describes the eternal and the infinite Son of God, in verse 14. Well-known are the words: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory," we beheld "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Now literally, in the Greek, John wrote the word, "tabernacled" or "tented among us." And here, he lays the link between the Tabernacle and the Lord Jesus Christ. The eternal Son of God assumed our human nature—his new temple. In him, God dwelt among us. No, not in a static building full of symbolism, but in a living person full of grace and truth. Through him, we can meet God. Through him, we can approach God. Through him, we can commune with God.

How significant, what Jesus says in John 2, verse 19, in which he responds to the Jewish challenge to the cleansing of the temple square: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up....But he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:19 & 21). And then Jesus, as he gave up the

spirit, in Matthew 27, verse 51 tells us that: "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," all pointing to Christ. In this divine act, God, as it were, told the whole world, there is no more need of an earthly temple to approach him. There remains, however, a need for a suitable mediator. If we have to draw near to God, we need to know his way. And this means now the living Lord Jesus Christ.

Imagine an Old Testament Jew reading Hebrews 10, verse 19. This would be unthinkable for any serious-minded Jew: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." For with the death of Jesus, God opened the way into the innermost Holy of Holies, or in other words, into his personal presence. And the way by which this is possible is through the living way, which is Jesus Christ risen.

Now moving on to the Apostle's epistles, observe how God continues the theme of the temple there. God speaks about his believing people as the temple. Think of Ephesians 2. After having identified that the church is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, Paul continued in verses 21 and 22: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." How impressive is the privilege to be part of this "habitation of God"!

That we are, as believers, the temple of God. And as the Tabernacle and the temple were dedicated and set apart for God's service, so are we who are called in grace to be his sacred temple. Paul again, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19) So as we will see, everything in the Tabernacle was holy—totally dedicated for God's purposes. And now, brethren, if that was true about a piece of furniture, about utensils, how much more are believers to remember that they have been set apart for the service of God, as holy, dedicated temples for the Most Holy God?



And then finally, the Scripture ends with the description of the new heaven and earth, in Revelation 21. Noteworthy is the detail in Revelation 21:3—"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, 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." How beautiful is that future! God will not dwell with his people through the symbol of a building, or through the written Word, by the Spirit. But God himself shall be with them, as it says in verse 22: "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

So in that blissful future, God will dwell with his redeemed people, in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. There is no need for a temple that stood apart from the people, and formed the solemn meeting place of God and sinners. Why no need? There is no more sin, and therefore no need for a temple structure, like in Paradise. God will commune with his people in an everlasting fellowship. So what Zephaniah chapter 3:17 prophesied will then be true for ever and ever, when he says, "The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."

Now may God bless these introductory truths and thoughts about the Tabernacle, for his glory, and for our spiritual comfort. Thank you.

The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 3 ~

SETTING AND ORGANIZATION

Welcome to the third study on the Tabernacle, as it is constructed according to the pattern that God supplied to Moses, in a forty-day stay with him on Mount Sinai. Now in the next eleven session, we will consider the general structure and all the chief pieces of the sacred furniture God commanded Moses to construct. Yet our main focus will remain on the spiritual teachings about salvation through Jesus Christ, that are pictured in these particular parts of the Tabernacle. For this was God's main purpose in all the details of the Tabernacle. He's not just into building structures—God is in the revelation of the gospel truth. And so we begin our study today with listening to how it all started.

In Exodus 25, verses 1 to 7, we read God's first instructions to Moses about building the Tabernacle. "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering." Then God specifies—the offerings that Moses is to request and to receive from the people—precious metals, like gold, and silver, and brass. Next are fabrics or twine of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine white linen. Added are planks of wood, olive oil, spices, and precious stones. But wait a moment. Where did these former slaves have all these treasures from in that large amount? Way back in Exodus 3:21–22, at the burning bush, God already had told Moses that the enslaved nation would not leave the country empty handed. He said, "And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: but every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth"—or liveth—"in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment"—or clothing—"and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians."

Now the word "borrow," being used in the Hebrew, has the meaning of "ask." So having served the Egyptians with rigor for many centuries, the Israelites were in the right to ask for a payment



for all those years that their lives were made exceedingly bitter through the slavery. So the Egyptians would doubtless have refused at first, but after ten plagues, they were eager to part with their treasures to get rid of the Jews. And so, Exodus 12, verses 35 and 36 reads as follows: "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent"—or granted—"unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians"—of those treasures.

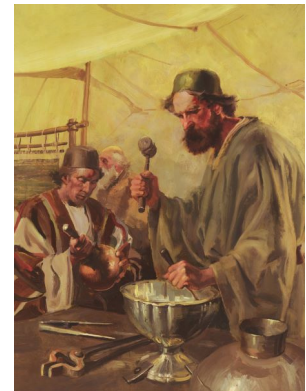
Now as Moses is to collect these building materials, it was clear

that he was never to force them to give. He was only to receive what was willingly given. And the response of this call is amazing. The people, including the children, gave up their jewels and their treasures for the house of the Lord. Can you imagine a church where we need to exhort, like in Exodus 36, verses 5 to 7, where it says the people were so eager to give that it overloaded the workers with resources. And we read very specifically, “And Moses gave commandment—after God told him so—“and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.” Now what a blessing! What a blessing is such a giving congregation of believers. God loves a cheerful giver, who gives joyfully and willingly for the cause of God’s kingdom. In such giving, we see the glory of our giving God. He is a cheerful giver.



Another question that needs an answer when we study this amazing building—How were these former slaves, trained only to make bricks, able to make such an elaborate structure as the Tabernacle was, while in the middle of a desert? Where did they get the experience from? Where’d they get the wisdom for this? And the answer to this is given in Exodus 35, verses 31 to 35. The main leaders, Bezaleel and Aholiab, were “filled ... with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.”

Bezaleel’s name has a beautiful meaning. Literally, it translates from the Hebrew, “in the shadow of El” or “in the shadow of God.” And his name, therefore, reveals the secret of his skill. It is God who equipped them and the others in these artistic skills. And according to Exodus 35:34, they both also trained other in all manner of work, such as engraving, and carving, and spinning, and weaving, and embroidering. And all these different skilled people are actually nothing different from what Paul writes about in the New Testament church, in 1 Corinthians 1. Paul writes there, in verses 4 through 11 of chapter 12, about the differences of gifts, the differences of administrations and operations. He says (verse 8), “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.” In other words, all them were administered by the same Holy Ghost to do the various skills.



So let’s think back once more about the giving of the people. Most important is not what we give, but how we give. A willing heart of love and devotion makes even a penny a worthy gift in the sight of God. It’s therefore not coincidence that Paul follows his teaching on the gifts with a chapter on charity—1 Corinthians 13. Charity, or love, is more important than the size or the quality of our gift.

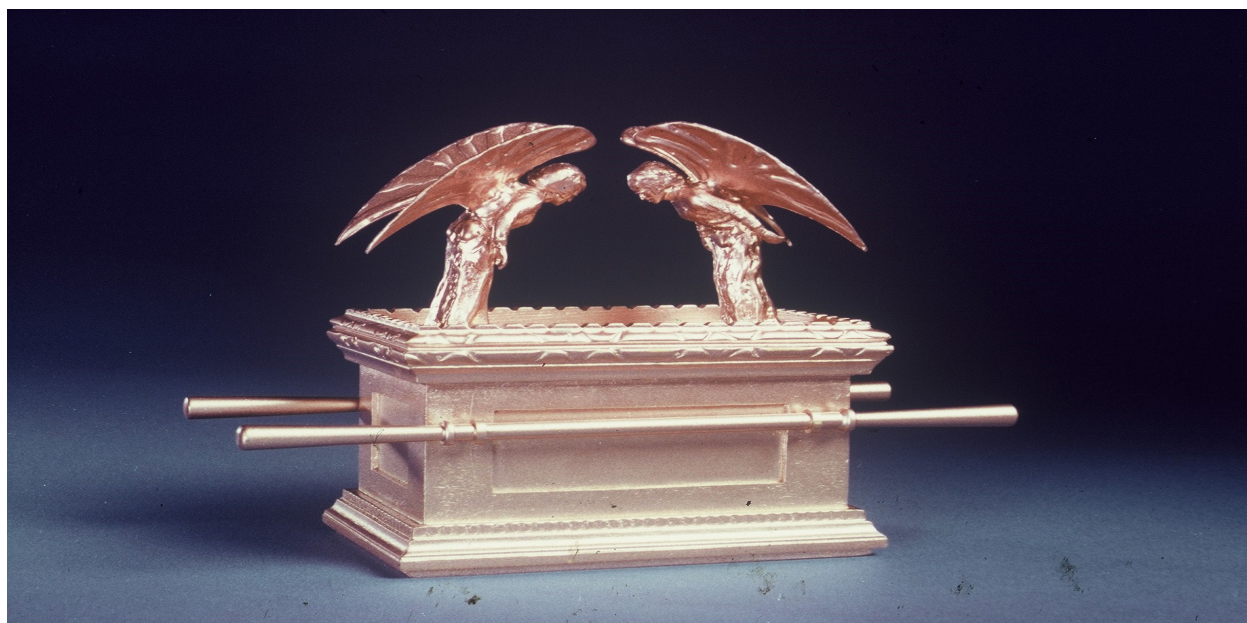
Now one last question, before we draw near to the study of the Tabernacle, is the order in which we should study the Tabernacle. Should we follow the order God gave to Moses in Exodus 25 to 27? God began the Tabernacle description with the Ark, in the Holy of Holies. The Ark is symbolic of the revelation of God’s heart of mercy and grace, in the context of holiness.

The Ark is describing the source of our salvation. And from there, God proceeds to describe all the rest of the Tabernacle, that, as it were, is centered around the Ark. So God’s order was from the inside out. We can also consider the Tabernacle from the outside in, where we start with the Fence,

and the Gate, and from there, we can proceed step by step, into the Holy of Holies.

Now in our study, I have decided to follow the outside to the inside way. And the reason why I have chosen for that order is because it ties in more with the experience of salvation, in the life of every believer. It is true that salvation begins with one-sided grace in the heart of Jehovah God—in other words, in the Holy of Holies. Yet, our own spiritual journey of salvation does not begin at the Ark. It begins with us being in the wilderness, lost in sin, separated from God's communion. Now out of this lost condition, God the Father draws sinners to himself. And in this drawing, he reveals himself to us in Christ, as the way, the truth, and the life. Now it's therefore much closer to our personal experience to follow the study this Tabernacle, beginning on the outside, working towards the inside, step by step.

So, now as we proceed, let's consider the contents. Let's do a bird's-eye view to survey the Tabernacle, mostly from the book of Numbers. You'll see then that the Tabernacle is placed in the middle of the camp. All the tribes were arranged, by God's own instructions, around the Tabernacle, each having their own assigned place. Neither Moses, nor Aaron, nor anyone, decided on

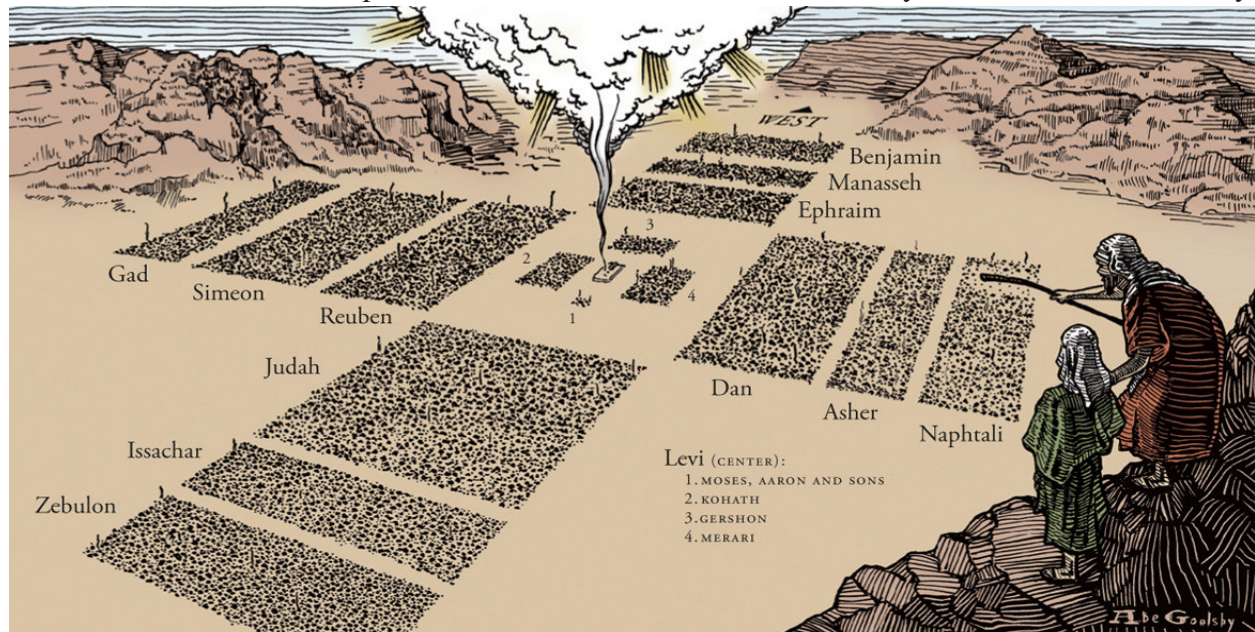


where to pitch their tent. God chose the tribe of Judah to hold the position at the east Gate—the east side. Why did he? Though we don't have answer on the why of every other tribe, there is a clear answer why Judah's tents were pitched at the east. It is from the tribe of Judah that the Messiah would be born.

So how naturally this is pictured in the placement of the tribes of Judah at the Gate. And yet, right before the entrance of the Gate, were also the tents of Moses and Aaron. Moses represents the law. Aaron, in his priestly work, pictures the gospel. And in this, God pictured the truth that both the law and the gospel play a role in the coming to and into the Tabernacle. It was also at the east side that you would find the only door of entrance. Now the east is where the sun rises. The east was also the place where God placed the angels guarding the entrance to Paradise. You see in these details the silhouette of the Messiah's appearing.

So, how big is the camp in which this temple is, or tabernacle is placed? It's estimated that the entire camp covers about 12 square miles, or about 30 square kilometers. This housed approximately 2.5 million people, plus the extensive herds of animals. Now obviously, over such a

distance, those at the parameter of this vast tent camp needed a clear direction where the dwelling place of the Lord their God was. And God pointed this out to them by placing the Pillar of Cloud in the day and the Pillar of Fire at night, right above the very Holy of Holies. These pillars would also guide them as they traveled. We can read this in Numbers 9, verses 15 and 16: “And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony.



“And at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.”

Now we know, in a desert culture, when the nomads would move around to another place for grazing their cattle, it was the sheik, or the tribal leader, who always determined where to camp. This tribal leader carried with him a long, you might say, symbolic spear. When he determined it was time to rest the entire tribe, he planted his spear in the sand, and immediately the servants would hurry to pitch all their tents around this spear, and his tent also would be pitched first of all. Now this is the same picture that God created, very familiar for the Jewish people, with the central Tabernacle, with the covering pillar of fire and cloud. God determined when to travel, and God determined when to camp. Listen to Numbers 9, verse 17 to 23. Only upon the commandment of the Lord, they journeyed or rested. And in verse 21, we read, “And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.”

Now immediately upon God’s move, the entire camp got into motion. Each individual family would be disassembling their personal tents, gathering their animals, and getting ready to move on. But also, the tent of the Lord needed to be disassembled. According to the book of Numbers, this task was assigned to the Levites between the ages of thirty to fifty. The entire tribe was divided into three groups, and were placed on either the north, the west, or the south side of the Tabernacle—so very close to it. And when the pillar of cloud moved heavenward, two trumpets were blown for the signal to the entire camp. And among the Levites, from the priestly family, Aaron and his sons were assigned to take down the inner veil. And walking backwards, they would cover the Ark of the Lord with the veil. Likewise, all the other sacred objects in the holy place were covered with a blue or scarlet cloth, and over that, a protective cover of badger skins. The only exemption was

the Ark. Its badger skin was covered with a cloth of solid blue. Blue, as we will see, is symbolic of the color of heaven. All the smaller utensils were placed on stretchers and also covered. Everything was covered.

And only after everything was carefully covered, were the assigned group of the Kohathites to carry it outside. And God warned them not to peek when the holy things were covered. And after they had carried the sacred pieces of furniture out of the Tabernacle, the next group of Levites would get to work. According to Numbers, chapter 4, a number of Gershonites would then dismantle the Tabernacle building first. The Holy, and the Holy of Holies. And finally, the assigned Merarites for that day would disassemble all the frames and the courtyard fence. Now while the Kohathites waited, with all the pieces of furniture carried on their shoulders, the Gershonites and the Merarites would load the Tabernacle on a number of wagons, according to Number 7, verses 1 to 9. These six wagons and twelve oxen were all donated by the chiefs, and by God's appointment, or commandment, were dedicated to serve for the transport of the Tabernacle. It's estimated that the disassembling and the assembling of the entire structure would take at least two hours, and was done by two dozen chosen men from the tribe of Levi.

Finally, when all the Tabernacle was ready for transport, the procession would begin, all following the pillar of cloud, or the pillar of fire. Even the order in which they travelled was set by God. According to Numbers 10:33 to 36, the Ark headed the procession, and "they departed," it says, "from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the LORD was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel."

Well lastly, before we look at the details of the building, let's not have a romantic idea about the Tabernacle ceremonies. All day long, the blood of sacrificial animals flowed upon the soil. Animals were bleeding, and the sweet smell of shed blood would mix with the smell of burning meat of the offerings on the altar. Undoubtedly, many, many penetrating smells hovered around the encampment as a daily reminder of sin and salvation, of law and gospel. And through the presence of the Tabernacle and its services, was a glorious revelation of the covenant God, Jehovah. It was also by these smells, and burning, a daily reminder that the cost for redemption from sin is great, and the price of atonement is very costly.



And so, friends, after this exploratory beginning of the setting of the Tabernacle, we are now ready to draw near to the Tabernacle itself. In our ten sessions, we will closely examine each aspect of the Tabernacle. May God open our hearts to both his law and his gospel, for learning to see our sins and his provided salvation, as visually set before us in the Tabernacle structure. And pray, pray that God would show us his glory. Thank you.

The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 4 ~ THE COURTYARD FENCE

Welcome again, in our fourth study on the Tabernacle, as God has given Moses the instructions to build it according to God's pattern. This took place in the forty-day stay, when he was with the Lord on Mount Sinai.

Now to make our study more personal, I'll try to do this study through the eyes of an inquiring Jewish boy in a conversation with the priest. We imagine this Jewish boy to be from the tribe of Benjamin, who was born during the wilderness journey. His father and his mother, and all his relatives camped on the west side of the Tabernacle, and he grew up looking at it from his baby days onward. But now that he's getting older, he began to wonder about this building with a pillar of cloud during the day, and this huge pillar of fire at night. And the only way that he could learn, is to ask questions. We'll call him Shema, as one of Benjamin's descendants carried that name, as mentioned in the genealogy of 1 Chronicles.

One day, Shema ventured closer to the fenced-off building on which the pillar of cloud rested. He had seen several times that his father and mother began to fold up their tent and gather their belongings when that pillar of cloud moved heavenward. He could see that the entire tent structure was broken down and loaded on a number of ox-drawn wagons. Recently, he caught a glimpse of white-clothed men carrying a number of cloth-covered items. Today the cloud tarried upon the Tabernacle, so there would be no journeying today. It would be a good day to take a closer look at this building.

So Shema started to walk toward the white fence. The white cloth fence stood out as a bright contrast to all the surrounding tents, in which they lived. Their tents were brownish-black color. As a matter of fact, the Tabernacle courtyard was the only white thing in the entire camp, and in the bright sun, it was actually quite intense to look at for too long. Shema thought out loud as he



walked towards it, "I must ask why the builders made this fence so white. Oh my! This fence is also much taller than I thought." From a two-mile distance, the fence did not look as tall as close up.

The curtain wall was almost two-and-a-half meters, or over eight feet tall. Far too tall for even his dad to look over. And as he came closer, Shema could see that although this fence was made out

of curtains, it was actually a very secure fence. Each of the sixty pillars were about two meters, or six-and-a-half feet apart, and each was set on a bronze socket, or a footing. And then they were secured with silver bars to the next post. And finally, they were tied down on both sides with cords and pegs to the ground.

The fence posts were even pretty, for the brass-covered wooden posts, they were crowned with a silver ornamental top. Shema walked along the wall towards the south corner, and then he turned left. And walking along the fence curtains, his curiosity was stirred even more. “How I would love to see across this fence. I wonder why we are not allowed to see inside. If there is a door, would I be able to go in? Straining himself to stand on his toes, he tried to see something of the inside building, but he could see just a glimpse of it above the fence line when farther away, but no matter how he strained, now standing near to the fence, that inside building was completely hidden from his view.

Walking along the fence toward the east corner, Shema saw something that he had not noticed before. The curtain fence was actually not one full length. Thinking of it, that would really be nearly impossible to carry or move around, for the entire south and north length was 50 meters or 150 feet long, and the east and the west side was half that length, at 25 meters or 75 feet. The curtain, as he noticed, was actually made of various sections, and looking back over the distance he covered, he counted how many sections he could see on the west and on the south side. And a quick calculation meant that there were exactly 10 curtains joined together to circulate this entire building.

So having reviewed together the material details of the courtyard fence now through the eyes of Shema, let’s ask ourselves— What is God’s message in this white wall Shema described above? Now there are four Biblical truths that God pictures to us in the Courtyard Fence. First, this tall and sparkling white fence around the building reveals a solemn truth about God. It’s a truth, friends, we are never to forget in our personal, and also our congregational worship of God. God is saying with this fence, “I am the Holy One. I AM the unapproachable One. Each time this fence came into view throughout the day, or when they approached the Tabernacle to participate in the ceremonies, it was as if God’s word spoken in pictures. Think of Psalm 96 or 99, “Oh worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him all the earth” (Psalm 96:9) “Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy” (Psalm 99:5).

The Hebrew word “holy” has the meaning of “to cut,” or “to be separate,” or “to stand apart.” So apply that to God. That means that God stands apart from us. No, he’s not just bigger, he’s not just more than us, he is altogether in a different category. He is totally separate from us. There is none like him. Often the Biblical authors exclaim in their worship, “O who is like unto the Lord?” And the answer’s always the same. There is none, for none can be likened unto Jehovah. Friends, it is this truth of the holiness of God that is vividly pictured in this Courtyard Fence. And yet, as we shall see, not only in the Fence, no, no, every part of the sacred Tabernacle emphasizes the holiness of God. The first time that this truth was vividly emphasized to the Israelites was in Exodus 19. God gave Moses careful instructions how the people were to prepare themselves to meet with their sovereign Lord and King. Hear God’s words in Exodus 19, verses 10 to 19: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and [let them] be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the

trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.”

Now as words could not express adequately the glory of God’s holiness to us, God expressed it in the most awe-inspiring display of his power at Mount Sinai. You would think that what we read in Exodus 19, verses 18 and 19, was enough to keep the people in line, and behind the boundary. Before them stood a mountain smoking and quaking greatly, and the voice of the trumpet sounding



long, and louder and louder. Did that stop them? No, still we read how the Israelites ignored the Lord God’s boundary, and they pushed on curiously and inappropriately. So God told Moses to hasten back, after he came up the mountain, and the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish” (verse 21). Now did the message of this awe-inspiring holiness of God hit home? Now we reviewed that earlier, after they heard the voice of God from the mountain in proclaiming the Ten Commandments, they shook, and they stood afar off. And then in Exodus 20, verse 18, we read: “And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they re-

moved, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”

Now this unchanging truth about God is pictured in the Courtyard Fence. God drove home the truth of the needed separation and the appropriate distance. God has made clear in this Fence that he is not on our level, ...and therefore he cannot be approached as we approach our equals. He is the Holy One. No common Israelite, young or old, was ever free to stroll into the Tabernacle area. It was completely off limits for the ordinary use. As we shall see in our further studies, God prescribed, laid out only one way by which he could be approached. That way, Jesus proclaimed himself. Listen—he said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14, verse 6). Friends, how spiritually alive are we to the holiness of God. How much of the truth of 1 Timothy 6:16 live within us? Do you and I extol God as Paul did? The “blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”

Or, consider the language of Isaiah 33, verse 14, so commonly misunderstood. How many of us think that Isaiah is describing hell in the worst. But my friends, that is not correct. He described God’s holiness in these words I will now quote. He says, “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Earlier in his prophecy, Isaiah already described how he saw the Lord God of hosts in a vision. And as he saw, his response is amazing: “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” Any man who has had a close encounter with the Holy One, will echo Isaiah’s woe about himself. Or he will sense what Moses felt when he stood before the burning bush, in Exodus 3. It says that Moses hid his face, as he feared to look upon God. Now not only sinful men sense the holiness of God. Even the highest ranking and sinless angels who stand before God sense it. If any of these creatures would join our fellowship, we would feel terrified, and yet Isaiah observed them standing in angelic modesty covering their feet and their faces, as they cried out “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isaiah 6:3).

So friends, adding up all these passages, can't you see the appropriateness of the reminder and the exhortation in Hebrews, chapter 12:28–29: “Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.” So in sum, the sparkling white, fine linen Courtyard Fence stood in total contrast to the black tents of the Israelites. Every Israelite looking toward the Tabernacle will be reminded, by this glaring white Fence, of two truths. First, the Lord our God is holy. And second, I am unholy.

And that brings us to the second main spiritual truth pictured in this Fence. We know this, that Shema observed the fence to be very secure—a strong fence. Each post was interconnected, set upon solid footing, and tied down with ropes. The Fence could withstand the fierce desert winds. Besides, Shema counted 10 individual pieces that made up this fence. All these facts set out the Biblical truth about God's holy law. God's law is the eternal, the unchangeable expression of his holy character.

From the onset of Jesus' redeeming ministry, the Lord Jesus made it clear that he did not come to take down the Courtyard Fence. Now the words in which he said it were a little different. In Matthew 5, verses 17 to 19, he says, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy [the law], but to fulfil [the law]. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass [on], one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and [whosoever] shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Now, if I paraphrase Jesus' words I said then earlier, in a different way, and use Tabernacle language, then Matthew 5 may have sounded like this: “Think not that I have come to make some cuts in the Courtyard Fence, or to take away one or more of the panels of the Tabernacle Fence, no, I will not even cut a few coupling loops or strips of fabric.” The Ten Commandments, the 10 curtains, joined together, visualize the abiding Ten Commandments God declared in this majestic display from Mount Sinai. And what was first spoken in audible thunder is reinforced in visible Fence in a visual brightness and sturdiness. And each time that the Israelite looked towards the Tabernacle, he was reminded of God's holy law, of the expression of his holy character, and of his holy will.

May I remind you, what is the original law of God. Matthew 22 tells us: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (verses 37–40) Do you and



I love like that? All the time? Consistently and sincerely? Let's be reminded that God's demand doesn't change or is lowered simply because we can't keep his law anymore. The firmness and the permanency of this Courtyard Fence pictures that his law stands firm. God will hold us to the requirement to love him perfectly, and to love our neighbor in the degree Jesus loved even his enemies. He never changed his standards of his law, for that would mean a change in his character.

And this truth is both confronting and convicting—it emphasizes a third main spiritual truth pictured in the Fence.

The white, tall, secure barrier stresses the spiritual truth that without holiness, no man shall see God. The Courtyard Fence declares the truth of the angels standing in the entry of the way to the tree of life in Genesis 3:24. We read, “So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” Reentry was forbidden, as well as impossible for us fallen sinners. The Cherubims were to enforce the no entry. The sword seen in Genesis 3 symbolized the justice of God. And God’s message in all this is so crystal clear. Only when my justice, demanding the payment upon sin is satisfied, will the way to life be open. The Courtyard Fence pictured what Jesus teaches us in Matthew 5:26—“Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.”

So finally, let’s turn this for a moment to personal. Have you met with this Fence of God in your spiritual thoughts. God uses his law to bring us to the knowledge of our sin. Paul wrote, in Romans 3:20, “For by the law is the knowledge of sin.” God’s first message in the Tabernacle, friends, is not, “I died for you and all is well.” No, instead, he proclaimed visibly, “I am holy. I am of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. I cannot meet or fellowship with you, for you are a guilty sinner.” Now such a convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit is vital for the health of our spiritual life. Conviction of sin is like God’s leading us out of our comfort zone to his comfort. And without sensing the holiness of God as revealed in his holy law—let’s be honest—you feel comfortable, and you see yourself as acceptable. You may live a good life. You may be an obedient person. You may have never hurt anyone or cheat anyone. And you may think all is fine. And though you know you’re not perfect, yet you think you are acceptable enough.

Well, friends, when God convicts you, it’s as if he draws you to stand before his formidable and blinding, bright Fence. And with a growing understanding of his holiness, you will understand Peter when he saw the greatness of his Master in the mighty miracle, and he said, “Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinful man.” The knowledge and the conviction of sin is not saving. Seeing the white fence preventing you from access to God, that’s no salvation in itself, and yet it is an essential step towards salvation. For without a conviction that you are lost as you face your holy Maker, you will never learn to seek or to cry out, “What must I do to be saved?”

So it is through this awareness that we begin to say earnestly, “Is there a way to God?” And this way is provided, and that we will study in our next session, as we take up the study of the Courtyard Gate. So may God bless these studies to use his law pictured in this Fence, as his means to bring us unto Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in him alone. Thank you.

The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 5 ~ THE COURTYARD GATE

Welcome to our fifth study of the Tabernacle of ancient Israel. The Scriptures to read along with this lesson you would find in Exodus 27, verses 8 through 19. We will again follow our Jewish boy, Shema. You know, he has a real eye for details. And especially a mind just like every child, he just wants to know why, for everything that he sees.

So in our previous study, we saw that Shema discovered this tall and this sturdy Fence that surrounded the Tabernacle building. And the pure white forced him to squint his eyes because



of the brightness of it, in stark contrast to the tents where he lived. And we saw that that revealed something—God is holy. As the Holy One, he maintained a clear boundary between himself and the people of Israel. That strong white Fence is there for a physical reminder to all of us, of God's holy law. And who of us does not need this daily reminder? Familiarity can breed contempt. We ought never to forget that when we come to God, and speak to God, we speak to a God who is holy and exalted. We are to serve him with fear, with respect,

and we are to rejoice in him with trembling—Psalm 2 exhorts us.

So, as Shema walked past the west side, rounded the corner, walked along the longer south side—he didn't see a door yet. In all of that fence, not a single door. But then as he rounded again the corner, there it is, on the east side, there is a gate. One of the panels is not completely white. It was obvious that is the door into this Tabernacle. And this door really stood out because of its beauty. As he came closer, he thought,

Wow! This is an amazing door! These embroidered colors of blue mixed well with the scarlet and the purple, and it all stands out beautifully on this sparkling white background. Indeed, the stark contrast with the white fence on each side make the whole door a focal point when you stood at the east wall. You just couldn't miss it. Your eyes were drawn to it, it's so, so beautiful.

something else struck him, as you look at the door. As a matter of fact, the longer that he looked, the more that he wondered about the details of the Gate of God's tent. First, he noticed that the entire Tabernacle had but one Gate. There was nowhere a little small side door, or perhaps a back door that may be used for the servants. The only way everyone was to come in and out was through

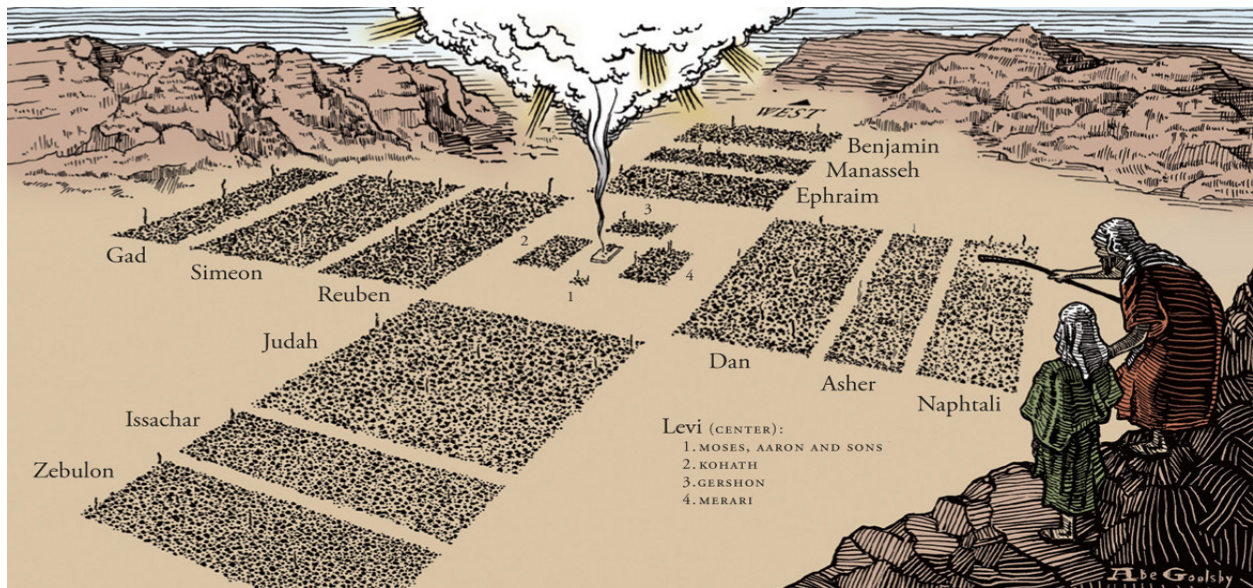
this one Gate. Shema stood still for a moment, and he saw people coming in and out through the Gate. A family was leading a sheep, and soon they disappeared behind the curtain. Well, looking at them, and looking at these people coming in and out, he made a second observation that really struck him—the door was huge! To be honest, it seemed unnecessarily big. Pacing the length, he found out this door was 10 meters wide. Ten meters, that's big enough for a few elephants next to each other walking through. Why? Why such a big gate, he wondered.

And then, he noticed a third thing about this Gate. It's very easy to enter. There was no heavy door to push open, and there was no handle like you couldn't reach if you were young in the door. There's none of that—no bars. And besides, look at this Gate—it's unguarded. When he heard about his father and family living back in Egypt, they talked about Pharaoh's palace, and they talked about the houses of the high government officials, and nobody could just walk in—nobody. Doors were either barred, or they were bolted, but at least they were guarded by soldiers. But in this house of God, no guard stood on duty. "What a relief," he thought, "for I really want to see inside this building. Gladly, it doesn't appear difficult to enter, and to check everything out that is in this building." But in that regards, Shema was wrong in his thinking. He would soon enough learn that though Jehovah God is approachable, he was only approachable in one way. And every detail of that way spelled holiness. Just like Hebrews 12:14 emphasizes that even for us today, dear friends, it says: "Follow...[after]...holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

So, having briefly reviewed the details of the Courtyard Gate through the eyes of Shema, let's now see what God is revealing in this beautiful Gate to us. I see in this Gate, six gospel truths. First, there's a Gate needed to go and enter into the presence of God. Now perhaps that seems so obvious, but nonetheless, let's think this through. Not long ago, all Israel, including Moses, felt it was impossible to even hear God speak from heaven, let alone draw nigh to this holy and majestic God, as he had shown himself on Mount Sinai. And back in Genesis 3, there was also no door back into Paradise. There were angels guarding the way back. So, friends, we need a door or a gate. Isn't that exactly what we begin to sense, when we discover that we have sinned against God, that we are guilty in his sight? Isn't that exactly what the poet felt in Psalm 130, when he said, "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities...who shall stand?" (verse 3) But then, that same poet almost shouted out with joy and hope, "But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared" (verse 4). It's like him saying, "There is a Gate! There's a door back! There's a way to be back to God, and back into his communion." And what a hope that stirs in a convicted heart, when we hear, in the gospel message of Jesus Christ, there is a way with God.

Now secondly, we notice that the Gate is on the east side of the structure, and that location wasn't random. It actually preaches again a message. Recall from our previous studies that in Genesis 3:24, it is written, "So [God] drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." So, the way was barred. We as mankind are banished from God's presence. But at the same place—east—where we were banished, God provided a door. But now a door, without a Cherubim, and without a sword. It is even a welcoming door, not a threatening door, not a forbidding door, a heavy door. All this is gospel revelation, friends.

And one more thing about the location of this door. Right before this Gate on the east side of the Tabernacle, we find Moses' tent, and we find Aaron's tent, next to each other. This detail is also not random. I said earlier that Moses represents the law of God. Aaron represents the gospel—the priestly work of Christ. And being side by side pictures a very important truth in God's dealings. It shows the close relationship that he maintains between the function of the law and the gospel, and



both of them God uses to lead sinners to himself.

Paul teaches us the law is used for the knowledge of sin, for the conviction of sin is necessary. Why? To make us seek for salvation. But this salvation from our sins and of our judgments is revealed in the gospel, and would come through the priestly work of Jesus Christ. Then beyond the tents of Aaron and Moses, we find the tribe of Judah camped at the East Gate. And also that again is a revelation, a silhouette, for the Messiah was born of Judah, as the patriarch, Jacob, already prophesied in Genesis 49, verses 8 to 10. Here are his words: “Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: . . . The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh”—the Rescuer—“come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

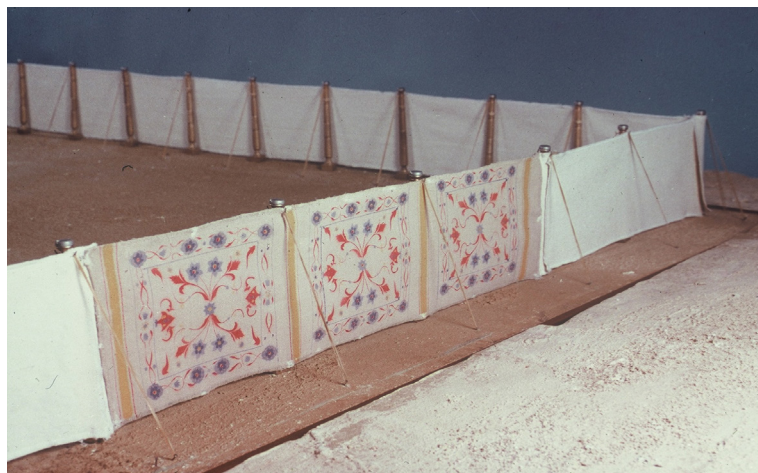
And thirdly, the number of the gates is a sermon in itself. Shema saw that there was no back door through the white fence into the sanctuary. And there were no additional doors for the servants to use besides this only Gate. It’s not hard to see the connection, is it, with this one Gate, and with Jesus’ own words in John 10, verse 9, where the Lord expounded this single Gate himself. He says, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” In John 14:6, the Lord reinforces that teaching when he says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Friends, Jesus teaches us that only he, and none else, is the way back to God, and all of the Scripture confirms this. Paul wrote, in 1 Timothy 2:5, “There is one God, and [there is] one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” As Peter stands before the religious assembly in Jerusalem, he propounds the same thing again, in Acts 4, verse 12: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” So God made it clear—very clear in these passages—there are not many ways to God; there is but one way, one Gate. Jesus preached himself, friends, as the exclusive way of salvation. I pray that God will enlighten our minds more and more in this very important fact of the gospel message—Christ alone.

Now one more observation about this one Gate. Everyone has to use this Gate—there’s only one. This Gate was not only for common people, or for children and for adults. No, it was for kings, it was for rulers, it was for the priests, it was for Levites, it was for the high priest. They all needed to use this same Gate. Isn’t that an important lesson for us all? There is no separate way in which we can come to God, that is perhaps based on our position, or our ranking, or our task, or our wealth. No! Before God, we are all equal—all need the same Savior. None is righteous in himself.

All can only draw near to God through the same person—his Son, Jesus Christ.

So that brings me to the fourth aspect of the Gate—the colors. Shema saw that the Gate stood out as a beautifully, artfully embroidered Gate, with various colors that were put on the white linen. Nothing was left to Moses' imagination, or the artistic skill of Bezaleel and Aholiab, and the team of workers. So even the colors were according to God's pattern shown, and what the pattern was we don't know. Each color, however, is symbolic about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's begin with that white linen, the background cloth. White—the color of holiness, purity, cleanliness. It sets out before us the perfect beauty of Jesus Christ. It's his holiness, his righteousness. It pictures that truth that Mary heard from the angel in Luke 1, verse 35, when he spoke about



the fruit of her womb as: "Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Holy is God. Now the blue color, as we all know, points to heaven. That's where he came from. That is his place of origin. How often did Jesus reaffirm and reveal that he was the Son of God? And friends, no doctrine for our salvation is more important than Jesus' divinity. It's because of his divinity, he could carry out the task as Mediator for sinners.

Who else could have borne the awful load of God's wrath? His divinity is not only important to give his work an infinite value, his work also had to be sufficient to save the innumerable multitude of sinners that would come through this Gate to God.

The next color—purple. Purple is the color that belongs to royalty. And there are many Scriptures that confirm that Jesus Christ has royal glory. He is the King—the King of the earth. Psalm 2, verse 6 declares, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." But in Psalm 47, it is rather that this royal glory of the descended Savior is over all the earth: "God is the King of all the earth"—and therefore—"sing ye praises with understanding." For "God reigneth over the heathen: [He] sitteth upon the throne of his holiness" (verses 7–8). So as we examine more details later on about the various articles of the Tabernacle, you will see this truth confirmed again and again.

The fourth basic color was scarlet. Scarlet resembles the color of blood. It therefore, of course, points to Christ's priestly work, as the sacrifice for sin, he shed his own blood for the atonement. And what's really interesting to know is how this scarlet color was produced. To obtain the scarlet dye, small worms had to be crushed to obtain the dye that was used to color the cloth. Now that graphically portrays the Lord



Jesus Christ in his suffering on the cross. In Psalm 22, we hear him cry out as he suffers on the cross, “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” So as he endured this judgment of God, and he was crushed, but in enduring this, he removed the obstacle of sin and guilt as the great Sin-bearer. It makes reconciliation possible on the ground of justice satisfied.

Now you see what glories are revealed, even in this one Gate that we are considering in this lesson. And all these colors, as it were, they flow together in the praises of the bride about the bridegroom, in the Song of Solomon, chapter 5, verse 10. She says this: “My beloved is white”—think about the linen fabric—“and ruddy”—which is a different word for scarlet—“[he is] the chiefest among ten thousand”—the royal purple—“[and] he is altogether lovely”—think about the heavenly blue. Now this is the inviting curtain, sitting there at the Gate of the Tabernacle. Not a heavy door, no thick locks, no heavy bars.

And friends, that is the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is so amiable. He is described by God himself, in Isaiah 42, verse 3, when God says, “A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.” He is tender. In Matthew 11, the Lord Jesus describes himself as “meek and lowly in heart.” He’s not an imposing figure, with a grim look on his face, and a harsh tone in his voice. No, children didn’t fear him. The lepers were drawn to him. Sinners were drawn to him. Violated, disgraced, and deeply ashamed women were never shamed by him, but were received with kindness, and understanding, and dignity. He was approachable by the fathers, and he labored to make everyone feel welcome. He didn’t stand with his finger in judgment, but with his arms in invitation.

Is that glory of Jesus Christ drawing you to him? So let’s move to the fifth aspect of the Tabernacle Gate. Shema noticed that the Gate was a mere curtain. It was not difficult to enter. Even if you were a child, you could push that curtain to the side. You did not need to show a ticket, or a personal invitation letter, or money. This whole Gate preached the “Welcome to Jesus Christ,” for poor and needy. This is preaching the simplicity of salvation. This is preaching Jesus so richly. “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Friends, salvation does not require your heavy labor, in order to satisfy the penalty of God’s broken law. You and I do not need, and we actually cannot gain access to God through our own doing. No, God opened the access to himself in the doing and in the dying of Jesus Christ. And all of you are invited to make use of this only and suitable Gate to God. You don’t need to pacify him with your doing—this is impossible. How can we satisfy, as a human, his divine-sized demand? No, friends, God’s method of salvation is through Jesus Christ giving a divine-sized salvation. It is through Jesus you and I may be received of God in mercy. Maybe hearing that, and thinking, you’re thinking or you’re saying, “Me? Am I welcome? Is the door open for me?” Let me bring you back to my last observation about this door. Remember what Shema was amazed about? Shema saw this door was unusually big, and when he paced it, he found it was 10 meters wide.

Why so wide? Nobody is that big. What’s God’s message? Encouragement. This Gate is big enough to allow the biggest sinner to enter into God’s presence. It’s as it were that the wide Gate is a forerunner of 1 Timothy 1:15—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” Often Satan successfully wedges a big lie in our heart, and that lie is, “The more you have sinned, the less hope there is for you.” Now if you’re tempted with that thought, let me direct you to that Gate again. I like the picture that Jesus makes in the parable of Luke, chapter 15. That parable is not about a younger and older son who both acted very wickedly—it’s not about that. It’s about that seeking, that waiting,

that welcoming father, who proclaims to us himself in his wide Gate, when he says, “Come, everyone of you that’s thirsty. Come, you that have wandered off. Come. No money? Come. Come. Don’t need money. Come buy the best of me without money, without price. I have paid the price.”

So as we conclude, be reminded that admiring, studying all the details of this Gate doesn’t bring us any closer to him. You need to enter this Gate if you want to be reconciled with God. To enter that Gate, that is what believing or trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ is. When that sinner came to God, in the parable of Luke 18, he entered through the Gate, when he cried out in conviction, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner” (verse 13). Peter entered this Gate, when he confessed Jesus, “Lord, to whom [else] shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68–69). If we believe and we are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”

So as Shema looked again at the Gate, he wondered what it was like inside the Tabernacle Court and what exactly was happening there. Now that’s where we will go in our next lesson on the Tabernacle. Thank you.

The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 6 ~

THE BRAZEN ALTAR—part 1

Welcome to this sixth study of the Tabernacle of ancient Israel. Today we will focus on the Brazen Altar. And the Scriptures that are describing this Altar are found in Exodus 27, verse 1 to 8; and 29:36 to 46. To get the complete picture, it's important though to read through the passages from Leviticus, especially in the first seven chapters.

Now in our previous lesson, we followed Shema, a Jewish boy, and he had discovered that



there was a big and beautiful door on the east side of the Tabernacle. And as people came in and out, Shema noticed a remarkable difference in these people. Many walked in downcast, as if there was a heavy burden on their heart or on their back, but then coming out, they actually looked relieved, and rejoicing. And yet, when Shema looked closer, he observed that not all of them looked downcast when they went in.

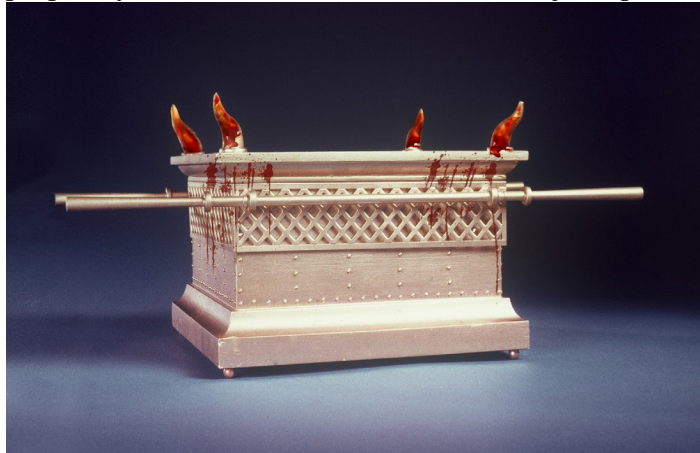
Now right before him, he saw a family carrying a basket of food instead of leading an animal, and they looked happy, they looked joyful as they entered into the Gate. So, he wondered, what is happening behind this gate? And why does the one bring in an animal, and others bring in a basket of food? What makes one look so downcast, and then come out joyful? So, Shema needed to enter into the Gate himself, to find out. And very gently, he pushed aside the curtain and he stepped into the Courtyard.

Now the first thing, he couldn't miss it! He saw a huge Altar, with a fiercely burning fire on the top of it. And around the Altar was a beehive of activity. One priest was talking to the family with the lamb. Another was busily butchering an animal, and he was catching the blood in a basin. And one priest was tending the fire and the sacrifice with a large fork on the fire. And looking back at the family with the animal, he saw the father put his hands upon the animal's head, and when he did, he said something, when he was holding his hand on the animal. And right after that, he saw that the priest, he took the lamb, and he slaughtered the lamb, and the family was looking on as the animal was sacrificed. So he was deeply impressed with it all.



Shema took a closer look at the Altar. It was a square box, of about two-and-a-half meters, or maybe seven-and-a-half feet wide, and about one-and-a-half meters tall. It appeared the box was hollow on the inside, and a large grate was fit snugly inside the box, towards the top rim. And on

that grate, was the burning sacrifice placed. And bloodstains could be seen upon the shining brass, but especially on the four horns that were sitting on each of the corners. It seemed that they were purposely smeared with blood, rather than just spattered by the butchery.



On the sides of it, he saw two long poles that were stuck into two sets of brass rings. So clearly, that's how the Altar could be lifted up and carried on the shoulder. To be honest, it smells far from pleasant. The burning meat caused a pungent smell as it burned up in the fire, and besides, he could smell the blood of the animals in the warm and hot weather. But now his eyes caught sight of the priest, and he was returning to the waiting family. And quietly, the family stood before

the priest, and it appeared that the priest was saying something. And then Shema, he almost saw a relief coming on the face of the father and his family as they were listening to the priest. "I wonder what the priest said that made them so happy," Shema thought. So, as the family returned towards the Gate, Shema walked up, and he asked, "What did the priest say to you that made you so joyful? May I ask?" And the father answered him, "The priest said that atonement was made for our sin, by the sacrifice that was offered on the altar. He said that the sacrifice was well-pleasing to Jehovah God, and we are pardoned from our sins." Now, though this all sounded wonderful, Shema wondered how someone's sins could be forgiven by the sacrifice of an animal.

So, after this short introduction, let's dig a little deeper into the gospel message that God is picturing for us in this Brazen Altar. For what happens at this Altar—that is the key to all the rest of what happens in the Tabernacle. I'd like to review with you four main truths that are pictured in this Altar. First, this Altar reveals to us God's way of peace, God's way of atonement or reconciliation. Now secondly, as you would expect, this Altar speaks about the glory of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, this Altar pictures justification by faith. And lastly, the actions of offering with the animal sacrifice reveals to us the role of faith in our salvation.

So, let's first consider how the Altar reveals God's way of atonement or reconciliation. Friends, every aspect of the Altar points to Christ—the fire, the animal sacrifice, the blood caught in that basin, the work of the priest, and even the Altar itself points to the Lord Jesus. Let's think first about the fire on the Altar.

Fire, God has chosen as a symbol of himself. It's a bright picture of his holiness and of his justice. As fire is consuming, so God's holiness and justice are consuming to us as sinners. And all day long, this fire was kept burning. It reveals the truth that, let's be honest, we often forget, too often forget. It reveals that God is displeased with the sinner who dishonors him. And being just and holy, God will not, and God cannot spare a sinner who has transgressed, or continues to transgress his holy law. The truth of Genesis 2 is written everywhere. The sinner shall surely die. Yes, Romans 6 says, "The wages of sin is death." We see it everywhere, friends. No one breaks the law cheaply in any of our countries, but we also do not sin cheaply. When I have despised God's law of love, I will have to deal with the hand of justice. It was this sense of sin that made that family coming into the temple look so burdened. Their consciences were alarmed. But how can this guilt be taken away? How can I stand in the judgment if God marks my iniquity? How can I be reconciled

to this holy One, while I have nothing to offer him in payment? Now the answer to these questions is found in this Brazen Altar. Powerfully, it sets forth God's way of peace, and the way of salvation, through the atoning blood sacrifice.

So, since we have broken God's law, God's justice requires payment—that's fair. I said earlier, "The wages of sin is death." We knew about that in Paradise already. But instead of our death, God provided the way through the death of a given substitute. And in the Tabernacle, the substitutes were the various animals, depending on the nature of your offense. But in reality, all those thousands of animals never did satisfy any demand of God's justice. Animal blood could not be a real substitute for us. And that is because we're dealing with divine-sized guilt that cannot be paid with the blood of animals, or for that matter, not even with our own. We are human—we are limited. He is infinite and divine. Listen to the book of Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 1, making it really clear: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." So the Brazen Altar points to the greatest altar we've ever seen in the world, and that altar is the cross of Golgotha, upon which the God-given Substitute, Jesus Christ, was nailed. In him, and through him, God provided the atonement, the means of reconciliation—the ransom price.



When John the Baptist introduced the Messiah, he pointed to him, and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"—John 1:29. And what's most interesting, if you read it in John, the fact that when John treats this, he was standing at Bethabara beyond Jordan, where he baptized the people. You see that in John 1:28. But you know, just at that crossing point in the Jordan River, each year thousands of lambs were herded from Bashan into the direction of Jerusalem. All these lambs were to be sacrificed, as they ran to the field of Bethlehem to be ready to go to Jerusalem. And yet none of those lambs would ever provide a real atonement. Only the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, could do this and has done this. And therefore, upon entry of the Tabernacle, immediately our eyes are pointed towards this blood-stained Altar, with that consuming fire. Now unless we deal with sin and guilt at this Altar, we are not able to draw near to God in his holy throne room pictured in the Holy of Holies.

But why is the death of Jesus Christ able to atone for our sins? How could he satisfy this divine wrath of God and pay every demand of justice? How could he even sustain, this Son of man, the intensity of this divine-sized judgment? Well, good questions. That brings us to our second main truth revealed in this Brazen Altar. It shows us the glory of the person of Jesus Christ—the uniqueness of him.

Shema noticed that the Altar was made of bronze. But what Shema didn't realize, the Altar was actually made of wood, and then covered with bronze. Now that makes sense, to cover a wooden altar with bronze or brass, if you want to use the altar more than once. And this altar had to be used more than once. The bronze kind of enveloped the wood, so no flame or heat could touch or disintegrate the wood inside. It protected it. This made it possible to use the Altar for more than one person. As a matter of fact, it served thousands, and thousands, and thousands of people.

But how does this picture the glory of Jesus Christ? The wood and the bronze are a picture of the uniqueness of Jesus' two natures. The Savior of sinners is both God and man—real God, real

man. His human nature is pictured in the wood, made of the shittim tree in the desert. And just as the shittim tree, so was the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you would look at the shittim tree, you would not see a stately and beautiful, mighty cedar tree, or you wouldn't see a graceful palm tree. No, no, all desert trees are rather grotesque in their shape—rough and deformed almost.

Isaiah 52 or 53 tells us some details of the Messiah. His face and form were marred more than any man, it says. When he grew up, he didn't have any comeliness. There was no beauty that man should desire Jesus, the Messiah. Undoubtedly, undoubtedly this has spiritual references. No one saw in him the promised Messiah, the Savior. For let's be honest. How could the child that came from Nazareth—Nazareth!—to be the chosen One of God, the son of David. But equally true is Jesus' physical appearance was far from glorious. Whether the details of Isaiah 52 or 53 are only spiritual, that's hard to prove. But I doubt not that he wasn't the handsome person people imagine him to be. He wasn't. His suffering image made many to turn away from him, Isaiah prophesied. Clearly, when they looked at Jesus, the Jews concluded, That man is under God's judgment for sin. He simply could not be the promised Messiah, the great son of David, no.

The important point for us is not what Jesus looked like. The important point is that Jesus was real human, real man, like us all, without sin however. But he was not a superman. He was a needy man. He was a man like us who tires, and who was hungry. He was a man who experienced weakness, and sickness. He was a man who trembled, and who cried with great fear when he saw the fearsome cross before him. He begged others to pray with him, as he felt overwhelmed with sorrow. A man, who therefore now can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. Why? Because he experienced the infirmities, like we all do as people. It was necessary that the substitute should be a man, for we men have sinned. And justice requires an eye for an eye, so a man should pay for a man. But how could a man ever be the Savior of sinners? How could he be the substitute, not just for one, or for two, but for an innumerable multitude of guilty people? How does that work? How can he?

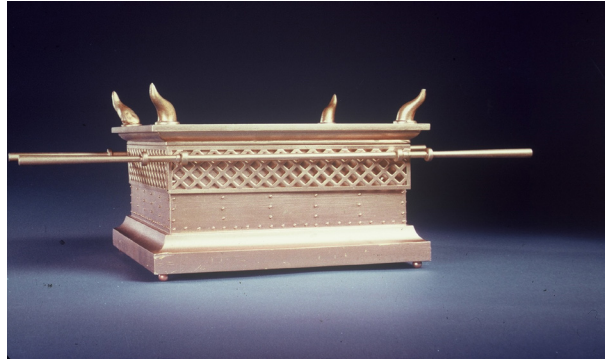
And secondly, how could a man bear the full wrath and anger of God against sinners? How could he satisfy the demands of a divine justice, being a man? Well, he could not accomplish that, as any man could, no man could, he couldn't either. He could only do that, friends, because he was at the same time God. Do you see now how this glorious truth of Christ is pictured in the Altar? The bronze, wrapping up the wood, that pictured that the substitute, the Son of man, the last Adam, was also the Son of God. John wrote beautifully in chapter 1, verse 14: "The Word was made flesh." That means, the uncreated God joined himself with human flesh. The infinite God, he stepped, as it were, into finite human nature. And this divine nature supported Jesus when he was laid upon the altar, and when he was made subject to the fierce fire of God's holy anger. How else—how else could any human carry the weight of this eternal punishment?

His divine nature, therefore, gave also his infinite value to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Though he suffered as one human, for a relatively short time, the merits of his sacrifice are infinite in worth. His merits are so infinite in value, that Jesus' death is abundantly able to atone for the innumerable multitude of sins. Jesus is able to save you to the uttermost, when you come through him to God. Never doubt it. Never doubt you're welcome. He is greater, a much greater Savior than we are great sinners together. As the innocent Son of man, he could be our substitute, as he did not need to pay for his own sins. So, as the glorious Son of God, he could be our substitute, able to meet all God's holy and just demands.

Now, how unspeakably great and wise is God's plan of salvation! We saw that yesterday, the attribute of wisdom. And never could such a thing have come up in the heart of man. So let us

conclude our study today with looking at one more detail that Shema also saw. He noticed the four horns on the corners. Each was obviously smeared with the blood of the animal. That was not just decorative. No, Moses had been instructed to tell the priest to put a horn on each corner, and they were probably at times used to tie up a sacrifice animal, and that at least seems to be alluded to in Psalm 118, verse 27, where it says, “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.”

But mostly, these horns are pointers to every direction of the compass. It pointed out the wonderful truth that the Messiah of the Jews is not only the Savior of the Jews, but would be the Savior of the world. His message would eventually go to all the corners of the compass. For the gospel was not to be limited to one nation only. Turning to the familiar passage in John 3, notice how Jesus himself expounds the glory of the Altar. But before I quote these verses, let me just point out to you that the Hebrew word, “altar” literally means, “the high place.” Every sacrifice had to be lifted up about a meter-and-a-half, upon a high place—the elevated Altar. And knowing that detail, how significant now becomes Jesus’ teaching to Nicodemus, in language that is intimately tied to this Brazen Altar. First, the Lord said to Nicodemus, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,



even so must the Son of man be lifted up”—lifted up on high for sinners. In other words, lifted up on the Altar. Then in the following verses, Christ expounds the worldwide significance of this sacrifice. “For God,” he says, “so loved the world”...and he “sent not his Son...to condemn the world,” but to save the world. How shocked Nicodemus was with this heavenly teaching of the Master, Jesus. He heard that God not only did love the Jews—his own people, as he always thought—but he loved the bad, the evil world of sinners, that he also sent his Son for them. And would the work of the Messiah have a worldwide significance? See, that was a new truth to Nicodemus. But it needed not, if he had understood the significance of the four horns of the corners of the Brazen Altar.

So with this, we will pause our studies on this Altar, and conclude it in our next session, with the last two thoughts. So may God bless us all with his Spirit’s teaching, making us see new things in old truths. Thank you.

The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 7 ~

THE BRAZEN ALTAR—part 2

Welcome again to the seventh session in our study on the Tabernacle of ancient Israel. And once more, we will consider the Brazen Altar in this session, and the extremely important message that God is bringing us in this crucial part of the Tabernacle. So it's good to re-read the scriptural passages that describe this Altar, found in Exodus 27, verses 1 to 8, and Exodus 29, verses 36 to 46.

In the previous session, I proposed to cover four truths God reveals to us in this Altar. We have



reviewed the revelation of his way of atonement, or reconciliation. We've also explored how the wood and the bronze pictured the very essential glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. And now in this session, let us review two more truths that are pictured in this Altar, namely, first, the nature of justification of the sinner through Jesus Christ. And then, secondly, we'll look at the role of faith in the justification.

Now to understand our second main teaching on the Brazen Altar, let's for a moment recall what

Shema observed. Remember that he saw some people who came into the Tabernacle—and they looked really visibly burdened as they went. But it looked like they were unburdened and refreshed as they exited the Tabernacle structure. So what did they do? Or what did happen? Well, what happened is what the New Testament refers to as justification of the ungodly, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is illustrated in the Altar. In order to grasp the glory of this, let me seek to frame this first with you. Let's begin to remind ourselves of the truths in Romans 3:23. That truth applies to all of us, but it's the question of whether we experience it so.

God's Word there reads this: "For all have sinned, and [all have] come short of the glory of God." Now if that truth is recognized, you will feel burdened. Not only burdened about what you've done wrong, but you'll feel burdened and grief also about how deeply we have dishonored the great and glorious Creator with our sins. It's only when we have learned to acknowledge this is our personal sin, that it will stoop your heart. It will become a source of pain and sorrow as you realize what you have done. It will make us urgent to seek for the reconciliation. But how? And where? Where can I find this redemption? And perhaps it is your question as well, "How can I, as a guilty sinner that is spiritually bankrupt, how can I ever satisfy God's just demands for payment? How can I, who am actually also still corrupt, be acceptable in his holy sight, where holiness alone is required? How can I ever hope to dwell with this holy Being in sacred fellowship, and obtain the

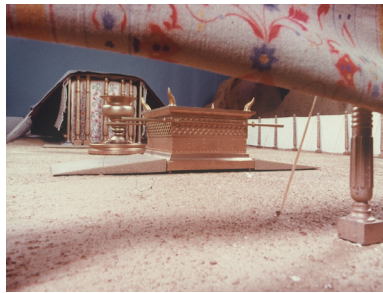
pardon of my sin, when each day, again and again, in thoughts, or in words, or in actions, I fail the glory of God?” Well, the answer to that is the Brazen Altar. Let’s look at that. Let’s consider again. And may God use this to bring relief to your heart.

The fire that’s burning on that Altar pictures the very thing that’s drying up your spirit. It pictured something of God’s holy justice and anger against sin that you sense, I mean, you feel that in your conscience. And when that is burdening your heart, then you actually experience what Galatians 3:10 calls the curse of God. Let me read that verse: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Now, to be cursed by God is not what people do to people, or what people do to God. To be cursed by God is not to have a torrent of words heaped in anger upon your head. No, to be cursed by God is to be rejected, to be abandoned, to be left to yourself, to be forsaken, to be locked away because you are a sinner. The Biblical word describing that awful reality is “hell.” There’s no condition worse, especially if that becomes eternal. And it will be eternal, unless there is a way in which that debt to God can be satisfied. What that way is, God pictures for us in this Brazen Altar.

Remember that no one could go into the Holy, or Holy of Holies by bypassing this Brazen Altar. Everyone—common people, kings, priests, high priests could only approach God by using the Gate, and then they must make use of the Brazen Altar. And this teaches God only can be reconciled to you and embrace you, as a guilty sinner, if you and I have satisfied his holy and his just law which we have broken. But through which reconciliation is possible. No, continual offering of animals. They never could bring the great reconciliation. But it is made possible through the Lamb of God given for the sin of the world.

Jesus Christ is the provided substitute for sinners. And everything of the Altar and on the Altar continually sets him before us. Remember how Shema saw that the offerer put his hand upon the animal? What did that mean? Why did he do that? Well that action pictured transfer symbolically. By putting his hand upon the head of the animal, the offerer transferred himself upon the animal, and all the sins that he committed were, as it were, put upon the sacrifice. So he became identified with the animal, and the animal became identified with him. In other words, now the animal became the thief, the liar, the adulterer, the disobedient child, or whatever the sins were that the person had committed. The Bible has a different word for this transfer. In the New Testament, we often find the word “impute” or the word “credit.” That word is actually borrowed from the banking world. Now, when someone transfers money from his account to my account, then it is imputed, or it is credited to my account. And when that happens, it actually becomes yours.

So God required that every sacrifice animal that would be the substitute had to be in perfect shape. There could be no deformity, no sickness to be found on the animal. And only upon the inspection by the priest, the animal was found to be acceptable, then was it allowed to be sacrificed on behalf of the sinner. So, this requirement symbolizes another truth. No one could be our



substitute who himself was guilty for their own sin. So if there is no Lord Jesus, there is actually no hope. He was holy, he was undefiled, he was separate from sinners. And did you notice that the Scriptures declared him seven times as innocent, as blameless? This is gospel. The Lamb of God was inspected, and he was found to be blameless. And since he was, therefore, he could suffer and die on behalf of others. He could take the guilt of sinners, and he could become imputed with their sin, and be their substitute. Isaiah 53 wonderfully expounds this truth in the well-known words of the prophet: “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:... and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...for the transgression of my people, he was stricken....Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him;...and he bare the sin of many” (Isaiah 53:5, 6, 8, 10, 12).

So after the offerer had transferred himself and his sins upon the animal, then the priest would methodically butcher the animal, flaying it piece by piece. And then the animal would be lifted up upon the burning altar. And as I said before, the smell would not be sweet, but it would rise up towards heaven, and though to us it was a pungent smell—a burning smell, it says in the Bible, to the Lord, it was a sweet smelling savor. Actually in Leviticus 1, verse 13, it says that. And Ephesians 5, verse 2, Paul described Jesus giving “himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.” Now the Hebrew word for sweetsmelling, it has nothing to do with the nose. It has the meaning of “rest-giving.” To us it was a pungent smell. To God it was a rest-giving smell. It settled, or it puts rest to the demands of his justice. The sacrifice opened the way for reconciliation between God and the sinner.

And this is wonderful news! This is the great news of the Bible! On the basis of the Lord Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, the way back to God is open for us. Or, to speak in Tabernacle terms, the way into the Holy of Holies is open. Shema noticed that the downcast and the solemn-looking face of the offerer was lit up with joy and relief after the officiating priest returned from the Altar. Why was that? What brought him this joy? It was because the priest assured him that in this way that he had just seen, in this way of exchange, all of his sins were really, really forgiven him. In Leviticus 4:35, after sacrificing the sin offering, we read, “And the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.” In the New Testament language, that is said as, “and he shall be justified.” Justified—that means that someone is officially and legally declared to be free. It means that his or her sins are put away forever. It means, friends, that God now sees this person as if they had satisfied for all their sins. Yet, to be justified on the basis of Christ’s merits actually goes one step further. God not only sees such a one as having paid for all his transgressions, he considers them also as if they have always been obedient. He considers now that their whole life is unblemished, for Christ’s sake. In other words, he considers them in Christ, as if they always observed and obeyed the commandments of God during all their life. I can think of no truth that is more glorious, more freeing, and more amazing than the teaching on justification by faith in Christ only.

Paul wrote about this in Romans 3, verse 24, where we read, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Or, if I may paraphrase it with the Tabernacle imagery—being declared holy and innocent through God’s gracious provision of Jesus Christ, pictured in the Brazen Altar, and in the sacrificial lamb. And the reason that the believer is declared justified is twofold. First, it’s because his or her sins were transferred to Christ. And secondly, a transfer also went the other way. The unblemished character of Christ is transferred to the believer. So, can you see now how that the burdened soul exited the Tabernacle rejoicing? Having understood and believed God’s way of peace, he rejoiced. He was released. And the entire transaction at

the Brazen Altar declared his salvation from the curse that was upon him.

As we read, for example, in Galatians 3, verse 13: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law”—how?—“being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed”—rejected—“is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Do you still struggle to believe what the gospel declares? And is the reason you find it so hard to believe is that you still feel so sinful? One reason for this struggle is that we tend to mix up the Brazen Altar with the Laver, which stands behind it. In our next study, we’re going to study the Laver, and the Laver is where the priest needed to wash himself daily.

The Laver pictures God’s work of sanctification. And though sanctification is twin with justification, they are still distinct. Never confuse these two, as often is done. Don’t reverse the order of them either, as often is done. For we are not justified because we are holy, but being justified through Christ’s merits, we will be made holy through Christ’s Spirit. So the chapter on justification by faith in Christ Jesus is a big chapter in God’s gospel, and one in which we are to seek clarity. For if we err in the understanding of the necessity of the Brazen Altar, or the cross of Jesus Christ, and omit using it by faith, we cannot be reconciled with God, and we cannot experience peace with God.



So that brings us to our concluding question: What is now the role of faith in the justification of a sinner? Do you remember how the offerer’s hand was laid on the animal’s head? As he held it there, that hand pictured the act of faith. Laying the hand on the animal, that did not save him, but it connected him to the animal which would take his place. Or, to say it in a different way, this hand united him to the animal. Now, they shared everything. The animal shared his sin. The offerer shared the animal’s innocence. Now all this visual, is a visual picture of the promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ has promised that whosoever believes in him has everlasting life. We read, for example, in John 5, verse 24, this beautiful truth: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” So, friends, faith was not a work that earned that salvation. Faith is the means God works by his Spirit in our heart, by which we receive this salvation. And what a glorious and simple message of salvation is that. We don’t need to work our way to heaven by good deeds, or by a perfect repentance, or by a perfect faith. No, no, reconciliation with God is never based on what we do, or what we bring it, or what we are. It is only on the basis of him on whom I lean, in whom I trust, to whom I look. And even though our faith is imperfect, or weak or trembling, that will not affect the blessing of God’s promise. Perhaps the hand of the offerer trembled with fear, as it was laying on the head of the animal. Or perhaps the priest needed to encourage him, or maybe even guide his hand. Perhaps the pressure of his hand was a mere touch. Maybe, maybe the doubts were not all cast out after the priest spoke the words after the sacrifice was made, and maybe he was still filled with doubts and fears. But one thing is sure—whosoever believes in Jesus Christ, as lifted up on the altar for sinners, shall not perish. Because he has already received everlasting life. It is not our faith that saves us, but the Savior whom we trust.

Well, let me draw your attention to a parable that Jesus spoke in Luke 18, verses 9 to 14. At the time of prayer, prayer time always included a sacrifice on the Brazen Altar. After that, the priest, that we will see later, will take some of the hot embers in a bowl, and take them into the Holy place,

where he would pray. So, at that time of the day, there's a Pharisee, and there's a great sinner joined with the people in the Temple. The Pharisee stands way at the front. He's super confident about his own goodness. He had no problem lifting up his eyes and his hands toward heaven directly, for God was sure to be pleased with his good record. As he rehearsed it before God, the great sinner hardly dared to come to the gathering. Discretely, he stands as far to the back as possible. He did not feel he belonged among these good people. He was no good person. His life has been a huge mess—broken promises, he's messed up, he's not worthy a look, after a life of sin. So he didn't even dare to lift up his eyes to heaven, as he felt so ashamed before God. Smiting himself on his chest, all he could pray, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Now Jesus ended this parable with informing his hearers of something that happened in heaven at that moment—something that the publican may not have realized, and therefore, he may not have tasted the comfort of it, but it was true, nonetheless. The truth was true for him, whether he knew it or not. Hear what Jesus said about that man. He says, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than [that Pharisee], for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and who trusts in the sacrifice. Now, did Jesus speak here as the priest would have spoken to the offerer? Indeed he did. He, as the Prophet and the Priest, declared that the great sinner was justified, forgiven, restored, reconciled with his God, on the basis of the sacrifice. For that's how. He didn't do anything, he didn't bring anything. He did not bring anything, but his eye rested upon the burning altar with the smoke going heavenward. And in that act, just like he laid his hand upon the sacrifice before him, and while he held his eyes upon that Altar and on that sacrifice, he pleaded with God for mercy, for Christ's sake, and God granted his request instantly, completely, freely, for Jesus' sake, pardoned. And so it will be, if every one of you who turns to God while looking at Jesus Christ and his sacrifice as the only way back.

So this concludes our review of the Brazen Altar and all its pictures of the need and the provision of God's sacrifice for sin. And may the Lord bless this study to us all.

The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

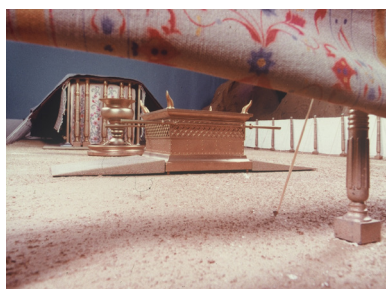
by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 8 ~

THE LAVER

Welcome. In this study, we will focus on the second piece of furniture found in the courtyard of the Tabernacle. I recommend that you take the time to read through Exodus 30, verses 17 and 21; chapter 38, verse 8; and chapter 40, verse 7. And may God bless us with his Spirit to understand, and embrace the gospel truth as set forth in the Laver.

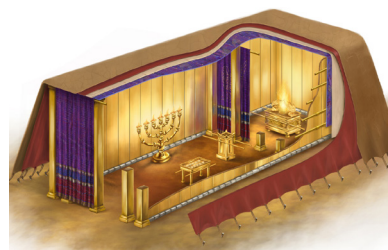
Well, before we look at the details of this Laver, let's re-remind ourselves of the main picture



of the entire Tabernacle structure and its ceremonies. God pictures before us in this structure two distinct yet related subjects. First, the courtyard. It pictures the sinner's only way to, or the approach to God. The Gate, through the Fence, the Brazen Altar, and the Laver, laying out the foundation for this approach to God. None could bypass. If communion with God was desired, you needed to stop by all of them.

Secondly, the Tabernacle building, with the Holy, and Holy of Holies, it kind of pictures the believer's communion with God. This communion is portrayed in the details of the Holy, and particularly, the Holy of Holies.

So, reflecting on these two main truths, do not forget, friends, that these objective pictures need to be also a personal, and they need to be spiritual and experiential truths. When the Holy Spirit works out salvation in our hearts, we will experience all these various truths displayed in the Tabernacle, but maybe always not so clearly put together. For example, you will have experienced a growing desire to be brought near to God, but you know that there's a hindrance. What is that? It's that Fence. You know that you've broken God's law, and that hinders reconciliation—a fence. God's holy and God's just being is a barrier stopping you from approaching him. But the Spirit of God discovers to you, there's a Gate—there is a way. There's a way open for us to come to God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. And how beautiful is the Savior that invites us to come to him, assuring us, "I will not cast you out." And the Gate is wide, as you saw—open for all-sized sinners. Yet in those moments of hope, when you see that Gate, you will still be facing the fact of your sins and your guilt. What about that? We can't simply ignore them and hope for the best. God is a righteous God. He demands the law to be honored, as you also would demand if you were sinned against. And a broken law demands a just punishment—a fair one.



So, facing this reality, the Israelite was guided to the Brazen Altar. That Altar, which we saw before, was nothing less than Christ Jesus pictured on the cross. Has God not made him precious, as the Priest, able to save us to the uttermost? Has the Spirit of God enabled you to place your trust in him alone? Have you already, by faith, tasted the peace and the pardon obtained through the Mediator's unblemished life, and yet sacrificial and atoning death? Well that's not where our spiritual journey ends. It's where our spiritual battle to be holy gets real. For let's ask, are you now pure? Are you holy? Are you without sin? Are you always, and in all things like Jesus Christ? Or must you say, "Oh that I may experience his power to behold."

Well, friends, then let's follow Shema in our thoughts, as his eyes fell upon the next object in the Tabernacle. Shema observed something behind this big Altar, right before him. It appeared to be a beautifully shaped piece. It shined brightly in the sunlight. It kind of looked like a giant wash basin. His eyes followed one of the priests with blood-spattered hands, and dusty feet, and he was walking towards the wash basin. Carefully and thoroughly, he cleansed himself, after having been busy with the slaughtering and the sacrificing of the lamb at the Altar.

Just then, his eyes spotted another priest, who walked in right through the Gate, and Shema saw that he went straight to the wash basin, even before he did anything else within the Tabernacle courtyard. And only after that washing, he joined the others in doing the priestly work. And while



he was watching, he saw an older priest come in. He was accompanied with a few younger men. And very solemnly, they walked towards the basin behind the Altar, and he noticed that they did not just wash their hands and their feet, but he noticed that they washed their entire bodies with this water in the wash basin. What happened to them? And why did their entire body need to be washed?

Well, in the meantime, a few of the Levites came through the Gate, and they were carrying together a large container with water, with which they replenished the wash basin. "They must do this several times each day, as it looks like this wash basin is heavily used," Shema observed. "I must check this out a little closer." And he tried to walk closer to the Laver, but suddenly, a priest blocked his way. "Young man," he said, "you're not allowed to go any further into the courtyard. This is only permissible for the priests and the Levites." Obediently, Shema backed off and, in the meantime, he asked the priest if he could please explain to him the details of that wash basin. And gladly, he did. So Shema learned that the wash basin is called "the Laver."

It was probably not more than about a meter-and-a-half tall, for it also had to be transported when they travelled. The exact shape and the dimensions are never specified in the Bible, so we don't know exactly what it looked like. Most likely it was like an oversized large bowl standing on a pedestal, into which the priests would dip their hands and wash their feet and hands, and if needed, their body. According to



Exodus 38, verse 8, the Laver was made from the looking glasses, or what we would call their mirrors. In the ancient days, glass was not yet invented. The people used brightly polished brass for a mirror. So how interesting, that what we may often use for vanity purposes, God turns into a holy purpose.



So as Shema observed, The Laver was placed behind the Altar, but before that you actually entered the Tabernacle. Right in between the veil and the Altar. To be honest, doesn't it seem much more logical to put the Laver first? Don't we usually wash before we approach an important person? Will we not be sure that we look pure and proper before that we go and approach to speak to him? And yet, God commanded Moses to put the

Laver second, not first. The message is clear.

Laver second, not first. The message is clear.

Our sins need to be confessed and atoned, before we will be made holy. Or to say it really theologically, justification precedes sanctification, though both are intimately connected together, as twin graces. For although confession and atonement are requisite in our approach to God, so is holiness. Hebrews 12:14 clearly states this in these words: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God." So this is like Jehovah's instructions to Moses, in Exodus 30, verses 19 to 21, where it reads: "For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offerings made by fire unto the LORD: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations."



So what is now God's message to us in this Laver? In the first place, the Laver is a visual of a rich part of the gospel. Usually we limit the gospel to the Lord Jesus Christ in his life, and his death, and his resurrection. But friends, the gospel is also about the Holy Spirit's ministry to sanctify us sinners. What is more impossible for us sinners than to become holy like Jesus? No, no, not just to look like it, not just to act like it, but to actually be holy. And where we fail, there the Holy Spirit succeeds. It's his work to sanctify sinners. He turns sinners into saints, or rebels into good citizens of God's kingdom. And this work of the Spirit begins in the great miracle of regeneration. Jesus spoke about that in John 3, as the new birth. This new birth is required if we will ever see, or ever enjoy the kingdom of God. And Jesus explained that that new birth was the work of the Holy Spirit. In John 3:8, he says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth"—or where it wants—"thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In Titus 3, verse 5, we read the reference to the Holy Spirit in salvation—we are not saved "by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved

us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Now the Laver illustrates that. It illustrates a cleansing and a washing away of the pollution of our sin. And that’s also God’s work of salvation. At the Brazen Altar, the guilt is carried away in the death of the substitute. In the Laver, the pollution of sin is removed through the ministry of the blessed Spirit of Christ. To put it in a different picture, Jesus provided, in his atoning work on the cross, the title for heavenly communion. And the Spirit provides, in his heart-renewing work, the fitness for heavenly communion. Now to say it in a different picture, Christ’s righteousness is the wedding garment of the bride, but the Spirit’s ministry prepares the heart of the sinner to be the bride of Christ. And therefore, it’s so important that we notice that the Brazen Altar stands before



the Laver. That’s not just random order. No, it’s a theological must.

It is on the basis of Christ’s merits that the Holy Spirit is poured out. Now, we can glean this from various Scriptures. Take, for example, John 7, verses 37 to 39. as Jesus invited thirsty sinners to come unto him, and if they would trust in him, they would receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38 says the exact same thing. Peter preaches, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of [our Lord]

Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” The Spirit is promised upon belief in the finished work of Jesus Christ. In other words, first the ministry at the Altar, then the ministry at the Laver.

So this brings me to the second main teaching on the Laver. God magnifies the holiness for his law in the Laver. Everywhere God exalts holiness as the attribute of all attributes. Scripture often speaks about worshiping him in the beauty of holiness. And everything in the Tabernacle, as I said before, stresses the holiness of Jehovah. That’s why every priest first needed to be completely washed, when he entered the Temple to do his sacred work. And it wasn’t only necessary at the very first initiation into the priesthood, as Shema saw happen, when a few young priests walked in with the elderly priest. No, each day, as they began their priestly work, but also throughout the day, they had to continually wash themselves, hands and feet, regularly at the Laver. Why? Fellowship with God without holiness is not possible. Let’s not think that this is only Old Testament theology. Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 22 tells us what is for us today phrased in Tabernacle symbolism: “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

The third aspect of the Laver is about the Laver and the water. Both are symbolic pictures of the sacred Word of God. The Laver acted like a mirror. The priests could see themselves in that. As he stood there, it revealed the smudges and the splatters on their faces, that needed to be washed. And so, as I use the Word of God daily, it acts like a mirror. It discovers to me where I need to be cleansed. Hebrews 4:12 reads: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, [and dividing] the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” It searches us out. In other words, the Word is able to judge or to reveal the hidden thoughts and the intentions of our heart. See how important the role of the Word of God is in the life of sanctification?

But not only is it the revealer of our sins, as a mirror does to our physical blemishes and filthiness, no, the Word of God is also the means for cleansing us from the pollution of our sins, as

water does to our bodies. Several New Testament passages will show us that we are washed by the water of the Word. Take John 15:3—Jesus says, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” In John 17:17, Jesus prays, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” In Ephesians 5:26, we read the phrase, “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”

So the constant use of the Laver illustrates to us the constant use every believer should make of the Word of God. The Word is sanctifying. And the sanctifying truth is beautifully stated in 2 Corinthians—and notice again the reference to mirrors: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

So in conclusion, I invite you to consider that unforgettable scene in John 13:8. Jesus is on the floor before Peter. He objected to having his feet washed. Jesus answers him patiently, “If I wash thee not, thou has no part with me.” Now the Lord did not mean that if he didn’t get to wash Peter’s feet, that Peter could have no relationship with him, or didn’t have a relationship with him. No, Peter was a believer blessed by God the Father. That relationship was permanent. Well, what did Jesus say? “If I don’t wash your feet, Peter, we cannot have the fellowship or the communion at this table.” Sin hinders communion, friends, and therefore, it needs to be washed daily. So at once, Peter make a complete U-turn, and he went overboard, when he says, “Lord, not my feet only, . . . but my hands and my head.” And Jesus’ response is significant, and it reminds us of the Brazen Altar and the Laver. Listen to verse 10: “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.”

Now in the Greek, there’s two different words used for the word “washing.” The first “wash,” is a Greek word, which means “to bury one’s body completely.” This refers to God’s active justification upon faith. All the guilt of sin is completely washed away in the sacrifice of the Lamb. Now what’s happened here was pictured at the Brazen Altar. But the second word “washed” in that sentence has in the Greek the meaning of “rinse off.” Now as we walk through our life, a pardoned and justified believer will daily soil himself with new sins of thoughts or words. Even with the best efforts, we will continue to live with an indwelling world of sin, as we are surrounded with temptations and fall each day. Therefore, each day we need to come unto the Lord Jesus, to the spiritual Laver, to have ourselves again washed, and these daily sins need to be confessed before God. They need to be washed away in Christ, in order to maintain this communion and this fellowship with God. So, was John also thinking of this, when he wrote in his letter, “And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. And if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins”—the Brazen Altar—“and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”—the Laver.

So may God bless these teachings, and deepen our understanding of the gospel, and deepen our enjoyment of the fellowship with God, all through Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit. Thank you.



The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

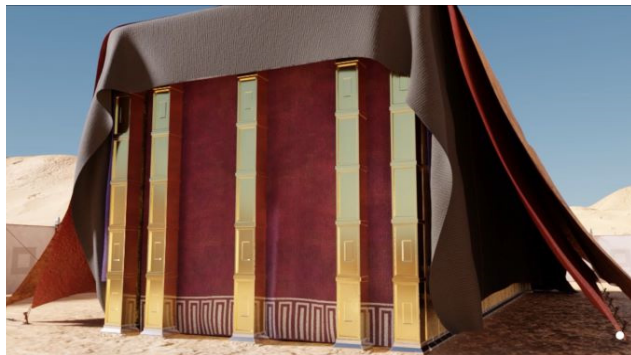
by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 9 ~

THE TABERNACLE BUILDING

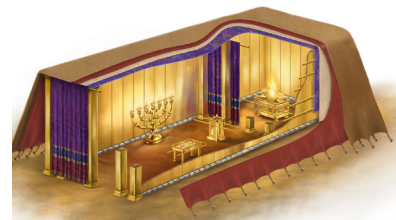
Welcome to our next session on the Tabernacle study. This time we will concentrate our attention on the actual Tabernacle Building. In very detailed instructions, Moses was told about this in Exodus 26. And God instructed Moses to prepare the various coverings, and gave him the exact number of the boards which will make the walls, and spoke about the two curtains which separated the Holy and the Holy of Holies.

And as Shema, our Jewish lad, stood at the entrance of the courtyard, he did not see any of these details inside this special building. For there was none could enter, except the officiating priests. So Shema did notice that before any of the priests entered, they first washed themselves carefully at the Laver. And then he saw how a priest took some of the hot coals from the Brazen Altar, carried them in a golden bowl towards the building, and he then disappeared behind the curtain.



And when that happened, he also noticed that everyone that was standing at the Gate or the priests that were in the Courtyard stood still, and waited for the priest to exit. And it appeared that everyone actually prayed. After the priest came out, he blessed the waiting congregation. These words are found in Numbers 6, verses 24 to 26.

Now, in this study, let's hear what Shema heard, as one of the priests described the details of the sanctuary to him. He, as one of the sons of Merari, was assigned to take down and put up the building when God instructed them to move on. And he told Shema that the sanctuary building was divided into two different rooms. The larger room was called the Holy Place. It had a rectangular shape of about 10 meters (32 feet) by 5 meters wide, and 5 meters tall. Now you could consider this to be the front entry to the second room—the most important room. The second was the smaller room, and it's called the Holy of Holies. It measured a perfect square [cube] of 5 by 5 by 5 meters. This room was God's dwelling place. It was his throne room. Exactly above that rose a pillar of cloud or fire which would stand when the building was resting.



This building had to be movable, so how was it constructed? In Exodus 26, we read that 48 boards formed the walls on the south, the north, and the west side. And each of them was con-



structed of Shittim wood, covered this time with gold. They stood next to each other, side by side. They were secured with cross bars sliding through three rings on each board. And to stabilize them, Moses was instructed to make silver sockets. On the east side, the wall consisted of five pillars with a huge curtain hung on them. The entrance to the Holy of Holies was also a curtain, but this time, attached to four pillars.

To complete the building, the Lord instructed Moses to make a roof. And this roof was made of four large coverings of various fabric. Three of them were made out of ten sections, except the third one. That one was made of eleven sections, and the eleventh section kind of hung over the backside of the Tabernacle. All the others, they ran across from the north to the south, without hanging either at the front or at the back sides of the building.

So let's now think together about the spiritual truths again that are pictured in this building. First, we'll consider the 48 boards: 48 is four times twelve. Twelve is an important number. Twelve was the number of the tribes of Israel. Twelve is the number of the apostles of Jesus. In Revelation, John saw twenty-four elders around the throne. It's therefore safe to conclude that these boards standing side by side are the spiritual picture of God's



church—his gathered saints. At one point, each believer was like those boards used to be, before they were placed in the Tabernacle there. For the boards were made out of Shittim tree, which is a rather unsightly desert tree, growing and surviving in the arid deserts made them twisted and gnarly. Makes me think of Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 1, 2, and 3, where Paul described sinners living in the desert of sin, separated from God and Christ. It describes us all, before being re-

generated, whether we live in the world, or are part of a Christian church. Now before God's quickening grace, we were all spiritually dead and living in trespasses and sin. We all were dominated by a spirit which is not God's Spirit. We were all strangers of God, and to his sanctifying influences. Yet, one day, the woodsman cut down the Shittim tree and began to make a straight board. So sinners are taken in the hand of God. In God's time, God took us in his hand of salvation. And Paul wrote about this beautifully in Ephesians 2, verses 4 and 5: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)."

So after having cut down the trees, the craftsman got to work. Now to make a straight board out of such a tree would not have been an easy task, as there was nothing straight about the wood. This pictures again the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation. It is his work to straighten out, as it were, our hearts and our affections, and our minds. He alone turns a sinner into a saint. Through teaching, through the trials, and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God begins to conform us more

and more to Jesus Christ. Slowly but surely, Christian character is developed by the Holy Spirit. We grow in grace, we grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that process, friends, is not easy, just as making a straight board, now that was hard work. The carpenter ran across gnarls and twists, and strains of the wood. And as the wood dried, and it wants to bend, it doesn't give. And so, actually this portrays the work of sanctification.

Now we meet with the sap of our selfishness. We meet with the knots of hardness of heart, and the habits that are wrong, and we discover twists, and out-of-shape aspects in our own thinking, or our own desires. Even harder it is to grow in the fruit of the Spirit—how to be gentle, and how to be humble, how to be compassionate and forgiving, even to those that are hard to live with, or how to be joyful and submissive when we run into difficulties. Rather, all those are the fruits of the workmanship of the great Redeemer. Listen to how Paul put that, in Ephesians 2:10—“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

So when the carpenter was finished, the board was still not perfect. Yet, all the imperfections were covered with a sheet of shining gold. And now nothing, nothing of the remaining imperfections were seen anymore. The only thing you saw is gold. Friends, what a beautiful, spiritual truth is pictured in these boards covered with gold. Even the best of the saints of Christ continue on this earth as poor and needy with indwelling sin—how easy it is to stumble. When is there ever a day, when we say we felt kind enough, or we felt joyful enough, or we felt loving enough. When is there ever a day we never did entertain a tempting sight. Never is a sincere child of God satisfied with



his level of holiness while on earth. Recently, I read a quote which was so true. The author wrote: “If we think we are enough holy, enough loving, and enough joyful, and thankful, and faithful, and gentle, then either we are deceiving ourselves, or we are in heaven.” Well, what we see within ourselves, God does not see in us anymore, if we are, by faith, in Christ. He sees his children as covered with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He sees everyone of them complete in him. God sees them righteous, gold, on the basis of Jesus Christ's merits. And that is the truth pictured in these gold-covered wooden boards.

Paul wrote in Romans 3:22, in words God wrote in the Tabernacle in these wood and gold boards. He wrote this: “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.” Now hear how Isaiah went from “Woe is me” to “I rejoice,” as he learned to see the spiritual truth of these gold-covered boards in his life. Seeing the glory of the Lord, he felt unclean: “Woe is me! for I am undone;...for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” And later, in Isaiah 61, verse 10: “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” See, this is the truth about every believer. Our human woodiness is covered with the divine gold-ness.

Well, another thing to notice is that no board stood on its own. The 48 pieces were held together by a number of bars running through the rings on each board. And with that picture in mind, consider how Paul described the church. Ephesians 2 again, verse 19 to 22: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners”—the individual desert tree, living by yourself, for yourself—but we are “now fellowcitizens with the saints, and [we are] of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone”—and then it comes—“in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy

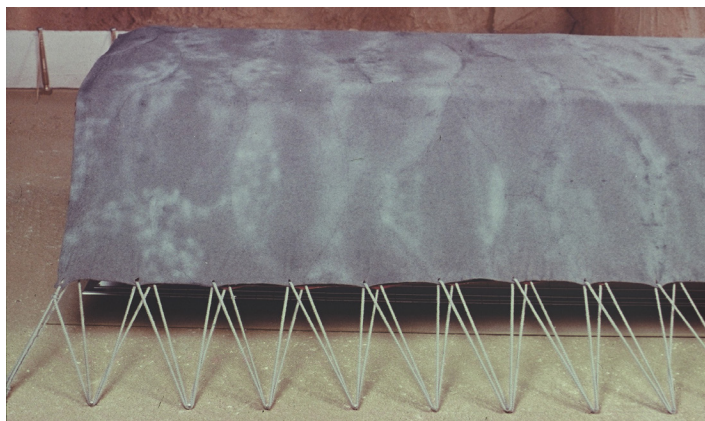
temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” The boards stood side by side. None leaned forward or backward. They were fitly framed together, as they were, standing shoulder to shoulder. None stood taller or smaller. All were not in the same position, but each were in the same condition.

Now there is a beautiful unity pictured in these 48 boards of this building. Sadly, this picture is not always visible among God’s children now. And therefore, again and again, we as believers need to heed the exhortation Paul gives in Ephesians 4, verse 3: “Endeavouring”—brethren—“to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” And the unity is in the details of verses 4 to 6: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are all called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” So we learn together as believers not to look upon another, or to despise others, or to be jealous. And so we remember that each board was a vital part of the building. And can we remind ourselves that every believer has his or her place in God’s kingdom. What will remain imperfect here, however, will one day be perfect, united as one church in the glory of the new earth.

Well next, we already saw that the boards were held together with the bars running through three rings attached to each board. Now, could those three rings be a picture of the Triune God, each Person contributing to the work of salvation. The Father elected the church. The Son redeemed them. And the Holy Spirit sanctifies the church.

There is one more significant detail about the boards. Remember they were placed on silver sockets. The silver of these sockets was obtained in a very special manner. According to God’s instructions in Exodus 30, verses 11 to 16, the silver was obtained from the price of a ransom, or from the redemption money. It says, “When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD.” So everyone twenty years old and above were to give half a shekel of silver. And this money was called “the atonement money.” It was melted into the sockets for the boards and the pillars. Undoubtedly we may read a reference again to Jesus Christ and his atoning work of redemption. Every believer is built on that foundation of Jesus Christ, for the entire church rests upon the security of his finished work. Our redemption is secure through the blood merits of Jesus Christ.

So lastly, let’s look at the four coverings that covered the Tabernacle Building. There’s an outside covering made of badgers’ skins. That was probably some sea animal that was found abundantly along the waters of the Red Sea. The outer layer was practically intended for the protection of the glaring sun and the searing desert winds, and the occasional rain. It actually might have given the Tabernacle a rather unattractive appearance from the outside. Isn’t that exactly how the people saw Christ Jesus, as Isaiah 53, verse 2 tells us: “He hath no form nor comeliness; and

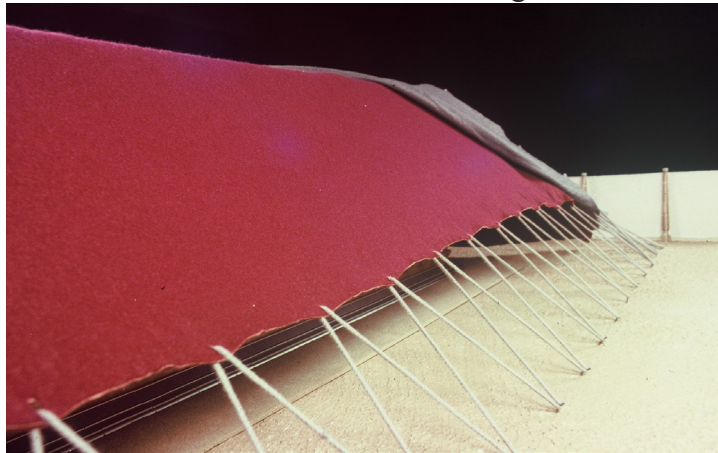


when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” Unbelievers, whose eyes are blinded by the gods of this world, do not see the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Was it not so with us also, before God’s Spirit opened our eyes? Though unattractive, this outer covering was very effective, which formed a protective barrier against all the outside influences of the sun, and the wind, the sand, and the

rain. And again, that aspect highlights the work of Jesus Christ. He is our covering. He is our shield, to all who place their trust in him.

The second covering underneath the first was made of rams' skins that were colored bright red. The ram was the animal Abraham saw in the bushes in Genesis 22. It was the animal of substitution. It was the animal of consecration for Aaron and his sons as they were ordained in the priesthood, as described in Leviticus, chapter 8. So this second layer points to Jesus work as the consecrated servant of God. He made himself of no reputation. He humbled himself. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross—the ultimate sacrifice. And in that, he provided a covering for all his people, and that's how they covered the Tabernacle.

The third covering was made of goats' hair. The common goats were black haired. The goat was also the animal used for sin offering. So this covering points to Jesus' life as the sin offering.



I said earlier, it is striking that this covering was composed of eleven sections, and all the others were made of ten sections. The eleventh section was visible at the backside. It hung down, and it may have practically been to protect the backside of the Tabernacle. But, it could also be a reference to Jesus' public ministry. For thirty years, he was hidden as he lived in Nazareth. It was only the last three years of his life that Jesus Christ became public. And yet, during all the

thirty-three years of his life, he is the substitute for his people. He atoned in his life for the sins of infancy, childhood, and adulthood. And so truly, he is a complete Savior.

The innermost covering was of fine-twined linen, embroidered with the same colors, as seen in the entrance Gate. This is the one we see from the inside. And as you learned, every color highlight one of the aspects of Christ's glorious Personhood and ministry. We are informed by the sacred Word that on this covering, angels were pictured. As it were, the angels were looking from above down into the sanctuary. Were they curious? Were they watchful? Were they rejoicing? Probably all three. As we read Ephesians, chapter 3:10, Paul refers to the angels, and what they learned about what was hidden, also for them, from the beginning of this world. He writes: "To the intent"—in the church—"that now unto the principalities and powers"—angels—"in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Likewise, Peter referred



to the angels in a remarkable phrase, in 1 Peter 1:12. Not only were the prophets curious about what they were writing in the Bible, but also the angels were curiously desiring to look into those things. And doesn't Hebrews 1:14 remind us of the angels' ministries? "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And isn't it beautiful to see how the various details of this original Tabernacle pictured New Testament truths long before it.

That brings us then finally to the first and the second veils of the Tabernacle, separating the Holy and the Holy of Holies. Again, the same colors were used. It's referring to Christ, as we already covered. But there remains a curious "why?" The first veil was attached to five pillars, and the second veil, leading into the Holy of Holies, is attached to four pillars. I don't believe that, with God, details are random or unneeded. I wonder whether this is a reference to the fact that the Old Testament gospel was actually introduced by the five books of Moses, but the real glory of the New Testament is that the gospel is opened with four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, setting out before us Jesus Christ. So far then about the Tabernacle Building.

In our next four studies, we will consider each piece of the sacred furniture found in this building. May God bless this overview and introduction to the study of this inner sanctuary of God and his people.

The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

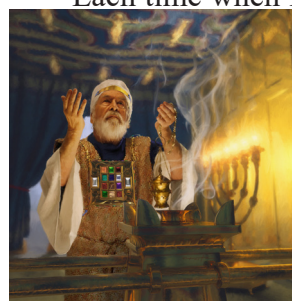
by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 10 ~

THE LAMPSTAND

Welcome to the tenth session of the study of the Old Testament Tabernacle. The Scriptures that will be considered in this study are found in Exodus 25:31–40; Exodus 37:17–24; and Leviticus 24:1–4.

Shema, our Jewish lad, could only imagine how beautiful and wonderful it was what the priest described to him one day. “Shema, after I have cleansed myself carefully at the laver, I would gather some of the utensils I need to take care of the lampstand. However, before I may do that work with the lights, I first need to offer some of the incense upon the altar of incense.



“Each time when I enter in the that sanctuary of the holy place, I feel the solemnity of God’s presence. Walking from the bright outside into this warmly lit up holy place is truly something soothing, as well as inspiring. It is something, Shema, you need to experience to know.” And this really is true what the priest said. It’s like Psalm 25, verse 14, where we read: “The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.” Grace, friends, teaches us to value and to experience the sweet communion with God, when he draws us away from all that is earthly and sinful, into his presence.

So let’s take a closer look at the lampstand, which is at the left side of the room. The Hebrew word for the lampstand is not what we often translate as “candlestick,” but “light-bearer.” That’s because the light comes from the finest prepared olive oil, instead of wax candles. The lampstand was made of nearly one talent of pure gold. In weight, that would be around ninety pounds of gold, and so it made it one of the most costly objects in the Tabernacle.

What is even more remarkable, is how the artist made this lampstand. He did not solder it together. He did not pour the gold into a mold. But it says it was beaten out of one solid piece of gold. That would have taken very special gifts, and amazing patience and perseverance to craft this lampstand out of one solid piece of gold. The whole thing was one astonishing feat.

There were three arms that grew out, as it were, out of the main center shaft, like branches from a tree. Each of the six arms were dec-



orated with three groups of almond blossoms, knops, and flowers. The main shaft had four groups of the almond decorations. And then, on the top of each of the arms was an almond-shaped bowl. It was obviously made to resemble the almond tree. And we wonder why God did command it to



resemble the almond tree. Well, this may be to do with the fact that the almond tree is the very first to blossom in the springtime. It was therefore a symbol of life and hope after the very long winters. Among the Jews, it spoke about resurrection of life.

How tall was this lampstand? The Bible doesn't have a measurement. Jewish tradition has it was about five feet tall, or about a meter and a half, and about three and a half feet, or a little over one meter wide. But what we do

know is the olive oil that the priests were to burn in this was the best of the best. In Leviticus 24, we are told the olive oil was not prepared in the very usual way—it was to be beaten out. Normally, the ripe olives are squeezed or pressed. But unripe olives, they need to be beaten to get the oil out. And the reason for using unripe olives is that the oil would be pure, burn brighter, and above all, would never smoke. So to safeguard the Tabernacle's beauty from an accumulation of soot, God ordered the best of the oils to be used.

The lamps were always to burn—in other words, day and night. And to maintain this, the wick needed to be trimmed twice a day, as well as the oil in every one of the cups replenished. From Exodus 30, verses 7 and 8, we learn that the care of the lamps always happened in combination with the offering of incense on the altar. Moses wrote these words: “And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.”

Now let's draw out of the teaching that God gives us in this spectacular lampstand. First, we'll consider again the key of the Tabernacle, the glory of Christ, as pictured in the lampstand. And then we will view the lampstand as the symbol of Christ in relationship to his own people. And then thirdly, we will ponder how the Spirit of God is pictured in the lampstand. And lastly, we'll view how the lampstand resembles our task as believers in this world.



So first, as expected, Jesus Christ is again the key point in the lampstand. We saw already that this piece of art was astounding. It was not poured into a mold, it was not soldered together, but it has been beaten out of one solid block of gold. And the mystery of how this art is produced, this candlestick, or this lampstand, is, however, exceeded by the mystery of the Son of God made flesh. Who can understand how the Son of God stepped, as it were, across the galaxies of the universe, and appeared upon planet earth in human form. You know, friends, Jesus' incarnation was nothing short of the infinite work of God. When Gabriel announced its event in the simple words, who can fathom them, when Gabriel said, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Now this mysterious work of forming the body of Jesus, in union with his divine nature as the Son of God, is symbolically pictured in the lampstand. We notice that there were no exact dimensions given of this lampstand, and how fitting that is, as it is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who can measure the glory and the greatness of the Son of God in the flesh, in this world?

John testified of his Master, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” In him is the fulness of God, and experiencing him, in his teaching, in his love, in his power, in his gentleness, in his warmth, that is to experience the light of life. And Jesus brings this very clearly out, in John 8, verse 12. He said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” He is the light of the world.

Now we all know how cheering light is, especially when it is dark and dismal. As we grapple with this darkness of sin, as we grapple with the depressing cloud of guilt, only the light of the gospel, the free and pardoning love and grace brings hope. And this is how the knowledge of God’s gospel will be experienced in our own heart—a light. What a revival of hope, when I may hear that he has come as the Son of righteousness with healing in his wings. The light in Jesus can also be seen as the love of God, and who can measure this love of God? Paul prayed that we may be able to comprehend, with all of the saints, what is the breadth, what is the length, what is the depth, what is the height of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.

So the more we peer on the love of God, especially as it reflects itself in the face of our loveless and hostile world, the more it shines. Is it therefore any wonder that Jesus needed to warn, in John 3, verse 19, about the evil of rejecting his love that shines in darkness? He says, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light,”—why?—“because their deeds were evil.”

Well, secondly, consider the lampstand as the symbol of the church, in close unity with Jesus Christ. God’s own word provides this commentary that the lampstand pictures the Lord’s people. We turn to Revelation 1, verses 12 and 13. John described how he saw Jesus among the seven lampstands. In verse 20, he identified these lamps as the seven churches. So what a fitting symbol, and also what a rich revelation this lampstand gives us of the union between Christ and his people.

It’s clear that its main shaft, that pictures Christ himself. But intimately united to him, as branches to a tree, are his people. It is only through this mystical and spiritual union between Christ and his people, that the root of all spiritual fruitfulness is found. Notice how Jesus emphasized this, in John 15, verse 5, using the analogy of the vine and the branches. “Abide in me, and I in you.” And, “as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” And then in verse 5, he repeated this with an absolute: “For without me”—or apart from me—“ye can do nothing.” So this truth is that we cannot shine the loveliness of godliness or Christ-likeness without being in Christ. So, did you know that this truth of the union of Christ with his people is emphasized well over an hundred times in the New Testament. God doesn’t want us to miss this gospel fact. And each look at the lampstand should remind each believer of Jesus and us. We cannot shine without him. Without him, we all will walk in darkness. But also, in him, we are the light—the light of the world.

You know, there’s another beautiful truth in this



lampstand. Though the branches cannot exist without the vine, it is also true that the vine cannot exist without the branches. From all eternity, Christ has been united to his people, as the Head to the body. They belong together in the mind of God. God's people are no afterthought in God's plan. They are together in his thoughts. Think of Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 4, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world."

Well, thirdly, let's explore the Spirit's importance, as pictured in the lampstand. The Spirit's ministry, friends, is pictured in the oil in the cups on each of the arms. As that flaming wick was fed with this pure oil, it caused a glowing light to fill the holy place. And thinking about the oil, and the light, and the seven arms of the lampstand, makes Revelation 1, verse 4 very clear, where John writes, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and"—he says—"from the seven Spirits which are before his throne." And in Revelation 4, verse 5, we read another reference about the "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which," John writes, "are the seven Spirits of God." Now the number seven is the number of fulness, and so the seven Spirits symbolized in the seven-armed lampstand declares the fulness of the Spirit. It is



the Holy Spirit who is the Person in the Godhead who administers the plans or the purposes of God in and through his church, in this world in which we are.

And yet, the work of the Holy Spirit is not only within the body of the believers in the six branches. No, he also filled without measure the main branch of the church—Jesus Christ himself. This main shaft was administered by the same oil—the Holy Spirit. Now if we turn to Isaiah 11, verses 1 and 2, it's almost as you see the lampstand in the prophesy about Christ. We find there a

sevenfold Spirit resting upon him that is born from the roots of Jesse. It says, "And the spirit of" Jehovah "shall rest upon him." Now picture that truth as the center in the main shaft of the lampstand. And then Isaiah describes the six branches, in a sixfold Spirit—"and the spirit of...wisdom and understanding," and "the spirit of counsel and might," and "the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD"—all rests upon him.

So, coming to the New Testament, we read about the Holy Spirit in Christ's life repeatedly. Joseph was instructed, in Matthew, chapter 1, verse 18, that Mary, his espoused wife, "was found with child of the Holy Ghost." As John the Baptist baptized Jesus, the Spirit of God descended like a dove upon Jesus. And Luke noted, in chapter 4, verse 14, that "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee," preaching the gospel. And all through his earthly life, Jesus preached filled with the Holy Ghost without measure. We read in John 3, verse 34, "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." The importance of the Spirit's work in Jesus' life even extended to Christ's resurrection from the dead. In Romans 8:11, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, then he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Let us never minimize the glory of this third Person of the Trinity. How essential he was for the Savior, as he was conceived, as he lived, as he labored, died, and rose from the dead. And likewise,

the Holy Spirit is indispensable to us believers. How could any Christian carry out his or her tasks without the constant ministry of the oil of the Holy Ghost? For who teaches us the wisdom to see our foolishness, or to see the need for our salvation in Christ? Who opens our understanding for God and for the glory of God? Who makes known to us the mystery of Christ Jesus? Who provides us with the counsel to return and to direct our lives? Who enables us to stand with might against the power of sin and Satan? Who works within us this reverential awe and love for God? And who enables us to shine as Christ shone in the world? In all these questions, one single answer—it is the Holy Spirit of God.

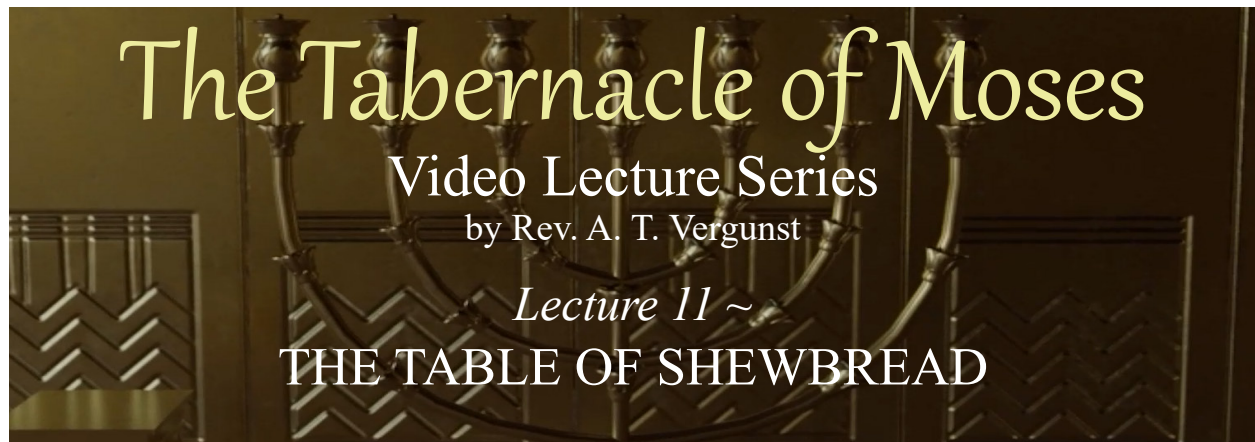
And that brings me to our last observation on this lampstand. The lampstand pictures our task as believers. Jesus is the light of the world, but so are his people. How vividly did Christ speak that in Matthew 5, verses 14 to 16. And Christ speaks about his people the same as he spoke about himself: “Ye are the light of the world.” Friends, either we are a candlestick in the home, or we may be on the top position in the world, but wherever God has placed his church, we have the task to shine the light. God leaves his purchased people in this world to shine in the light of holiness, and love, and goodness, and graciousness. Listen to Paul, as he exhorted the Philippians, in chapter 2:12–13 that the believers live in care, so not to eclipse themselves through disobedience or neglect: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” And then in verse 15, he adds, “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”

God expects his people to shine. As we live, and as we love, and as we forgive, or as we forbear, and as we care, and as we serve others; as we sacrifice, as we deny ourselves, as we show the fruit of self control, and meekness, and gentleness. We are to shine when we devote our gifts for the benefit of others, in the body and outside the body. Let’s not forget, dear fellow Christians, light doesn’t speak a word—it shines, it allures without words. And so one of the most powerful ways to be the light of the world, is to simply walk as Jesus walked, going about doing good, going about bearing testimony about his deeds, that were speaking love ahead of his own words. And if you live like him, in our dark societies or surroundings, we will be like a lampstand. And though the world may not comprehend how someone can be so loving, or so gentle, or so self-controlled, or so humble, it may attract them to the light, as they may struggle with various issues of darkness and difficulties.

And so, finally, one more observation. Each day, the priest had to tend the lamps. He had to trim the wick with the scissors, then he had to refill the bowls with the pure oil, and that was necessary to keep the lights burning. Now that’s equally true spiritually. If I live a prayerless life, if I live a Scriptureless life, I will soon be a ragged wick, dry of oil. And in that light, understand Paul’s exhortation that he gives to the Christians, much like the caring of the lamps. Listen to what he says, in 1 Thessalonians: “Quench not the Spirit. Despise not the prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.” You see, Paul’s exhortation in Ephesians 5, verse 18 is again reminiscent of the priest’s daily task with the lampstand: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”

Now however, friends, if it was dependent upon us as believers, we would all be smoldering wicks. And how precious therefore is then that picture that John describes in his closing the book, Revelation 1, verses 12 and 13, “And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks” or

lampstands; “and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man.” That is the interceding High Priest, who, through the Spirit, maintains his body—his church. And we have a High Priest who will not quench the smoking wick. Instead, with his divine skillfulness, and his compassionate mercy, he pours the pure oil of his Spirit upon his people, so each may be a light, either on the candlestick in the family home, or like a city on a hill in your community, or in your business, or as the light of the world, like those who have high and public positions in life. Wherever we are, shine. May God comfort us and equip us to shine like that for the King.



Welcome again to our next study on the Tabernacle. In this session, we will study the Table of Shewbread. And that will cover the teachings from Exodus 25, and also from chapter 37, and from Leviticus chapter 24.

Now by way of introduction, let's think for a moment again about the whole word "salvation." The riches of God's salvation are more extensive than the universe is big. Salvation, which this whole Tabernacle is speaking about, means to be restored in a relationship with our Creator, God. It is to be reconciled with the Lord of heaven and earth. It means to be forgiven, to be accepted with our holy God, on behalf of Jesus' merits. But it also means to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, to become a new creature. It is to be filled with the indwelling Holy Spirit leading us through this life. And so salvation, friends, is to have a relationship with the Triune God. And in this life, through faith in his word, and in the experience of his Spirit, but after this life, it will be in personal communion through Jesus Christ, who then will be the living Tabernacle. Now such communion will not be in the setting of a wilderness journey, or in a fallen and sinful world, but in the new earth, under a new heaven, called the spiritual kingdom.

So, this incredible good news of the gospel is that God desires communion with sinners. He wants to dwell among his creatures, and he made provision for that in his own Son, Jesus Christ, the spiritual Tabernacle. Now let that truth chase out the dark views of God we have embraced in our thoughts. Let's seek and approach God with the conviction that he seeks and desires our reconciliation with him, for that is ultimately the whole message that God proclaims in this building in the midst of the Israelite camp.

As we considered earlier, the Tabernacle reveals not only his divine goodness, and his grace and love, it also is the sum of divine wisdom. No human mind, no matter how intelligent, could have come up with God's solution on the question of how a holy and just God can receive an unholy and guilty sinner back into his own grace. But God, in his infinite wisdom, revealed to us a God-honoring way in which he is able to embrace and to pardon the guilty. Paul referred to that in 1 Corinthians 2, verse 9: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Out of his infinite being, flows the plan of salvation, based on the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God.

Let's give now our attention to this Table of Shewbread. Shema, our Jewish boy, he asked the priests what else there was inside the Holy Place besides the Lampstand. So, while the priest took him along in his thoughts, he shared with him the following details. "Shema," he said, "when I come from the bright sunlight into the Holy Place, I am greeted by the golden light of the Lamp-

stand. And in that light, your eyes will be drawn to a table that is on the right wall.

“The Table is not big—it’s about a meter long, maybe 57 centimeters wide, and about 75 centimeters tall. It’s an unusual table, though a beautiful table, for instead of a flat top, this table has a border of about 10 centimeters around it, and this border is decorated with a crown, it looks like a crown all around it. And since this table had to be carried, it was supplied with these two gold-covered staves which were placed alongside the table, and al-



ways were in there. And then, Shema, we have several specific utensils that have been made for the use of working with this Table—several bread pans, and covers, and cups, and bowls. But the most important part of this Table is the Shewbread on top of it.

“Each Sabbath day, we receive twelve new breads that are to be placed on the Table. According to God’s commandment, the breads are made of the finest flour that is available. Six in a row, they are standing on the Table till the next Sabbath day. And after we’ve placed them there, these two

stacks, then we pour frankincense over the bread. And this has the practical result of preserving the bread while it is sitting on the Table for seven full days. But it also dedicates the bread to the Lord. It is Shewbread before the Lord. The next Sabbath, we replace the bread with fresh loaves. And then, Shema, we may eat the old loaves on that day. We may not take any of it home—it’s for us to eat. Our Lord said, in Leviticus 24,



verse 9: “And it shall be Aaron’s and his sons’; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.””

So, let us draw the spiritual teachings from this sacred object. First, let’s consider the details of the Table. You could expect, indeed, a revelation of Jesus Christ. Secondly, let’s give the attention to those twelve loaves of Shewbread. And as we’ve discovered time and again, the key in everything in this Tabernacle is the central Person of the entire Scripture, Jesus Christ. God intended the holy structure to be the most visual presentation of the glory of Jesus Christ. It’s really the gospel in the Old Testament.

And the Table does that again, in the wood and the gold structure. Maybe now we are familiar with how that is picturing Christ’s dual nature. The two natures of the Savior are critical for having made him a suitable Mediator between God and us—fully God, and real, sinless man—human, made to bring divinity and humanity together. But there’s one more aspect of Jesus Christ that is vividly pictured in the wood and the gold structures I haven’t mentioned yet. You know, the wood

and the gold are really close together—as it were, one structure. And yet, the wood and the gold always remain separate.

So it is with Christ. His divine and his human natures are never mixed. His divinity remained fully divine, though it was joined most intimately with the human nature. Just think of it. He was omniscient in divine nature, yet he had a limited human understanding. In Mark 13:32, his words indicate his humanity, limited in knowledge. He says, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son [of man], but the Father.” Think of it—he’s omnipresent in his divine nature, and yet he was only at one place at one time in his human nature. He was eternal in his divine nature, yet Jesus had a birth day in his human nature. Though he was omnipotent, Almighty, as the God of heaven, yet he was wearied, and he sat down at the well. His human nature always remained fully human, though united to his divine. He was the Son of man, though he was, at the same time, mysteriously, the Son of the Highest. It is the Son of man who died on the cross. And yet, Acts 20:28 tells us that it’s the blood of God that purchased the church. It is the Son of man that tasted the full wrath of God against sin, yet it was his divine nature that upheld him under it. For his divine nature didn’t need to grow, but his human nature did. Luke records, in Luke, chapter 2, that the child Jesus grew and he waxed strong in spirit, filled with increasing wisdom. So it’s critical in all our teaching, in all our thinking, that we keep Christ’s natures strictly separated, yet we may and we cannot separate them as we think of Christ. Never think of Jesus as deity possessing humanity, for that will deny his real humanity. But neither are we to think that his humanity was simply indwelt deity. No, the two natures were mysteriously united, together in one Person.

Having this uniqueness made him the true bread from heaven. The priest told Shema that the Table was also decorated with this crown on the rim. Over and over, God keeps emphasizing this glory of his Son who has come in the flesh as the bread. Friends, he that walked on earth is the same One Isaiah saw as the Lord God on the throne in Isaiah 6. He deserves our worship and our trust. And the question for you and me is, are we truly worshipping this God-man, Jesus Christ? Do I trust him as the One who is able to save me to the uttermost because of his dual nature, being the Son of God, being the Son of man? For if he’s not God, how could he substitute for you and for all fellow believers, and for this innumerable multitude? If he was not real man, how could he take the place of a man? And if he was not an innocent man, how could he be a substitute for the guilty?



So secondly, let’s give our attention to these twelve loaves of bread on the Table. First, the twelve loaves of bread are called Shewbread. The word “shew” has the meaning of “face” or “presence.” So it can be read as “the bread of his presence.” Not only are they stacked in God’s presence, but they symbolize God’s presence with his people. The command of God in Leviticus 24, verse 8, is: “Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually.” And notice they were loaves not to be shown to men, but shown to the Lord. There were therefore in the first place for God’s own delight. Now this sets out a rich thought we often forget as we think about the whole of the gospel. The work of Christ pictured in the bread is not, in the first place, for the salvation of sinners. It is to the glory and to the delight of God himself. Though Christ is the de-

light of his people, never omit to remember that he is, first and foremost, the delight of his Father. The Father spoke from heaven, in Matthew 3:17—“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” His work is pleasing to God, and in that truth actually lies all our hope. For separated from Jesus Christ, we remain unclean, and unacceptable, and unfit for the communion with God Almighty. But in him, and because of him, we can be pleasing to God. There’s another thing—that truth is again represented in the frankincense. Each time, when those loaves were placed on the Table, they were topped with the frankincense, spreading it’s beautiful fragrance before the face of the Most High.

And I must keep reminding us that we are made acceptable in the Beloved. Everything of him is beloved. Salvation, according to Ephesians 1:6, is to the praise of the glory of the grace of God. And Jude emphasized this so beautifully in the closing words of his Gospel epistle, when he writes: “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Now secondly, the Shewbread highlights the sinlessness of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Leviticus 2:11, we learn that God forbade that any leaven to be part of the grain offerings. The reason was that leaven, or yeast, was the symbol of sin in the Bible, and therefore was to be absent of any of the offerings. This little but significant fact is a preview of the sinlessness of our Lord and Savior. We have a high priest, who is holy, who is undefiled, who is separate from sinners, and yet he’s made higher than the heavens—Hebrews 7:26. In 1 Peter 1, verse 19, he is exalted as the “lamb without blemish, without spot.” And why is that important? It is because only being sinless or blameless could he assume the place of the guilty and carry the punishment for our sin.

Now thirdly, the Shewbread is one of the simplest pictures of Jesus Christ. In John 6, the Lord identified himself as the bread of heaven. He said: “but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he”—Jesus—“which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world” (John 6:32–33). He also says later, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). And in John 6:48–50, he adds: “I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.” Now if you take a moment to read all of John 6, you can see that he contrasts himself with the earthly bread he had made the day before. But he is contrasting himself also with the manna that rained down upon the Jews in the wilderness journey. The manna in the wilderness was a wonderful gift of bread which fed the living, and kept them from dying. But the bread God gave in Jesus Christ his Son is totally different. It does something no normal bread can do—it makes life. Here’s how Jesus put that in John 6, verse 33: “For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and gives life unto the world.” Friends, he is the only bread that gives life to the dead.

Another rich meditation is found in tracing the journey from seed to bread. You know, a seed that was sown dies in the ground first. And then it grows as a plant, and it forms an ear of grain, it ripens, and it gets harvested. And finally, the grain is ground together, baked, and only then is it bread. Now this whole process from seed to bread is a picture of the journey of our Lord Jesus Christ, who became the bread for sinners. In John 12:24, Jesus says: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Think about how Christ was sifted, how he was ground in the mills of justice, and experienced the wrath of God upon sin. And this he did, to become the bread of life, to feed the poor, but also to give life. So let us take care to chew in meditation upon the work of Jesus Christ,

for such a meditation that will strengthen us to run the race of our life.

Now fourthly, the Shewbread was to be eaten by the priests, within the sanctuary, according to Leviticus 24:9, where it says, “And it shall be Aaron’s and his sons’; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.” Now likewise, we believers are to feed our soul with the Lord Jesus Christ. For the believers are, according to 1 Peter 2, and verse 9, a royal priesthood. So as each Sabbath was set aside for the priests to feast on the Shewbread, so, brethren, are we called to feed our soul with the living bread. And only when we nourish our souls with the divine truths of our Lord and Savior, will you and I experience the spiritual strengthening. We cannot function physically without actually partaking of food and drink. And just as our bodies are not strengthened by looking or admiring food and drink, well, so it is spiritually. We need to make it our own. How? Through the act of eating and drinking. And so it is spiritually. Hearing about, and thinking about, and speaking about Jesus Christ, that is not the same as spiritually feeding on the Savior and on his saving work. And only when we, by faith, embrace his Person, and his message, and his promises, will we be able to be like Paul, in Philippians 4, verse 13, when he said: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Be therefore committed, friends, weekly in a church gathering, where you are fed with the truths of Jesus Christ, the living bread. Flee those places where you are fed the empty husks of feel-good teaching or man-centered emphases, to build up yourself. No, seek faithful, Biblical teaching. No, that will not make you feel good about yourself, but instead, it will diagnose us, it will show us our sinfulness, our inability even to heal ourselves, but it will hold up before us the rich Savior of a poor and needy sinner, and how they are brought together through the saving ministry of the Holy Spirit. Well, seek such a ministry, and then you will be a blessing indeed for others. So, may God bless us, and draw us ever nearer to himself.

The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 12 ~

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

Dear friends, welcome to our next session on the Tabernacle. The portion of Scripture connected to this is from Exodus 30, verses 1 to 10, and Exodus 30, verses 34 to 38. But I suggest that you also take the time to read through Leviticus 16. And as you read these verses, you will be reminded of the entire purpose of the Tabernacle. Twice the Lord has mentioned, “This is where I will meet with you.” But in order to meet with them, he has thought out and provided for us the only way possible in which this holy God can meet with us, as lowly and guilty sinners.



And this way is set out before us in the Tabernacle—the gospel of the Old Testament. How richly has God provided everything that we need in his magnificent Son, Jesus Christ. We saw before, the door provided—wide enough for all the world, for the greatest sinner. We saw the blood sacrificed, as a ransom for guilty sinners, on the Brazen Altar. We’ve seen the Holy Spirit poured out to purify the most filthy sinners, through the Laver. And in him, we’ve seen the light risen through enlightened sinners in total spiritual darkness, in the Lampstand. And him, we saw food is given—spiritual food for our hungry souls.



But in him, also is given what we will now consider together in the Altar of Incense. Shema, our Jewish boy, he observed that twice a day, at least, the priest would enter into the Tabernacle Building.

Shema saw that they carried with them a bowl with burning coals that they had taken from the Brazen Altar. But they also carried another bowl within the building. He wondered what that was, and what they were doing. This is what the priest told him, when he asked:

“My friend, Shema, twice a day, I am privileged to enter into the Holy Place. First, I need to trim the wicks of the Lamps so that the light remains clear and pure. But I also have the great honor to perform the work at the Golden Altar. This Altar is placed right before the veil leading into the Holy of Holies. And to do this, I needed to take some of the burning coals from the Altar of

Burnt Offering, as you see me take in a little bowl. If I didn't do that, my boy, the same thing would happen to me that God did to Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu. I would be consumed by the glory of God for my irreverence shown to him."

"What does that Altar look like? Is it as big as the one on the outside?" Shema asked. "No, I have to disappoint you, Shema, but the Altar of Incense is actually the smallest piece of furniture within the entire Tabernacle. It is a mere half a meter square, while it is a meter high. But this altar is also made just like the other ones, from shittim wood, like the one outside, except this one is covered with pure gold. The top rim is like the Table of Shewbread. It has a golden rim that looks again like a crown. And like the outside Altar, there is also a horn on



each of the corners of this altar. Since this Altar needs to be carried as we travel, it also has these rings on the sides, in which there are two gold-covered poles, so that we can rest it and put it on our shoulders.

"But, Shema, remember, although this altar is small, it is no less important. The work that I may do each day at around 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. is very rich in meaning. First, I place that bowl with the hot coals upon the Altar, then I sprinkle upon it the incense. And do you know that the incense is made exactly according to

God's own recipe? Do you know that no one is allowed to use this incense in their homes, or as a perfume on their bodies? The Lord has said very clearly to us, "Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people." It is reserved just for this Altar.

"Now, after I put the incense on the coals, immediately, the whole Tabernacle Building is filled with the most sweet, wonderfully sweet smell. All that strong smell that we smell here outside, disappears there. It is truly heavenly within the Holy Place. And not only does it fill the Holy Place, no, the aroma enters also into the Holy of Holies, through the veil, the curtain.



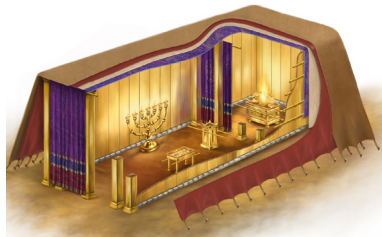
"And then, while that sweet incense rises up, I have another privilege. I have the privilege and sacred duty to pray, as the interceding priest. And I plead with the Lord on behalf of our nation, on behalf of our people, on behalf of you, Shema, and of myself. And my prayer rises up with the incense, before the throne of God. Shema, words fail to describe the sense of God we may at times experience when we work within those sacred walls. And besides these two times in the morning and evening, we also have to place incense on the Altar each time when we change the Bread, or when we do some work on the Lampstand. God commanded that we are always, as it were, to surround ourselves with the smell of incense when we labor within the Tabernacle Building.

"Then, when I'm finished with the morning and the evening sacrifice, I have one more im-

portant task to do. You must have seen it. We priests, we come out of the Tabernacle, and we walk towards the Gate, and there, in the name of Jehovah, I may proclaim the priestly blessing.” As found in Numbers 6, verses 24 to 26: “Jehovah bless you and keep you: Jehovah make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. Jehovah lifts up his countenance upon you, and gives you peace.”

So the priest informed Shema of the work with the Altar of Incense. Now, let’s draw out some of the rich, spiritual, gospel teaching that God pictures in this Altar, and the priestly services at the Altar. Friends, God doesn’t tire in drawing our attention in every detail, to the glory of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. As we’ve seen before, the meaning of the wood covered with gold, the crown around the top of the Altar, the horns as we saw on the other Altar, also on this one on each of the corners—they all picture the various aspects of Jesus’ glory. But the Altar of Incense has a unique function, and has a significance that extols a part of Jesus’ very important ministry. So let us consider the Altar in three ways. First, why was it placed there, right before the inner veil? Secondly, what is the connection between the Brazen Altar outside and the Golden Altar inside? And third, what is symbolically pictured in the Altar, and how it is used?

So first then, the placement of the Altar. It stood right before the veil leading into the Holy of Holies. There, behind that veil, there is, as it were, God’s throne room. This room was not accessible to the ordinary priest, except once a year, on the Day of Atonement, for the high priest. So the closest that any priest could come to God, as they daily served him, was the Altar of Incense. And it is noteworthy that God ended the description of the Altar with these words, in Exodus 30,



verse 10: “It is most holy unto the LORD.” Next to the Ark of the Covenant, this Altar was the most sacred piece of furniture in the Tabernacle. Firstly, because it brought the priest the nearest to the throne of God, but also to illustrate that the function of the spiritual significance of this Altar is so vital to our spiritual lives. Our further study will make this clear.

Now secondly, let’s think through the connection between the outside and the inside altars. It could be asked, why was a second altar necessary? Was the first one outside not sufficient? Obviously, there is nothing meaningless or unnecessary in God’s design of the Tabernacle. So it is therefore for us to discover what is the connection and the necessity of the two altars. Now the Brazen Altar and the sacrifices, as we have learned, picture the crucified Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the Brazen Altar sets out Christ in his humiliation, his suffering, and his death. Therefore, that Altar had no crown; and therefore, it stood outside the Tabernacle Building. It pictured how Jesus was made sin for us, and how he laid down his life for his church. The altar inside the building was decorated with a crown at the rim, and it was also never seen by the people. It points, therefore, to Jesus, in his exaltation, in the glory of God’s presence after he ascended. It is his work, as the exalted Priest there, based on the work that he did as a Priest here. In other words, the foundation of the Altar of Incense was the Altar of Burnt Offering, and this is pictured by the requirement that incense was always offered on top of the burning coals of the Brazen Altar. And this also makes clear why Aaron’s sons were killed by God, when they tried to draw near with strange fire. “Strange fire” must have meant fire that did not come from the Brazen Altar. And the lesson for us is timeless. Anyone who seeks to come to God on the basis of his or her own works, or their own feelings, or their own spiritual experiences, or their own doings, will experience God’s displeasure and rejection. It is only Christ, his righteousness, that has opened the way to the Father’s heart.

Third then, what is pictured with the Altar of Incense? This altar and the incense portrayed the intercessory work of the praying High Priest, Jesus Christ. The sweet-smelling incense represents the perfection and the accomplishments, and the merits, and the grace, and the purity of all of what Jesus Christ has done to make reconciliation. His entire life, his soul, his body, was a sweet savor before God. And mostly, this altar then portrays Christ's intercessory prayer that he offers up to God. And this is very much supported by how David prays in Psalm 141, verse 2, when he says, "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." The second support for that thought is found in Revelation, chapter 8, verse 3—we read: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

In Hebrews, sometimes called "The Divine Commentary on the Book of Leviticus," frequent mention is made of Jesus' high priestly intercession. For example, in Hebrews 7, verses 24 and 25, we read: "But this man, . . . is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 9:24 adds: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Friends, the Lord Jesus, in his stated exaltation is day and night doing the heavenly part of his salvation work. What would any of his people be without the prayers recorded in John 17. As all day long, the sweet smell of incense lingered in the Holy and the Holy of Holies, so the sweet incense of Jesus' intercession for sinners is before the throne of God. And these truths make it even more clear why the priest was never allowed to enter the Tabernacle to trim the lamps or to change the bread, without offering incense on the burning coals of the Altar of Incense. All that we do is to be, as it were, bathed in the sweet smell of prayer offered up in the name of Jesus Christ. Our prayers are not acceptable or sweet, unless they are based on the finished work of Christ, as well as carried upward in the sweet incense of that great High Priest. For haven't you, to your own dismay, discovered that even our best prayers are not as pure incense? Don't we smell and sense how selfish, sometimes how irreverent, how formal our love is, how distracted our thoughts, how scattered our affections, and even what unbelief clings to our prayers? Therefore only through the incense of the intercessory prayers of Jesus can our prayers be acceptable to God.

I find such encouragement in that precious truth of Hebrews 7, where we are continually pointed back to that Savior, able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him. And why? For we have an high priest, who is holy, who is harmless, who is undefiled, who is separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. He doesn't need to offer up sacrifice for his own sins, because he had none. But he sacrificed himself for the sins of his people, once and for all. And though the Old Testament priests could not draw near to God then before the veil, all New Testament believers have this privilege granted to them—they may go beyond the veil, because of the new and the living way, in the exalted Savior. Hear Hebrews 10:19 to 22, set out this glory: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest"—an interceding High Priest—"over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Do you see how rich the Tabernacle symbolism shines through that Scripture? According to

Exodus 30, verse 20, the priest did not only need to take coals and the incense with him to enter into the sanctuary—he also needed to wash himself at the Laver: “When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD.” So likewise, when we pray, we must repent of our sins, we must confess them, and we must seek the washing in Jesus’ blood and ministry. For to pray with unconfessed sins laying upon us is like a priest walking with unwashed hands and feet into the presence of this holy majesty, Jehovah.

So lastly, friends, how remarkable is the timing of the morning and the evening sacrifice. Each morning at 9 a.m. and at 3 p.m., the officiating priest would bring the sacrifice. Now these times coincided exactly with the timing of Jesus’ crucifixion. At that moment, at nine o’clock in the morning, he uttered his first intercessory prayer on the cross: “Father, forgiven them, for they know not what they do.” And then, as the afternoon sacrifice concluded, it coincided with the death of Jesus at 3 p.m. And upon his cry, “finished!” he committed his soul to his Father’s hand, and he died. And his Father’s answer was the rending of the inner veil from the top to the bottom, as Matthew recorded. The work was truly done.

The way to reconciliation was opened on a just and a holy ground. And now we may draw near to God with liberty beyond the veil. And why beyond the veil? It’s because our intercessor has gone beyond the veil himself to open the way for us, and this was beautifully pictured on the Day of Atonement, as you could read in Leviticus 16. On that day, the high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies. And this foreshadowed Jesus’ ascension into heaven, with his own blood, and with the sweet-smelling savor of his own obedience.

Now to picture this gospel truth, only on the yearly Day of Atonement, the incense was placed within the Holy of Holies, as recorded in Leviticus 16, verse 12. This pictured Christ entering into the heavenly glory upon completion of his sacrifice on the cross. And that also explains the often misquoted or confusing Scripture of Hebrews 9, verses 3 to 4, where at first it appears that the Apostle had made an error when he described the Holy of Holies. He wrote: “And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark.” Brethren, that truth is for our comfort. We have our Mediator within the veil, and on the basis of him, we may have liberty to draw near to God. Let none of us neglect so great salvation.

And then, in conclusion, ponder the glorious composition of the incense. The exact details you can read in Exodus 30, verse 34. Four ingredients were used, all of the exact equal proportion. Each pictured, again, the work of the Savior, both in his state of humiliation, and exaltation. No part of each was more important or less important in the work of the Savior. Now the four parts in Jesus’ life were, first, his miraculous, holy conception; and secondly, his suffering and death; and thirdly, his resurrection; and fourthly, his ascension into heaven to be at the right hand of his Father, which he will complete with his return, to judge the living and the dead. And all these aspects of our Lord’s person and ministry are invaluable and indispensable for the salvation of any soul. As God warned that no other ingredients were ever to be mixed in this incense, so we are to be cautioned, never to come before God with anything added to his Son and him crucified. God’s recipe for salvation is Christ alone—his perfect holiness in his birth; his perfect obedience in this life; his perfect obedience in his death; and his perfect labor at the right hand of his Father. May God so bless these instructions with his Spirit writing his truths on our heart. Thank you.



The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

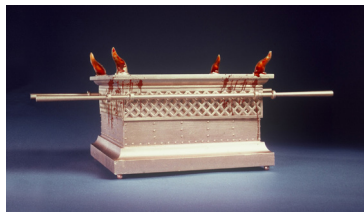
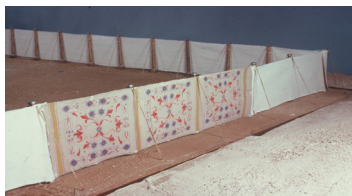
by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 13 ~

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Welcome again, to our last study in this series on the Tabernacle. I hope it has been an enriching journey for you to look at the various details of this mostly unknown or misunderstood building. So to profit most in this study, I would recommend you take the time to read through Exodus 25, verses 10 to 22, and perhaps also consult chapter 37.

And just as a review of what we learned so far, each part of the Tabernacle points to one thing—the full deliverance of sin. If you take the Courtyard, pointing to the regeneration, it is the act of God, where God delivers from the reigning power of sin. And next is the Brazen Altar—we saw it pictures justification. That reveals God’s way of deliverance from the guilt of sin. Right after the Brazen Altar, we see the Laver. And with its pure water, the Laver portrays the work of sanctification through the Holy Spirit, and that wonderfully proclaims another aspect of deliverance, which is the deliverance from the pollution of sin. And finally, as we come into the sanctuary, where only gold meets the eye, that speaks about glorification—the final stage of salvation.



And glorification is the final deliverance from all the results and the very presence of sin. So can you see how, in that sense, the Tabernacle is one beautiful visual of 1 Corinthians

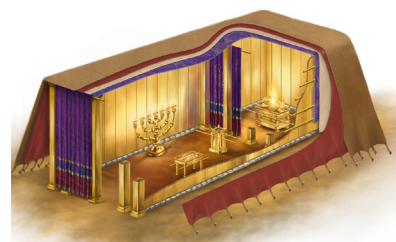
1:30, where it says: “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” And rightfully, Paul added in the next words, “He



that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” To him alone goes all the honor for the salvation of us as sinners.

Now let us approach, lastly, the Holy of Holies. When Shema asked the officiating priest about what else was there in that building, the priest might have answered something like this: “Well, dear boy, how often have I stood before that beautiful inner veil, and while admiring the images of the Cherubim gazing upon us, as we work in the Holy Place, I wished at times I could see behind it, but I have never been behind that second veil. “The Holy of Holies is forbidden ground for us priests. Only the high priest, he is allowed to enter in, and even he is only allowed to do this once a year. And, Shema, let me remind you that the curtains in this Tabernacle are not just

for decoration. They are to emphasize separation. For do you know that the word “veil” in our Hebrew language means “to separate”? God is telling us there is a need for space between him and us—separation, or a boundary. And that reminds us that God commanded Moses to embroider the images of the holy angels on that inner veil leading into the Holy of Holies. Don’t those angels remind you of the Cherubim that stood guard at the entrance of Paradise after God banished our parents from his presence because of their sin?



“So, my son, Shema, have you ever learned to see why we are banished from God’s presence? Do you realize already that your sins also separate you from your Creator? Do you know that the God of holiness cannot have fellowship with you? We can only have access to him through prayer and worship, after all, his just conditions, as set out in his holy law, are met. And is that not a wonderful message, Shema, that God gives us, in this whole Tabernacle Building, that he’s made a way in which he can dwell among us, and in this, he can receive us back as well into his fellowship?”

So let us now consider the details of the Holy of Holies. The room is a perfect cube of five meters each. Like the Holy Place, all was gold except the veil and the roof. Both the veil and the roof were the white linen, woven with three colors, we have seen, all symbolic of Jesus Christ.

And yet, the main focus of the Holy of Holies is the Ark—the Ark of the Covenant. That single piece of furniture is actually the very center around which all the rest of the Tabernacle was built. It is the most sacred piece of furniture in the Tabernacle. The Ark symbolizes the place where God sits upon the throne—upon his throne. It is at the Ark where God will meet with his people, as he has stated in Exodus 25:22, “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat.”

The Ark, which is mentioned over 170 times in the Bible, wasn’t a very huge object. It was a small, rectangular chest of about a meter and 125 centimeters long, and 75 centimeters wide and high. And as expected, it was constructed from shittim wood covered with gold. And as we’ve learned, it points to Jesus’ two-fold nature. Well let me add a few more thoughts on the wood that was used to make this Ark.

The shittim wood, or the acacia tree, that is used, is said to be the most imperishable of all the kinds of woods. It was the only tree grown to any size in the



desert, and it was able to thrive still in the harshest conditions. Now interestingly, this tree produced gum Arabic. And this substance was highly prized and used as medicine. The only way to harvest that was to pierce the tree in the dark. Now, as I learned these things about that tree, I couldn't help but to see a silhouette of the Lord Jesus Christ in that whole tree.

But anyway, the most interesting part of the Ark was the lid. The lid was called the Mercy Seat, or literally, "the Mercy Throne." Well what's unusual about this lid? This lid was made out a solid sheet or slab of pure gold. In other words, now catch this, there was no wood used in the Mercy Seat. That must be significant. It is significant. It reveals that the very throne of God has nothing human entering into it. Now what made the Mercy Seat even more special are the two angel figures that are standing on either end of it. They were not soldered onto it, no, they were, as well,



beaten out of the slab of gold, as being one with the lid—amazing! From a craftsman's perspective, this Mercy Seat with the Cherubim really defies all human ability.

The entire Mercy Seat breathed divinity in every detail, and only that. It is the only throne worthy of a God so great, so glorious, and, above all, so gracious. For did you notice, that this is not called "the throne of justice," it's called "the seat of mercy." It is the seat upon which God can, as it were, sit among people in the very clothing of mercy!

How is that possible? How can God be merciful, while he is a just and an upright God, holding true to his own word? I wonder whether that question is actually portrayed in how the two angels are positioned on the lid. They did not stand on the lid looking heavenward in worship, or sideways at the people that would come before the throne. No, instead, they looked downward, in a position of inquiry.

In 1 Peter 1, verse 12, the Apostle writes about the prophecies of the Old Testament, and about salvation, and he adds about the angels, "which things the angels desire to look into," or, they stooped to look into, curiously. How significant is that phrase, and how it reminds us of these angel figures on the Mercy Seat of the Ark. In other words, the angels were curious—about what?—to see the unfolding of the story of salvation, through the incarnation of their Lord, the Son of God.

Now let us think through the different names that were given to the Ark in the Bible. As always, Biblical names are always revelation. Exodus 25:22 introduces the most frequent name, the Ark of Testimony. Now the Ark testifies. Every aspect of it, of God's holiness, of his majesty, of his grace, and yet, above all, of his mercy. Within the Ark, Moses was to place the Tables of the Law, under the Mercy Seat. It testifies that God's throne is based on the law, the holy law of God. In Numbers 10, verse 33, the Ark is called the Ark of the Covenant, and that emphasizes very beautifully, the intimate and personal relationship God has with his people. He desired to dwell among them, and he made the provisions for this in his covenant of grace. Then, in Joshua 3, verse 13, he Ark is called, "the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth." What an encouragement this was for Joshua and for the people, as they stood finally before the conquest of Canaan, facing the Jordan River. Now, the strength of God, on behalf of his people, is pointed out in the fourth name given to the Ark—it's called, "the ark of thy strength" in Psalm 132, verse 8. In the time of Josiah, it is also called, "the holy ark." And this young King Josiah realized, just like his forefather, David,

that restoring the proper worship of God is the key to the blessing on the nation. For whenever a nation honors the Holy One, and reflects the glory of him, that nation will be exalted and blessed.

Now according to Hebrews 9:4, the chest also contained three objects. We already mentioned the Law, but first of all, the Golden Pot with Manna was in the Ark, reminding us of God's wonderful, covenant faithfulness, as he provided the daily bread in the wilderness journey. Then, secondly, the law of God was added to that, the tables of stone, reminding us that the throne of God is based on the Holy Law. And then thirdly, Aaron's Rod that blossomed. Often this is seen as a symbol of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So, after having reviewed these few details, let me now conclude with drawing your attention to some spiritual truths set out in the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. So first of all, all of the Holy of Holies, with the restricted access, sets out the glory that the Lord God is holy. For here, in the throne room—that is the throne room that Isaiah saw in the vision, where the angels cried out, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD," and, "the earth is full of his glory." To approach him casually, that could be deadly, and will be deadly, for the Lord is a consuming fire. Therefore, we are exhorted to serve the Lord with fear, with respect, and rejoice with trembling, in Psalm 2, verse 11. We are to be moved, friends, to pray for the grace whereby we may serve this God and speak to this God with reverence and godly fear.

Secondly, though the Lord God is holy, he's also a gracious God, he's a merciful God, he's an awesome Being. With peculiar emphasis, God calls this throne a mercy throne. There really is no throne like the throne of Jehovah. Though he is holy, though he is the Just One, though he is the Majesty of Heaven, he has revealed that he is a God of mercy and grace. And in Jesus Christ, God makes known his heart. In the Lord Jesus, my friends, we see how he paved the way whereby we can return to him and we can be reconciled together. Now he didn't make this way reluctantly, or in response to our fervent plea—he laid out this way in eternity. And he made it known from the day of our rebellion in Paradise. And though never leaving the throne of holiness, he has made it a throne of mercy. He has designed a way in which mercy could be exercised while maintaining the holy law and justice. How? Well, each year, this was symbolically portrayed on the Day of Atonement. Three times that day, the high priest would bring the blood of the sacrifice into the presence of God, sprinkling it on the Mercy Seat. In that sacrificed substitute, God sets out the way in which he was appeased, and was able to extend his gracious mercy to guilty sinners.

And when you come into the New Testament, you'll find that the words "Mercy Seat" is written with a much more difficult, but a very significant word: "propitiation." Take, for example, 1 John 2, verse 2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Again, in 1 John 4:10, John extols the love of God in making his Son the Mercy Seat. He says, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation"—or Mercy Seat—"for our sins." Do you see, in this testimony, God bears witness he is ready to receive us sinners at his Mercy Seat. Instead of sitting enthroned in majestic glory, surrounded with the forbidding sense of royalty, God reveals in this Mercy Seat, he is a willing, and he is able to receive us in grace in that well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Each year, in that elaborate ceremony, the Mercy Seat was sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice. And the details of this are all found in Leviticus, chapter 16. First, the high priest would place a golden bowl with the coals and the incense inside the Holy of Holies, and that would fill the whole room with the fragrant smell. Then he would return to the Brazen Altar, and again he would enter into the Holy of Holies, now with a bowl of the blood of the sacrifice. And he would then sprinkle that seven times on the Mercy Seat. And this sprinkled blood symbolized the price that

was paid—totally paid—and therefore God can show mercy. Seven is the number of completeness, and so God declared in that seven times what Jesus cried out on the cross, “It is finished!”

Today, we have no earthly Tabernacle. We don’t have any blood sacrifices. We have no Holy of Holies hidden behind a thick veil. No, we have in the New Testament the revelation of a spiritual Tabernacle in the living, the risen Lord Jesus Christ. In him, God has satisfied all the righteous demands of his law, and in his mercy, God removed the obstacle of that which separates us from God, symbolized in that veil, now rent. All of the gospel assures us that we as sinners are welcome to come boldly to the throne of grace. Hear it again from Hebrews: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness”—or liberty—“to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh” (Hebrews 10:19–20).

Now, what was unthinkable for any Jew is now our privilege. We may enter into the holy presence of God in Christ. It is now possible for our holy and just God to dwell with us, his people, and to fellowship with them. And this fellowship is made possible one way only—the blood of the sacrifice, or, in the New Testament language—the cross.

Now thirdly, and lastly, the Ark, with the pure gold Mercy Seat, again proclaims the divine wisdom of our God. Nothing human entered into God’s method of salvation. No one has been his counselor. None of the great minds of the world ever thought this plan of salvation out. Paul called the Lord Jesus Christ “the wisdom of God,” in 1 Corinthians 1:24. As it were, God bundled all his wisdom in the plan of salvation, through his own Son, Jesus Christ becoming man. In him, all the attributes were honored. His holiness was vindicated. His justice was completely maintained. His truth was upheld. His mercy was poured out. His grace was exercised. And they all stood in one divine harmony together, setting out the way of salvation. In poetic language, the sons of Korah sing about this, in Psalm 85, verse 10, where it says, “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” All of it is God’s, and all of it is done by God. To him be all the glory, all the praise, all the thanksgiving for such great salvation.

And friends, regretfully, with this, I need to conclude our series of our studies on a portion of Scripture which is often too much neglected. And I am conscious that in all these sessions, I have only scratched the surface of God’s message, as set out in the Tabernacle symbolism. Undoubtedly, as you continue to meditate more, and hopefully, as you will use this teaching also to teach others the great gospel themes with the picture of the Tabernacle, that you will experience what the Queen of Sheba experienced after having seen and heard Solomon. As she came away from him, and observing all his glory, she exclaimed, “And behold, the half was not told me” (1 Kings 10:7). Now this study is only to encourage us to study deeper in the Old Testament Scriptures, for doing that will help to grasp the riches of the New Testament teaching as well. For the New Testament is steeped with Old Testament symbolism and references. And no book shows that clearer than the very last book in the Bible—Revelation. John the Apostle, to describe what he saw, has borrowed his imagery, the glories of the new earth even from the ancient Tabernacle. And hear, therefore, in conclusion, one small sampling from the Book of Revelation, in 21:3 and 22: “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, 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....And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” Amen, and amen.