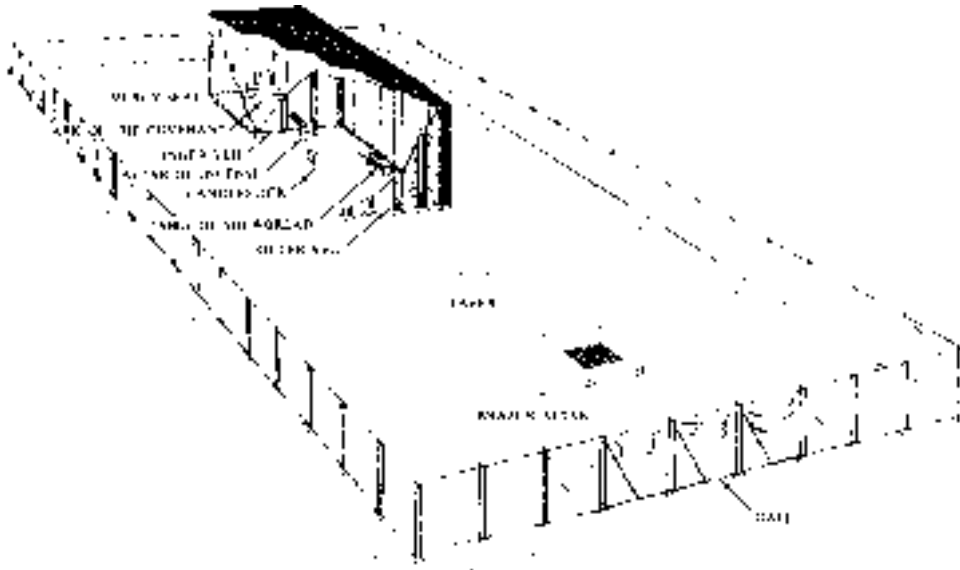


Bible Studies

The Tabernacle



The Tabernacle was built by Moses as a mobile place of worship and sacrifice. It stood for some 450 years until Solomon replaced it with the Temple.

God commanded the Tabernacle to be built.

Exodus 25v8

God showed Moses the plan.

Exodus 25v9, Acts 7v44

God filled the craftsmen with His Spirit.

Exodus 31v2-3

The materials were donated by the people. (Is this significant, where did they get)

Exodus 25v2 of Exodus 36v5-7

It was a copy of a Heavenly Tabernacle.

Hebrews 9v11

It was a 'type' of spiritual truths

Hebrews 9v1-5

Why was it so important that the Tabernacle was made just right? Hebrews 8v5

The tabernacle was not just a place of worship, it was intended to reveal truth.

If you read the early chapters of Revelation, you will not find direct reference to a literal tabernacle in heaven, you will find that many of the furnishings alluded to. There is no altar, but there is a slain lamb. Rev 5v5. There are seven candlesticks and a seven fold, Spirit of God. There are golden bowls of incense. There is also a throne room, where God dwells. All of these are illustrated by the items found in the tabernacle.

Bezalel is the first person in scripture who is specifically said to have been filled with the Spirit. Not a king, prophet or priest, but a craftsman and a worker.

Do you think this is significant? If so, what is it intended to tell us?

The Holy Spirit is given to us for practical reason, specifically so that we can witness. Acts 1v8. The Holy Spirit is given to us so that we can build God's house today.

Two Hebrew words are translated tabernacle, *olam*, which simply means tent, and *miskan*, which means dwelling. From *miskan* we get the word *shekinah*, the presence of God.



The tabernacle represents and explains;

The way to approach God.

The way of Atonement.

The way of Worship.

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As a whole, the Tabernacle is a picture of Christ and his work on the Cross. Luke 24v27.



General description

There were three parts to the Tabernacle. The **outer court**, 100x50 cubits (50x25m) which was an open area where the sacrifices and ordinances were carried out. It must have bustled with activity. The **Holy Place** measured 20x20 cubits (10x10m), Here the priests carried out their duties and entered regularly. Divided from the holy place by a thick curtain stood the **Holy of Holies**, where God's presence rested. The high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of atonement.

Do you see a pattern?



The Tabernacle was designed to let men approach God, but also to keep them at a distance. Each area restricted access further. Everyone could come to the gate. Men with sacrifices could come to the Altar. Priests could go as far as the Lavar. One priest chosen by lot, entered the Holy place morning and evening. Only the high priest entered the Holy of Holies and only once a year.

Why did God need to restrict access?

What is the connection between these two verses?

Hebrews 9:8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.

Mark 15:38 The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

What does this mean for us? Hebrews 10v19-23

Over the tabernacle stood the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

Exodus 40v36-37. Numbers 9v15-17

What did the cloud and fire represent?

It symbolised the presence of the Lord.

It guided them.

It protected them.

At night it gave light to the camp.

In the day time it gave shelter from the sun.

Exodus 13v21-22

Exodus 14v19-20.

Psalms 105v39.

Psalms 105v39



Christ in you, the hope of glory. Col 1:27

And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the LORD, 'and I will be its glory within.'

Zechariah 2:5

God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5



What happened when the cloud moved?

Numbers 9v19-21

What implication does this have for us?

It's Position

The Tabernacle stood in the center of the Israelite camp, 3 tribes to the north, 3 to the east, south and west. *Numbers 2*. It is likely that the openings of the tents faced in.

Why? *(Defence, unity, God in center, see the cloud, centred thoughts on)*

The Tabernacle faced east (as later the temple did) It faced the sunrise. *Matthew 24v27*.

The furniture in the Tabernacle forms a cross with its foot at the altar, the place of suffering and sacrifice, and its head at the mercy seat, the shekinah glory of God. The cross bridges the two. **What does this mean for us?**

When the people moved from place to place, the Tabernacle moved with them in a procession. The Ark of the Covenant travelled in the center.



Pillar of cloud *three tribes* Tabernacle Structure *three tribes* Tabernacle Furniture *six tribes*

There was only one Tabernacle for all the people. One place to come. There is only one Calvary and only one Cross. Only one place to find God.

Bible Studies

From the outside in.

The courtyard

Exodus 27v9-19



Description: Surrounding the tabernacle was a wall of linen, enclosing a rectangular court 50x25m. There were 20 posts on the south and north sides and 10 on the east and west sides. Each was 2.5m high. Each had a bronze base, a silver capital and guy lines to keep them from falling.

Meaning: In the Scripture white linen stand for righteousness. *Rev 19:8*. The white Tabernacle must have stood out in stark contrast to the black tents of the Israelites. *Phil 2:15*

The linen wall was:

A **barrier**, it prevented unlawful approach, stopping people or animal from wandering through the sacred place, thus preserving its sanctity.

It created a **separation** between the holy and the secular, the church and the world. *2 Cor 6:14&17*

It created a way of **approach**. Man thinks he can come to God any way he likes, but God says there is only one way. John 14v6



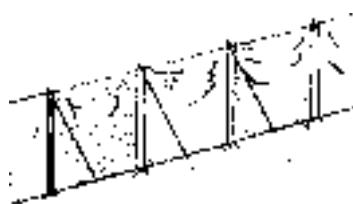
All of the wood used in the tabernacle was achaia wood, which is by nature short knotted and twisted. It speaks of humanity. It must have taken considerable skill and work to make poles and planks from this kind of wood. In us, God took what was twisted and made it straight. The bronze speaks of sin which God has put under foot, and the silver of redemption. (Redemption price was paid in silver. eg Hosea 3v2, Zech 11v13, Matthew 26v15)

Application: **How does this apply to us?**

The Gate

Exodus 27v16

Description: At the eastern end of the courtyard was the entrance. It was made of a brightly coloured curtain and suspended between 4 posts. It may have been rolled up for entry but it is more likely that the people had to push through the curtain.



Meaning: It was the **only** gate, just as Christ is the only gate, John 10v7.

It was **wide**, 10m, larger than you would expect, this speaks of universal access.

It was **accessible**, not made of wood with bars and bolts, anyone could push through. It could not be locked. If you want to come to God, you must push through.

It was **beautiful**. Woven from

blue,	(deity).
purple	(Royalty / redemption.),
scarlet	(blood / sin)
white	(righteousness)

The four posts are sometimes spoken of as the four Gospels, the way to enter.

In what way does the gate speak of Christ?

The Altar of burnt offerings

Exodus 27v1-8, 38v1-7

Description: The first object in the court was the brazen altar, (Heb. Mizbach). It was made of achaia wood overlaid with bronze. It measures 5x5x3 cubits (2.5x2.5x1.5m) and may have been filled with earth or stones, Exo 20v24-26. It had rings on the corners so that it could be carried on poles.

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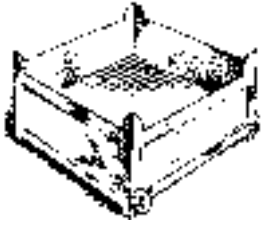
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Meaning: It was the place of sacrifice and death. On it the sacrifices were burned, the blood was sprinkled on the base of the altar, Exodus 29v12 and the ashes taken outside the camp. Lev 4v12, Heb 13v11-12. Such sacrifices were called '*Alyot*' which means '*lifting ups*', so Christ was lifted up from the earth. It was both the way to God and a barrier to God.

What does this altar represent?

In what way does the cross bar the way to God? 1 Cor 1v23

Application: *Romans 12v1 Matthew 10v38-39 Romans 6:11*

We do not need to sacrifice to win admission to God, Jesus has done that for us but we must apply that sacrifice to our lives. We must adopt the same attitude of sacrifice. *Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.* Ephesians 5:1-2

Hebrews 13v15 1 Peter 2v5

How will an attitude of sacrifice show itself?

To bring a sacrifice to the Tabernacle was very public, everyone could see that you had sinned again. It was a way of confessing sin. This reminds us that to enter God's presence we must confess our sin. But we must also go on from there and leave our sin behind us.



To get closer to God each item in the tabernacle needs to be taken seriously and acted upon. There are no short cuts. We can only come through Christ the Gate and we cannot approach God before we deal with sin at the altar.



It was from this altar that the priests took their food, but *We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.* Heb 13:10

What does this mean?

The altar was also the place of sanctuary. To take hold of the horns of the Altar, was to find safety from the avenger. 1 Kings 1v50-51, 2v28. **What does this mean for us?**

"Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people;" Leviticus 9:7



The Laver Exodus 30v17-21

Description: The laver was a basin used for washing. No description of it is given, but the one that later stood in the temple held 50,000 litres of water. It was placed between the tent and the altar.

It was made from the women's bronze hand mirrors. Exodus 38v8. Traditionally the priest washed under running water, which was collected in a basin. They did not wash in the basin, for then they would be using soiled water. It may have been shape like a cup and saucer, the *cup* being the reservoir with taps on the side pouring water into the *saucer* below.

Meaning: Only the priests washed here not the people. (As Christians we are all priests 1 Peter 2v5) they washed before each priestly act, it was not optional. They washed their hands (=actions) and their feet (=direction). They washed when they entered the holy place to minister to God, and when they minister to the people at the Altar.

Is it significant that it was made from mirrors?

Application: The Laver represent ongoing holiness (Sanctification) it is not enough to be forgiven at Calvary, we must walk in holiness, continually coming to God for cleansing. *Psalm 119v9 Ephesians 5v26 John 15v3*

We need this holiness in our relationships with those around us and in our relationship with God. Asking for forgiveness must be frequent, just as it was for the priests. It is a prerequisite to worship and ministry.



Summary

Through the Gate

The Altar

The Laver

Coming to the father through Jesus

Jesus Sacrifice for our sins - entrance to the house of faith

Self examination - Forgiveness - Holiness

Bible Studies

The Holy Place

In the courtyard stood the Tabernacle itself, it measured 30x10x10 cubits (12x4x4m) it contained the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The metal used in the courtyard was bronze, in the Holy Place we exchange bronze for gold.



Construction

The hoards: Exodus 26v15-25 The 'tent' was constructed of 48 achaia wood boards each 10 cubits high and 1.5 cubits wide. Again the twisted, knotted achaia wood must have been worked hard to form straight planks. The planks were then overlaid with gold. They represent us. Wood speaks of humanity and Gold divinity. This is an illustration of how God has taken our old twisted nature and straight us. The Gold overlay speaks of His image in us. *You participate in teh divine nature 2 Peter 1:4.* The planks were held together by bars passed through rings on their outer face. They stood in unity, *Then He will purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder.* Zephaniah 3:9

How does God choose to surround Himself? cf Revelation 4v4.

The Foundation: The planks stood in Silver foundations which separated them from the desert floor.

Where did they get the silver from? Exodus 38v25-28

This silver was the half-shekel atonement money collected from each man in the community. Exodus 30v11-16. It was the only item that was not donated as a free will offering. It was still being collected annually in Jesus day, Matthew 17v24-27. (It was the reason there were money changers in the temple). In Scripture silver is used to purchase life, (to buy or redeem a slave). The foundation of the boards, their feet and capitals, the bars and rings which held the planks together, were all made of this silver, which speaks of Christ's atonement for us.



What binds us together as a Church?

What separates us from the world around?



The Covering: Exodus 26v7-14. There were two sets of curtains and two coverings that went over the tabernacle,

- 1** The first set of curtains was of linen Exodus 36v8 (= Christ our righteousness).
- 2** The second set of curtains was made of goat hair (Black in colour = Christ as our sin offering Isaiah 53v6).
- 3** The inner covering was made of rams skins died red, (the ram was an animal of substitution = Christ as our substitute).
- 4** The outer covering was made of the hides of 'sea cows' (KJV badgers, possibly dolphins?) This would have been a protection from the rain and sun, weather beaten and unattractive. *He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.* Isaiah 53:2

The Menorah Exodus 25v31-40



Description: The Lamp stand was made of 34 kg of Gold, it was hammered from a single lump of gold, an amazing piece of work! It stood on the left side of the Holy Place. It had seven branches, three each side of a central pillar. Each branch had a dish containing olive oil, in which a wick burnt, giving the only source of light in the holy place. It burned 24 hours a day. The priests trimmed the lamps morning and evening.

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Meaning: The menorah has two meanings

Revelation 1v12-13 & 20

Matthew 25v1-13

Revelation 2v5

John 9v5

Zechariah 4v2

Matthew 5v14-16

The menorah speaks of God's presence in His church and in the individual, in the persons of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It also speaks of God's presence in the world in his people.

Application: It is God's light in us that makes the difference. We need the oil of the Spirit in our lives. We need regular trimming.

How does this item explain how we come to God and how we worship him?

The Table of Show bread Exodus 25v23-30



Description: The table of show bread stood on the left hand side. On the table, as described in Exodus, twelve loaves representing the twelve tribes were placed in two rows. This was known as the bread of the presence (lehem paniya = face bread) It was changed by the priests once a week on the Sabbath. The old bread was eaten. Matthew 12v3-4.

Meaning:

Gods provision

It reminded people of the manna

The Covenant

Part of the weekly covenant meal (Communion)

The Word of God

Matthew 4v4, Isaiah 55v10.

Jesus

The bread of life John 6v50

Doing the will of God

John 4v34

Application: Jesus is our source of supply, if we do not eat of him we have no life in us. John 6v56. Jesus is the presence (face) of God 2 Cor 4v6. We need communion with him. He is our sustenance.

How does this item explain how we come to God and how we worship him?

The incense altar Exodus 30v1-10



Description: Much smaller than the bronze altar, the incense altar stood in front of the veil separating the Holy place from the Holy of Holies. On it incense was burnt twice a day. On the Day of Atonement the blood of the guilt offering was poured out over it. Hebrews 9v24-28. The incense offered was very expensive and was prohibited being used for other purposes on pain of death. Exodus 30v34-38. The warning here is not to use what is holy for the secular. It was here that the sons of Aaron offered unauthorized fire and were put to death Lev 10v1-2.

Meaning:

Psalm 141v2

Revelation 5v8

Isaiah 60v6

The incense altar speaks of prayer and worship.

Application *My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before him and serve him, to minister before him and to burn incense.* 2 Chronicles 29:11 The way to enter the Holy Holies is three fold; The blood of Jesus on the altar, Prayer and Worship. We must not be negligent.



Summary

The Holy place is the place where the priests ministered eg Luke 1v5-22

The Menorah The Spirit of God in us

The Table Communion with God in Jesus

The Altar Intercession and Worship.

Bible Studies

The Holy of Holies



The Veil Exodus 26v31-35

Between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place was a veil, or curtain. For the 1500 years that the Tabernacle/Temples stood it bared man from approaching God, (though not God from approaching man!) The veil was supported by four wooden pillars covered with Gold, each had a silver base (redemption money). They had no capitals. Some have linked this to Isaiah 53v8 ie that Jesus life was finished before it's natural time.

Description: The curtain was made of blue, red and purple thread and of linen (white) It had a design of cherubim woven into it. The work was extremely skilful and tradition says that it was a hands breadth thick and very strong.

Meaning: In Scripture, Cherubim are seen guarding the presence and glory of God. In Revelation, we find four Living Creature surrounding the throne, they in turn are surrounded by thousands of Angels, Ezekiel 10v14 describes the same 'Living Creatures' and calls them cherubim. The design is of cherubim for it is a copy of the Heavenly Tabernacle, where the cherubim surround the throne.

Typology:

What is the veil? Hebrews 10v20

What happened when Jesus died? Mark 15v38. (Mat 27v51, Luke 23v45)

What does this mean?

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, Hebrews 10:19-20

Is it significant that the veil was torn from top to bottom?

The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. Hebrews 9:8

We can conclude, that in Christ, it has now been disclosed. The curtain symbolised the separation between man and God caused by sin. When Christ died that separation was ended. Nothing stops us from approaching God.

Can the curtain be mended?



The Most Holy Place

Behind the veil was the Most Holy Place (or Holy of Holies). It had no source of light other than Gods Glory *Rev 21v23*. Into the Most Holy Place the High Priest alone would come on the Day of Atonement, first to make offerings for his own sin, then for the sins of the people. He took the blood of a lamb or goat and sprinkled it on the mercy seat to make atonement for sin. These regulations are found in Leviticus 16.

The Ark of the Covenant



The ark was the only furniture in the Most Holy Place. It was an open wooden box overlaid with gold. It measured 2.5x1.5x1.5 cubits (1.1x0.7x0.7m). It had four golden rings so that it could be carried on poles which were always left in place. When it was moved it was always covered, It had to be carried by hand.

What happened when these regulations were ignored? 1 Chr 13v9-10
It had a moulding around it's top. A solid gold slab formed a lid for the box, this was call 'the atonement'. On this lid two cherubim were fashioned out of gold, one on each end of the slab. The Cherubim faced each other, their wings overshadowing the gold lid.

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In the ark were placed the tablets of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden jar of manna. Later the Philistines added 5 gold mice and 5 gold tumours as a guilt offering 1 Sam 6v11. It is also likely that a copy of the law, Deuteronomy or Leviticus, was placed in the ark.

The ark's lid is often called the 'mercy seat' this is an excellent description, but a poor translation. (Seat as in seat of government, not a place you could sit down.) In Hebrew it is named with a single word, *Kipporah*. In a common sense this means a lid or cover, in a spiritual sense it is the word used for atonement. The NIV rightly takes both meanings and translates it Atonement cover.

What does atonement mean? 1 John 2v2, Romans 3v25

Meaning: The ark is also called the testament (Heb *Ehoud*, witness). The ark itself was reminder of and witness to the covenant between God and Israel. Its major significance is its association with God's presence.

Leviticus 16v2

Exodus 25v22

Numbers 7v89

Seven times in the OT God is described as *enthroned between the Cherubim*.

Such a mystic surround the ark that the Israelites thought it would make them invincible in battle, *1 Samuel 4v3*, it didn't.

Do we ever assume on God in a similar way?

The ark disappeared at the time of the exile 600BC, tradition says that Jeremiah hid it. There was no ark in the temple in Jesus' day. Despite this its aura continues, hardly a year goes by in Jerusalem without some latter day Indiana Jones hunting for the ark. They obviously have not read **Jeremiah 3v16**.

Where is the ark today?

Where is God's presence today? John 14v23, Eph 2v22, Rev 22v3



The Day of Atonement

This was Israel's most holy day, the day on which the sins of the people were atoned for. The day the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place. The day went like this. A bull and a ram were sacrificed for the Priests' sins. The Priest put on white linen robes. The Scape Goat was prayed over and sent into the wilderness. The High Priest made atonement in the MHP for his own sins. A second goat was sacrificed, the high priest took its blood and sprinkled it on the Atonement cover in the Most Holy Place.

Aaron could not approach the ark however or whenever he wanted? Lev 16v2



Can we?

How do we approach?

How then do we compare to the OT High Priest?

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:19-22

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. Ephesians 3:12



Jesus fulfilled the Day of Atonement ritual. Hebrews 9v11-12

Application

The effect of all of us is that

Our sins are forgiven

We can know communion with God every day

We can receive His help Hebrews 4v16



Is it an option or a command to approach God?

How does all this effect you

Have you ever known the awesome presence of God?

How close will you come?