

MESSIAH IN THE OT
JROC/Week 28 – THE TABERNACLE
August 18, 2019

A recurring theme in Scripture - God's desire to dwell with man. Ex. 25:8 - *And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*

God walked with Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8). God created man to have fellowship with us! Man is not as anxious to have fellowship with God. God gave Moses the pattern for the tabernacle when He met with him on Mount Sinai. Ex. 25:22 – Regarding the mercy seat on top of the ark in the Holy of Holies, God told Moses, *And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat*

John 1:14 - *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.* Jesus DWELT, He TABERNACLED among us!!!

God the Son will dwell with man during the 1,000 year Millennial Kingdom.

God the Father and the Lamb will dwell with the redeemed in the new heavens and the new earth...in the New Jerusalem.

Jesus left His throne in heaven and tabernacled among His people. In Jesus we have a High Priest, a perfect blood sacrifice and access to God.

What is a tabernacle? According to the dictionary, a tabernacle is a temporary dwelling place. The Hebrew word for tabernacle is *mishchan* – dwelling place. The root word is *shachan* which highlights “to dwell.”

Why was the tabernacle built? ...*that I may dwell with them*

Moses did not design the tabernacle and then invite God to dwell in it. It was God Who, according to His plan of redemption, desired to dwell among the children of Israel. The tabernacle was also built for the sacrificial system – allowing man to approach God. It was built as a place from which God legislated His commandments (Lev. 1:1). The tabernacle was built to point to the Messiah.

How was the tabernacle to be built? According to the pattern of things in the heavenlies which were revealed to Moses while he was on Mt. Sinai. That pattern later appeared, so it seems, to the Apostle John while he was on the island of Patmos. In the book of Revelation we find an altar of incense (Rev. 6:9), a sea of glass (Rev. 4:6), seven golden lampstands (Rev. 1:12), the golden altar/incense altar (Rev. 8:3), hidden manna (Rev. 2:17), and the ark of His covenant (Rev. 11:19). And so we see the substance of what was the shadow on earth. The shadow was the foreshadowing – pointing to the substance Who is Jesus. In the book of Revelation we see God's throne room...we see the finalization of God's plan. We truly see the pattern in the heavenlies!

God's plan of redemption is rooted in eternity past – in the heavenlies (Isa. 53:10; Rev. 13:8). In the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus will be seated on the throne of David from the Millennial Temple in Jerusalem in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant and the

Davidic covenant. Isa. 2 – The LORDS’s house shall be established on the top of the mountain AND all nations shall flow to the temple – “the house of the God of Jacob (Isa. 2:3). In the new heavens and new earth, ...*I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God*

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Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Rev. 21:22). The glory of God illuminates the city – the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:23).

In both Exodus and Hebrews the Lord said...

Ex. 25:40 - ...*see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.*

Heb. 8:5 - ...*Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, ‘See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain...’*

It was GOD Who had designed the tabernacle.

Ex. 31:1-3 - *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ² “See, I have called by name Bezalel (bez-a-LEL), the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³ And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, God anointed Bezalel with the Holy Spirit to accomplish what He, God, had intended regarding the construction of the tabernacle. Other artisans were gifted from God as well (Ex. 36:1-2). And so, shouldn’t we be careful in understanding what the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to write about the tabernacle?*

Let’s look at the tabernacle from God’s perspective...

Ex. 25:8-10 - *And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. ⁹ According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it. ¹⁰ “And they shall make an ark...*

Regarding His commandments concerning the tabernacle, God began where we intend to end, at the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies. We would veer toward looking first at the exterior and then move within. We would begin at the entrance (screen) into the courtyard. God presents the pattern from within first...from the interior and then moves to the exterior. God focused first, in His instruction, on the ark of the covenant, also known as the ark of testimony as it contained the tablets with the ten commandments (Heb. 9:4). (Read also Ex. 20:2-17; Ex 25:16; Ex. 31:18; Ex. 34:29; Ex. 40:20). The ark would be placed in the Holy of Holies – the inner part of the tabernacle. How does God view man? God looks upon the heart (I Sam. 16:7) – the inner man.

NOTE: we need to know that Moses did place the ark into the tabernacle after the tabernacle was constructed along with the other furnishings. The point, however, is that God, in His instructions to Moses, spoke of the ark of the covenant first (Ex. 40:17; Ex. 40:18-33).

On top of the ark was a lid called the mercy seat on which rested the cloud or visible glory of God representing God's presence. From the mercy seat, between the cherubim God dispensed mercy to man when the blood of the atonement was sprinkled on the mercy seat. Ex. 25:21-22 - *You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. ²² And there (at the ark – “God's throne”) I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.*

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And, upon this mercy seat, the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement. The mercy seat was a type of Jesus. The mercy seat sat on top of the ark of the covenant contained the tablets of the law (also: pot of manna [Ex. 16:33; rod of Aaron that budded [Num. 17:10] [Heb. 9:4]). Above the mercy seat the glory of God dwelled. The law can NEVER save. Rom. 3:20 tells us that the law can never justify/can never declare a person righteous because NO ONE can keep the law. On this mercy seat blood was sprinkled once a year at the Day of Atonement/Yom Kippur. The mercy seat with the blood came between the glory of God and the law.

How does this foreshadow Jesus? Jesus' blood was shed to REMOVE the judgment brought upon man by the law (Rom. 3:20 - ...*by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*). Jesus is our Mediator (I Tim. 2:5). A mediator is someone who intervenes between two parties to resolve a conflict or to ratify a covenant. Jesus is the only Mediator Who restores peace between God and man.

Each year on the Day of Atonement/Yom Kippur, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood of animals (sin offerings: bull [for himself and his family] and the Lord's goat) sacrificed for the atonement of the sins of God's people. This blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat and on the horns of the altar of incense in front of the veil (Ex. 30:10).

The point conveyed by this imagery is that it is only through the offering of blood that the condemnation of the Law (II Cor. 3) could be covered/atoned for and the violations of God's laws (man NOT being able to obey all 613 commandments ALL THE TIME) covered.

Let's look at the basic layout of the tabernacle...
 (first graphic – from the ESV Study Bible)

THE TABERNACLE TENT

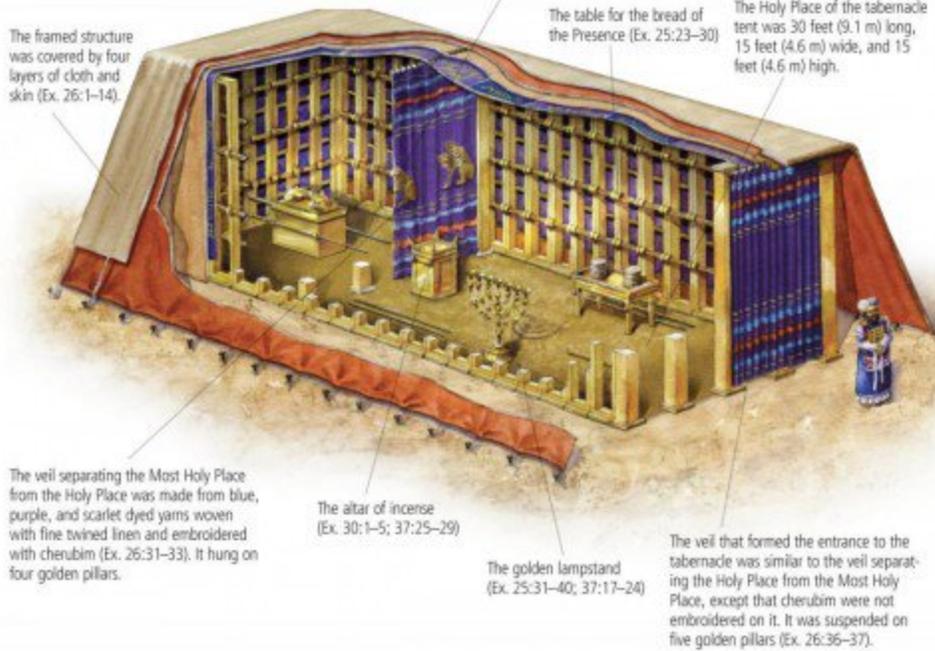
The entire tent was 45 feet (13.7 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high. It was a wooden skeletal structure, overlaid with gold, with no solid roof or front wall (Ex. 26:15–29). Five wooden bars (overlaid with gold) passed through rings attached to each frame (Ex. 26:26–30).

The framed structure was covered by four layers of cloth and skin (Ex. 26:1–14).

The Most Holy Place was a 15-foot (4.6-m) cube, containing only the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:10–22; 37:1–9). It was here that Yahweh would descend to meet with his people in a cloud theophany (divine appearance). The high priest could enter only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (see note on Heb. 9:7).

The table for the bread of the Presence (Ex. 25:23–30)

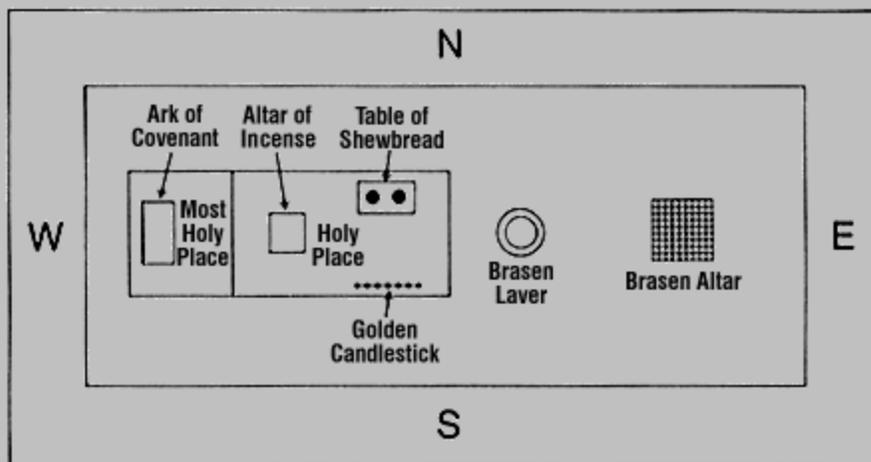
The Holy Place of the tabernacle tent was 30 feet (9.1 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high.



The Plan of the Tabernacle



The tabernacle was to provide a place where God might dwell among His people. The term *tabernacle* sometimes refers to the tent, including the holy place and the Most Holy, which was covered with embroidered curtains. But in other places it refers to the entire complex, including the curtained court in which the tent stood.



This illustration shows the relative positions of the tabernacle furniture used in Israelite worship. The tabernacle is enlarged for clarity.

The tabernacle consisted of a tent-like structure (the tabernacle proper – the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies) covered by rug-like coverings for a roof, and an external courtyard (150 feet by 75 feet). The whole compound was surrounded by a high fence about 7 feet in height. The fence was made of linen hangings held by pillars. The “tabernacle proper”, covered by a “tent” (rug-like coverings) was divided into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

The tabernacle proper, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, was made of acacia wood boards overlaid with gold. On top, four layers of curtains acted as a roof. The innermost layer was woven with fine linen and embroidered with figures of cherubim (angels), the second layer was made of goat’s hair, the third layer was made of rams’ skins dyed red, and the outermost layer was made of porpoise skins (Ex. 26:1-14).

The specific layout of the tabernacle and its courtyard is significant because it illustrates God’s prescribed way for man to approach Him. The whole compound was surrounded by a high fence with only one entrance. A person could not simply come from any

direction into the tabernacle as he pleased — he had to enter through the one gate, which was always located to the east.

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The Israelite entered through the “gate” (the screen) of the tabernacle compound, so to speak, which was on the east – facing the sun – exposing his sins. The Israelite came to the brazen altar where he brought his animal as a substitute for his unintentional sin.

NOTE: we read in Lev. 12 that women, following childbirth, brought a lamb for a burnt offering and a pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering...for her purification. (“The priest shall offer it and make atonement for her.”) If a lamb could not be brought, the woman would bring two pigeons or two turtledoves (one for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering)

The tabernacle depicts total grace – even in the midst of 613 laws. It was where man could approach God according to God’s instructions and find mercy.

TABERNACLE FURNISHINGS

The Brazen Altar/The Altar of Burnt Offering (Ex. 27:1-8; Ex. 38:1-7)

- The brazen altar, bronze altar, or altar of sacrifice was situated at the entrance of the courtyard. It wasn't inside the tabernacle proper. The offerer came upon the brazen altar ...upon entering the gate. The altar was easily accessible, and unavoidable.
- Hebrew word *mizbeach* means "slaughter place." The Hebrew root for altar, *zavakh*, means "to slay" or "slaughter."
- The brazen altar stands in a prominent position.
- Many people see the altar as the end of life. The brazen altar in the tabernacle was the end of the old life and the beginning of a life provided by God – a new walk with God.
- The altar was made of wood from the acacia tree common to that area. The acacia tree was full of knots and twists. The acacia tree speaks to humanity.
 - Jesus became flesh – He became like us – common man.
- As we proceed, we're going to observe that the items *inside* of the Tabernacle (the [menorah](#), incense altar, showbread table, and of course the [ark of the covenant](#) itself) were made of gold. Everything *outside* the tent was bronze.
- The altar was overlaid with bronze which is a symbol of judgment. Brazen speaks to something that has gone through the fires of judgment. [Rev. 1:15](#) – In the revelation of Jesus to John the Apostle on the Island of Patmos, John saw Jesus (I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day) in a vision and Jesus' *feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace*. Jesus took our judgment upon Himself. Jesus never became sin!!! He is God. Bronze is connected with sin.
- God set up a system of animal sacrifice for the Israelites in the Old Testament. To impress upon them the seriousness of sin, he required that the person offering the sacrifice lay his hands upon the animal to symbolize that it stood for him. The offerer sinned and something had to die. An animal without blemish had to die. Also, the person making the sacrifice had to kill the animal, which was usually done by cutting its throat with a very sharp knife.
- *"He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him."* ([Leviticus 1:4](#))
- By laying his hand upon the head of the offering, the person was identifying with the sacrifice. His sin and guilt was being moved from himself to the animal.
- The worship of the individual Israelite did not extend beyond the brazen altar. Before the veil of the Temple was torn in two, access to God was through the priesthood – as established by God.

Lev. 1:3-9 –

The Laver of the Tabernacle (Ex. 30:17-21; Ex. 38:8; Ex. 40:7)

- Very little is recorded concerning the laver. We do not know its size or shape. When we read of the furnishings being covered and transported, we don't read of the laver.
- The laver was made from the bronze mirrors of the women of Israel (Ex. 38:8). It appears that it was their freewill offering.

Regarding the meaning of the mirrors, perhaps the women realized that the care of their inward character was more important than adorning the outer person.

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- The laver of bronze had a base of bronze. Perhaps the laver was a large bowl (an upper basin) filled with water. The laver in the courtyard is located halfway between the brazen altar and the Holy Place. It was made entirely of bronze. The priests were to wash their hands and their feet at it (with water from it) before entering the Holy Place.
- The laver was located in a convenient place for washing and stood as a reminder that people need cleansing before approaching God. The priests atoned for their sins through a sacrifice at the brazen altar, but they cleansed themselves at the laver before serving in the Holy Place, so that they would be pure and not die before a holy God.
- The brazen altar speaks of justification, being declared righteous by God through the blood. The laver speaks of being cleansed through the water of His word (Eph. 5:26 - Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,) (OT - purification rituals in Lev. 15). We need to be washed daily in His Word to cleanse ourselves, so that we can serve and minister before Him.

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [with blood] to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:22)

- The laver can be seen as a type of the Holy Spirit. Some have objected, stating that this is premature as the Holy Spirit was not yet given (John 7:39). What do you think about that? We see the Holy Spirit in Gen. 1:2 (actually, Gen. 1:1). Because there were OT saints, the Holy Spirit was regenerating lives. Titus 3:5 speaks of the washing of regeneration. It is the Holy Spirit Who regenerates (Eze. 36:26-27; Eze. 37:4).

The Gold Lampstand/The Menorah (Ex. 25:31-40; Ex. 37:17-24)

- After washing their hands and feet at the laver, the priests could enter the Holy Place, which was the first room in the tent of the tabernacle.
- There were three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place: the gold lampstand, the table of showbread and the golden altar of incense.
- The menorah, also called the “golden lampstand” or “candlestick,” stood at the left side of the Holy Place. It was hammered out of one piece of pure gold.
 - In the Middle East – little clay lamps burned olive oil.

- These are not candles – candles give light by the consumption of themselves. But this lamp gives its light by means of oil poured into it. Oil – anointing oil used to anoint prophets, priests, kings. Messiah – the Anointed One.
- Jesus – I am the light of the world – John 8:12.
- The Lampstand was the most elaborate of all the vessels in the Tabernacle:
 - It was made of solid gold.
 - It was a hammered work – it was beaten from a solid pc. of gold. It wasn't molded or made in sections and then assembled.
 - It consisted of a main shaft out of which emerged a central branch. From each side of the central branch came 3 branches for a total of 7 branches.
 - The Lampstand speaks to the unity of the Messiah and His body.
- How was the Body of the Messiah birthed? Through the beating and crucifixion and resurrection of the Messiah. Isa. 53:10 – “It pleased the Father to bruise Him”.

3

- Jn. 15:5 – “I am the vine and you are the branches”
- Main shaft – Jesus. The main shaft is called a branch. Jesus is the Branch – Messianic title (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5-6; Zech. 3:8, 6:12)
- Branches on each side – believers. Coming from the side of the central branch – they stand aside to give preeminence to the Branch – the Messiah.
- Six side branches – 6 is symbolic of man who was created on the 6th day but has come short of divine perfection (7).
- The central branch rises higher than the other branches (Psa. 45:7).
- The Lamp was to burn continually (Ex. 27:20; Lev. 24:1-3).

The Table of Showbread (Ex. 25:23-30; Ex. 31:8; Ex. 37:10-16)

- The table of showbread was a small table made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold.
- It stood on the right side of the Holy Place across from the lampstand and held 12 loaves of bread, representing the 12 tribes of Israel.
- Food was placed in pagan temples to feed their gods. The Table of Showbread spoke to God's sustenance of Israel by God in the wilderness.
- Jesus is the Bread of Life – John 6:35.
- 2 rows – not piled but “set in 2 rows, 6 on a row”. Showbread was the “bread of faces” implying that the “cakes” were spread out on the Table so as to present themselves before the face of God (Ex. 25:30; Ex. 40:23).
- Fine flour had to be baked before it was eaten. It was baked in a fierce, quick oven. Jesus, the Bread of Life, experienced a fiery trial. He suffered for us.
- Only the priests were to eat the Showbread (Lev. 24:5-9).
- The bread was placed before God continually (Lev. 24:8) – forever before His face, pleasing to Him. Jesus' sacrifice appeased God.
- “Showbread” also was called “bread of the presence” because it was to be always in the Lord's presence.

- The table and the bread were a picture of God’s willingness to fellowship and communion (literally speaking, sharing something in common) with man. It was an invitation to share a meal, an extension of friendship. Eating together often is an act of fellowship. God was willing for man to enter into His presence to fellowship with Him, and this invitation was always open.
- Jesus came to call sinners to Him, make them right with God, so that they could enjoy everlasting fellowship with God.

The Golden Altar of Incense (Ex. 30:1-10; Ex. 37:25-29; Ex. 30:34-38)

- The golden altar of incense sat in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.
- It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. Four horns protruded from the four corners of the altar.
- God commanded the priests to burn incense on the golden altar every morning and evening, the same time that the daily burnt offerings were made. The incense was to be left burning continually throughout the day and night as a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

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- The incense was a symbol of the prayers and intercession of the people going up to God as a sweet fragrance. God wanted His dwelling to be a place where people could approach Him and pray to Him.
- The golden altar, furthermore, is a representation of Christ, who is our intercessor before God the Father (John 17:1-26). Today, Jesus still is our high priest at the Father’s side, interceding for God’s people:

“Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.” (Romans 8:34)

The Veil

- A thick curtain separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. This curtain, known as the “veil,” was made of fine linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn. There were figures of cherubim (angels) embroidered onto it. Cherubim guarded the throne of God.
- The word “veil” in Hebrew means a screen, divider or separator that hides. What was this curtain hiding? Essentially, it was shielding a holy God from sinful man. Whoever entered into the Holy of Holies was entering the very presence of God. In fact, anyone except the High Priest who entered the Holy of Holies would die. Even the High Priest could only pass through the veil and enter this sacred dwelling once a year, on the Day of Atonement.
- The picture of the veil was that of a barrier between man and God. God’s eyes are too pure to look on evil and He can tolerate no sin (Habakkuk 1:13). The veil was a barrier to make sure that man could not carelessly and irreverently enter into God’s awesome presence. Even as the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of

Atonement, he had to make some meticulous preparations: He had to wash himself, put on special clothing, bring burning incense to let the smoke cover his eyes from a direct view of God, and bring blood with him to make atonement for sins.

“But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.” (Hebrews 9:7)

- So the presence of God remained shielded from man behind a thick curtain during the history of Israel. However, Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross changed that. When He died, the curtain in the Jerusalem temple was torn in half, from the top to the bottom. Only God could have carried out such an incredible feat because the veil was too high for human hands to have reached it, and too thick to have torn it. (The Jerusalem temple, a replica of the wilderness tabernacle, had a curtain that was about 60 feet in height, 30 feet in width and four inches thick.) Furthermore, it was torn from top down, meaning this act must have come from above.
- The curtain had blocked the entrance to the Most Holy Place (Ex. 26:33; Heb. 9:3).
- The tearing of the veil signified that the way into God’s presence was now open to all through a new and living way (Heb. 10:19-22).
- As the veil was torn, the Holy of Holies was exposed. God’s presence was now accessible to all - Matt. 27:51.

5

- The torn veil illustrated Jesus’ body broken for us, opening the way for us to come to God. The veil is His flesh (Heb. 10: 20) – when Jesus’ flesh was torn at the crucifixion – and He completed His work (John 17: 4) – the temple veil was torn.
- Believer priests – direct access to God – I Peter 2:9.
- Ex. 19:6 – you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests. . . .
- As Jesus cried out “It is finished!” on the cross, He was indeed proclaiming that God’s redemptive plan was now complete. The age of animal offerings was over. The ultimate offering had been sacrificed.

Contrasts between the Tabernacle in the wilderness and Solomon’s temple:

- The Tabernacle foreshadowed Jesus in His First Coming. The Temple looks forward to Jesus at His Second Coming.
 - The Tabernacle was first erected. The Temple was not built until long afterwards – after a gap of time.
 - The Tabernacle was erected by Moses the Prophet (which was the office Jesus filled during His First Coming). The Temple was built by Solomon the King (which is the office Jesus will fill at His Second Coming).

- The Tabernacle was used in the wilderness – speaking of Jesus’ humiliation. The Temple was built in Jerusalem, the “city of the great King” (Matt. 5:35) – speaking of Jesus’ future glorification.
- The Tabernacle was unattractive in its externals; Jesus, at His First Coming, was “a root out of dry ground.” The Temple was renowned for its outward magnificence. So Jesus, when He returns, shall come in power and great glory.

There are two full accounts given in Exodus of the construction of the Tabernacle. First we have a description of the Tabernacle and its furniture as it was given to Moses at Mount Sinai (Ex. 25-31). We then have a parenthesis in Ex. 32 & 33 with the record of Israel’s transgression in the sin of idolatry – the worship of the golden calf. Despite Israel’s transgression, the Tabernacle was erected. Israel’s sin did not turn God from His purpose of mercy!

Exodus 40:34 – *“Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”* While the outward appearance of the Tabernacle was rough and unattractive, the divine glory of God resided within! So it was with Jesus at His First Coming – “He had no form nor comeliness” (Isa. 53:2) YET in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9).

