

MESSIAH IN THE OT

Week 6 – Made According to Pattern/The Tabernacle: The Sacrificial System

February 26, 2019

Why should we study the tabernacle in the OT?

Consider:

- God created the whole world in six days, but God instructed Moses about the tabernacle over forty days (Ex. 24:18).
- Concerning the creation in Scripture, we note two chapters in Genesis, and several chapters in the Psalms. It has been documented that there are “...no less than fifty chapters regarding the tabernacle: 13 chapters in Exodus; 13 chapters in Numbers; 18 chapters in Leviticus; 2 chapters in Deuteronomy; 4 chapters in Hebrews...and other references.” (*Made According To Pattern*, C.W. Slemming)
- “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27). The tabernacle points to Jesus.
- Jesus told the Jewish leadership of His day, “If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.” (John 5:46)
- The tabernacle in the wilderness, the format of which God gave to Moses and Moses wrote down, speaks of the promised Messiah and God’s plan of redemption!

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. 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.

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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 sacrifice (Rev. 6:9), a sea of glass (Rev. 4:6), seven golden lampstands (Rev. 1:12), the golden 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 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

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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.*

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).

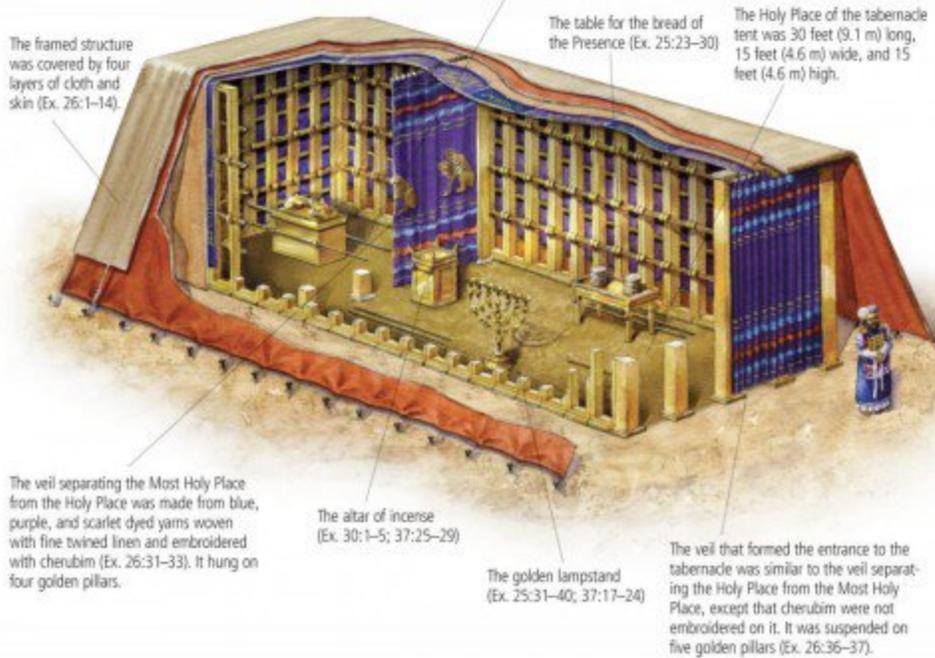
The point conveyed by this imagery is that it is only through the offering of blood that the condemnation of the Law (II Cor. 3) could be covered/atoned for and the violations of God's laws (man NOT being able to obey all 613 commandments ALL THE TIME) covered.

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).

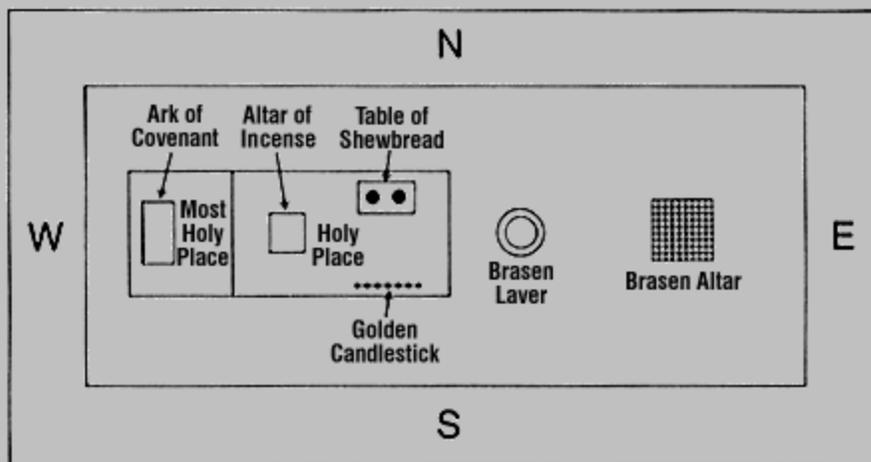
The Most Holy Place was a 15-foot (4.6-m) cube, containing only the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:10–22; 37:1–9). It was here that Yahweh would descend to meet with his people in a cloud theophany (divine appearance). The high priest could enter only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (see note on Heb.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



The 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.

SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

God gave the children of Israel the sacrificial system so that they could approach Him. When Moses was on Mt. Sinai with God, he was given the 10 commandments. More commandments were conveyed to Moses from God (total of 613 commandments). Because no one can keep one commandment faithfully, and because God desired a relationship with individuals, God instructed the children of Israel to construct the tabernacle while they remained at Sinai so that they could approach Him through the sacrificial system which He gave them.

Why all the blood” Sin is ugly, brutal, and time consuming! God gave the children of Israel the sacrificial system to teach them the consequences of sin, to provide the way, temporarily, for the children of Israel to approach Him, AND to point to the ultimate sacrifice – the Messiah – Jesus, the spotless, perfect Lamb of God!

Lev. 17:11 – God told the children of Israel, *For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.* Atonement – *kaphar* (ka-FAIR) – to cover. Through atonement sins were covered (Rom. 3:25; Acts 17:30) until the ultimate sacrifice would be offered and TAKE AWAY sin (Psa. 103; Psa. 103:12; Jer. 31:31; John 1:29). The sacrificial system was designed to cover sin until it was finally PAID FOR...taken away (from God’s perspective) through the death of Jesus.

Heb. 10:1-4 - *For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ² For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. ³ But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*

NOTE: the sacrificial system prior to Jesus' sacrifice produced a reminder of sins because sacrifices were continual.

Animal sacrifice is an important theme found throughout Scripture. When Adam and Eve sinned, animals were killed by God to provide clothing for them (Genesis 3:21). Cain and Abel brought sacrifices to the Lord. Cain's was unacceptable because he brought fruit, while Abel's was acceptable because it was the "firstborn of his flock"

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(Genesis 4:4-5). After the flood receded, Noah sacrificed animals to God (Genesis 8:20-21). God provided a ram in a thicket as a substitutionary sacrifice for Isaac (Gen. 22).

God commanded the nation of Israel to perform numerous sacrifices according to certain procedures prescribed by God.

First, the animal had to be spotless (Deut. 15:21). Second, the person offering the sacrifice had to identify with the animal in that the person realized their sin and realized that something had to die in their place – for their sin. Third, the person offering the animal had to kill the animal (Lev. 4:29). When done in faith, this sacrifice provided a temporary covering of sins.

Jesus took our sin upon Himself and died in our place. As 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Through faith in what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross, we can receive forgiveness – the removal of sin from God's perspective – so that He declares us justified – righteous in His sight – Jude 24 - *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to resent you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy....*

Did animal sacrifices remove sin?

The passage in Leviticus 4:20–35 seems to teach that animal sacrifices can take away sins, while the passage in Hebrews 10:4–11 reveals they did not. The book of Leviticus discusses many of the sacrifices performed by the Levitical priests. In some places, it seems to claim that a particular offering could remove sins.

And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

(*Leviticus 4:20*) *Salakh* – a lightness; a lifting up. Yet the book of Hebrews explicitly states that animal blood could not take away sins. *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. (Hebrews 10:4)*

Nowhere in the Old Testament is it ever claimed that sins were “taken away” (i.e., completely removed) by animal sacrifices. The root of the Hebrew word translated “atonement” in the Old Testament is *kaphar*, which has the idea of “covering,” not total removal. Tens of thousands of animals were ceremonially slaughtered by Jewish priests for centuries, the spilling of their blood vividly illustrated the deadly seriousness of sin. However, these sacrifices were essentially like a bandage, only acting as a covering for sin. They did not, and could not, remove sin, as [Hebrews 10:4](#) clearly states. They also pointed forward in time to the only One that could remove sin—Jesus Christ who shed His precious blood to accomplish that purpose.

...we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. (Hebrews 10:10–12).

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Jesus is our propitiation – Gk word *hilasterion*. Jesus completely appeased/satisfied God’s righteous demands. [Rom. 3:25](#) - *...whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,*

When Christ shed his own blood, it was a once and for all sacrifice that removes sins. Jesus’ sacrifice was a sacrifice of redemption – paying the price of release from bondage...completely appeasing God’s wrath...taking away sins (John 1:29).

God promised to make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah (Jer. 31:31ff). This is looking to the future when the nation of Israel will be restored. [Jer. 31:33-34](#) - *...this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*

[Eze. 36:24-28](#) – (giving timeframe of restoration – future)

²⁴ *For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be*

clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. ²⁸ Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Hebrews 9:26 - *But as it is, He (Jesus) has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin (not just cover sin) by the sacrifice of Himself.* The coming of Jesus took away the need for ongoing sacrifices for unintentional sins. Instead, we are called to trust in Jesus by faith, receiving His forgiveness for sins.

God continued to require the children of Israel to approach Him with a sacrifice. And, because the sacrificial system continued – for approx. 1500 years as the ultimate sacrifice had not yet been offered – Jesus, there remained a reminder of sins every year. Approx. 1500 years:

DAILY SACRIFICES

Ex. 29:38-39 - *Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. ³⁹ One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. .*

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Sin is in the camp – the camp of the children of Israel where God dwelled over the mercy seat between the cherubim in the Holy of Holies. Yom Kippur was divinely ordained “because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins” (Lev. 16:16). God chose to dwell amidst the children of Israel...the nation was required to stand clean before its holy God.

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Each year, the issue at stake is whether or not God would continue to abide within the camp, in the midst of His people. The uncleanness of the people contaminated the dwelling place of God, and the Day of Atonement was provided to atone for these sins. The most dreaded evil for Israel was the absence of God’s presence in the midst of the people.

Once a year, at the Day of Atonement, the High Priest, ONLY the High Priest was instructed to go into the Holy of Holies.

Lev. 16:1-2 - *Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD, and died ² and the LORD said to Moses: ‘Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy of Holies inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die;*

This was not a ceremony to be taken lightly, and the people were to understand that atonement for sin was to be done God's way.

Since the High Priest was not sinless, he had to sacrifice a sin offering - a bull for his sins and for sins of his house and sprinkle the bull's blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. The human High Priest looked forward to the GREAT High Priest, Jesus, Who is without sin.

The High Priest killed the Lord's goat (and offered it as a sin offering) for the people and brought its blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat. And so the High Priest made atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, because of their transgressions, for all their sins.

After the Lord's goat was sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the mercy seat, the High Priest laid his hands on the head of the scapegoat (the live goat), confessed over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, putting them on the head of the scapegoat.

The scapegoat was sent away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man (an escort). The scapegoat bore on itself all the people's iniquities to an uninhabited land. The scapegoat was a picture, a foreshadowing of the removal of sin – the forgiveness of sin through the redemption – the ransom price Jesus paid for sin.

The Lord's goat and the scapegoat foreshadow Jesus Who became the sacrifice and the scapegoat for all who call upon Him. The Lord's goat was slaughtered for the sins of the people and the scapegoat took on the sins of the Israelites and removed them. The sins of people are both sacrificed for and driven away never to be remembered. The Day of Atonement foreshadowed the ultimate redemption that Jesus provides.

QUESTIONS

What did you learn?

What impacted you and why? How will the truths and principles of this lesson from Scripture change your life?

What is not clear?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread the handout with the Bible references.

Jot down observations, questions, and begin to write answers.

Share one or two truths that you learned with at least one person.

Read the Week 7 handout when you receive it.