

## **The Tabernacle: The Fingerprints of the Messiah**

### *Objectives:*

1. To understand the purpose of the Tabernacle.
2. To understand the Messianic symbolism of the Tabernacle and its furnishings.
3. To understand the Tabernacle as it relates to observing the Lord's Table.

### *The Purpose and Design of the Tabernacle*

1. The Tabernacle was a place where God could dwell among His people.
2. The Tabernacle had multiple names of designation.
3. The Tabernacle is called "Sanctuary" in Exodus 25:8, which means "holy place".
4. In Exodus 25:9 the Tabernacle is described as "dwelling place".
5. In Exodus 26:36, the Tabernacle is called a tent, which communicates a temporary status.
6. In Exodus 29:42 it was referred to as "tent of meeting". This is the place the Lord will meet with His people.
7. In Exodus 38:21 it is referred to as the Tabernacle of Testimony. Here the Tabernacle contains the law given to Moses, which is the LORD's witness to Israel and the world.
8. The LORD (Yahweh) provided the plans, i.e., the blue prints for the Tabernacle. Ex 25:1
9. The LORD defines the manner and structure on worship.
10. The LORD defines that He is the object of worship.
11. Only those who had willing hearts provided the materials. Ex 25:2, 35:5, 35:21
12. Paul affirms the willingness of the worshiper in the New Testament. 2 Corinthians 9:7  
*Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*
13. The furnishing of the Tabernacle symbolized the various ministries of the Messiah.

## *The Furnishings of the Tabernacle*

### The Bronze Altar (Exodus 27:1-8)

1. It is also known as the Brazen Altar.
2. It is also known as the Altar of Burnt Offering.
3. This altar is 7 1/2 feet long, 7 1/2 wide and 4 1/2 feet high.
4. This altar was made of Acacia (Shittim) Wood (27:1).
5. Acacia (Shittum) wood is a hard, dense, and durable wood found in the Sinai Desert.
6. Acacia (Shittum) wood is resistant to decay.
7. It has been suggested that the choice of the Acacia points to the Messiah's humanity.
8. Given the resurrection, Christ (Messiah), in His humanity, did not suffer decay (Psalm 16:8-11, Acts 2:31).
9. The four corners of the altar were fashioned to resemble horns.
10. Horns represented power and strength (2 Samuel 22:3, Psalms 18:2).
11. The horns here represent the power and strength of the Messiah.
12. The Acacia (Shittum) wood was overlaid with brass.
13. The bronze overlay pointed to the Messiah's strength, protection and healing through faith in Him (Numbers 21:6-9, John 3:9-15).
14. The altar was the place for sacrifice to satisfy the penalty of sin.
15. The bronze altar was located in the front of the Tabernacle.
16. It was the first piece of furnishing in the Tabernacle.
17. Once the sacrifice was made, one could approach God.

### The Bronze Laver (Exodus 30:17-21)

1. From the Bronze Altar, the priest moved to the Bronze Laver.
2. The laver was designed for the priest to ceremonially cleanse his blood stained hands and court soiled feet (Ex 30:20).
3. The laver was to be used exclusively by the priests (Exodus 30:21).
4. The cleansing pictured the holiness required of priests.
5. Being cleansed by the water was necessary for life.
6. The laver foreshadows our sanctification in Christ.
7. We are sanctified and washed by the Word (Ephesians 5:26-27).

8. The New Testament believer is designated as a priest by the washing and regeneration of the Word (Titus 3:5).
9. The Bronze Lavar's basin was lined with mirrors (Exodus 38:8).
10. The priest could see his reflection, reminding the priest that God sees Him.
11. This reflection is meant to cause the priest to consider his spiritual condition.
12. The washing/cleansing pictures being washed by Christ (John 13:8).

#### The Lampstand of Gold (Exodus 25:31-40)

1. The Lampstand pointed to Christ, who was the Light of the the world. (John 8:12)
2. The Lampstand points to the holiness of Christ (1 John 1:5,7).
3. The Lampstand was made purely of gold.
4. The Lampstand was hammered, not molded, picturing the suffering of Christ who was beaten and crushed for us (Isaiah 53:4-5, Luke 22:63).
5. The pure gold represented the purity of the Messiah/ Christ (1 Peter 1:19, John 1:29).
6. The Lampstand was required to burn continually (Exodus 27:20-21).
7. The light of the Messiah/ Christ will forever pierce darkness.
8. As ambassadors for Christ, we are called to reflect the light of Christ (Matthew 5:14).
9. Likewise, the Lampstand may point to the type of churches.
10. In Revelation 1:20 the seven churches are mentioned, with those seven churches being addressed in Revelation 2 and 3.
11. The oil in the Lampstand points to the Holy Spirit's ministry through the Messiah during the Millennium (Isaiah 11:1-10).

#### The Table of Showbread (Exodus 25: 23-30, 34-38)

1. The table was three feet long, one and a half feet wide, and two and three-tenths feet high.
2. The table was made of Acacia (Shittim) overlaid with gold.
3. Like the altar, the wood used here points to Christ's humanity that withstood the grave.
4. The gold overlay points to the Divine nature of the Messiah/Christ.
5. In other words, the Acacia (Shittim) overlaid with gold overlay pictures the hypostatic union of Christ; the union of Christ's divinity with His humanity. (Philippians 2:5-11)
6. The showbread or the bread of presence symbolized the face of God (Exodus 25:30).

7. The bread was placed on the table in two rows of six loaves, equaling 12 loaves on the table.
8. The twelve loaves represented the 12 tribes of Israel (Leviticus 24:5-9).
9. The bread signified Christ, who is the bread of life (John 6:35-40).
10. The bread was made from fine flour, which was free from impurities, foreshadowing the purity of Christ.
11. King Solomon only used fine flour at His table (1Kings 4:22)
12. Likewise our host, King Jesus, has been sifted and is pure.
13. The loaves were sprinkled with drizzles of frankincense (Leviticus 24:7).
14. The frankincense is the aroma presented to Christ as a child by the wise men. (Matthew 2:11)
15. The table of showbread symbolizes our communion with Christ in unity, which emits a sweet aroma when we sit at His table together.
16. Christ is our spiritual food.

#### The Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1-10)

1. The Altar of Incense is a smaller altar being 18 inches square and 3 feet high.
2. It was made of the same wood, Acacia (Shittim), as the Bronze Altar and Table of Showbread.
3. The wood was completely overlaid with pure gold, again speaking to the two natures of Christ.
4. It was located in front of the veil, near the ark of the covenant.
5. The incense comprised of three aromatic spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, mixed with frankincense. (Exodus 30:34)
6. These spices were rare and expensive, pointing to the exclusivity of Christ.
7. This mixture could only be used for this purpose.
8. The incense was to be burned each morning and evening, symbolizing prayer in communion with God (Psalm 141:2, Revelation 5:8).
9. Using the oil for personal use was forbidden. Violators would die.
10. This combination of spices emitted a sweet, unique aroma symbolizing the life of Christ.
11. Likewise, for those who believe, we are called to manifest the aroma of Christ. (2 Corinthians 2:14-16).

### The Veil (Exodus 26:31-35)

1. The Veil separated God and man.
2. The first screen/ gate, “blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen”, was 30 feet long attached to the outer wall. (Exodus 27:16)
3. The second curtain, made of “blue and purple and scarlet *material* and fine twisted linen”, was the doorway to the tent. (Exodus 26:36-37)
4. This third veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.
5. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, which was held once a year.
6. Woven into the fabric were images of Cherubim.
7. Cherubim are spirit beings, symbolizing God’s glory, holiness and protection (Genesis 3:24, Ezekiel 1:5-28).
8. The veil pictures the plan, purpose and ministry of Jesus Christ to reconcile man to God.
9. The blue and purple represented Christ’s kingship and royalty (Esther 8:15).
10. The scarlet represented the saving power of the blood of Christ (Romans 3:25-26).
11. Christ’s death on the cross tore the veil, giving every man direct access to God (Matthew 27:50-51)
12. Christ demonstrated his Divine authority, proving that He was the true High Priest (Hebrews 10:19-22).

### The Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-22)

1. The Ark of the Covenant represented the throne of God.
2. It was the first furnishing God instructed Moses to build.
3. It was a 4 feet long and 2 1/4 feet square chest.
4. In Exodus 25:22, it is called the Ark of the Testimony.
5. In 1 Samuel 3:3, it is referred to as the Ark of God.
6. In 1 Kings 2:26, it is designated as the Ark of the Lord God.
7. In 2 Chronicles 35:3, it is called the Holy Ark.
8. In Psalm 132:8, it is referred to as the Ark of thy Strength.
9. These designations point to the character of God.
10. It was made of Acacia (Shittim) overlaid with gold.

11. Again, this symbolism foreshadows the union of Christ's divinity with His humanity.
12. Two solid gold Cherubim facing each other were on the lid.
13. The lid was called the mercy seat.
14. The word translated mercy seat, means atonement.
15. Here the throne of God's mercy is in view.
16. Hebrews 9:4 lists the contents inside the Ark, "golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant".
17. Manna was the daily bread God provided to the Israelites for 40 years.
18. Manna means "What is it?"
19. Manna is referred to as bread from heaven, symbolizing God is able to meet our physical and spiritual needs. (Exodus 16:4, 1 Corinthians 10:3, John 6:32-35).
20. In Revelation 2:17, Christ declares to the Pergamum church, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it."
21. Aaron's Rod is warning that God has all power and authority over rebellion. In Numbers 16 and 17, Korah led a challenge against Moses and Aaron's authority.
22. Moses prayed and God executed judgment on the 250 in the rebellious group.
23. To authenticate Aaron's calling, God put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds on Aaron's rod (Numbers 17:8).
24. Moses was commanded to keep Aaron's rod as a sign against the rebels, and to warn against grumbling against God (Numbers 17:10).
25. The law was placed in the Ark as a witness against the Israelites (Deuteronomy 31:25-26).
26. Christ, the Messiah, is the fulfillment of the law and the Prophets.
27. Jesus is the 'kept' promise spoken of in the law (Matthew 5:17-18, Galatians 3:19).

The Lord's Table (1 Corinthians 11:17-26, Hebrews 9:11-26)

1. Christ eliminated the sacrificial offering system of repentance.
2. The Sin Offering was a sacrifice in acknowledgment of their sin (Leviticus 4:1-6:13).
3. The Guilt Offering was a type of sin offering relating to offenses against personal rights. (Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-7).

4. The Burnt Offering symbolized complete atonement for the people's sin (Leviticus 1:6:8-13).
5. The Meal Offering symbolized God's sovereignty over the people. (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23)
6. The Peace Offering symbolized fellowship with God. (Leviticus 3, 7:11-21)
7. Christ as the true High Priest put an end to the Old Testament sacrificial system, by offering Himself and shedding His blood for sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).
8. Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant.
9. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we unite in the power of His death, burial and resurrection, celebrating His victory over death and sin.
10. We remember and proclaim the greatness of His sacrificial love for us, as one body unified by His Spirit.