

# DOCTRINE OF THE TABERNACLE

June 1, 1986

- I. The tabernacle ("dwelling place") was an elaborate and expensive portable sanctuary constructed by Israel at Sinai in the days of Moses (circa 1446BC). Its existence was authorized as a part of the Mosaic Covenant (codex 3 ordinances), Ex.25-31; cp. 35-40.
- II. Four noteworthy features.
  - A. The practical: it was constructed out of material the people already had (i.e. recently acquired wealth and items native to Arabia), plus it was ideal for a nomadic existence and the early years in Canaan.
  - B. The artistic: once completed and erected, it was a thing of "glory and beauty". The gold, silver and bronze, together with the richly embroidered linen curtains and hangings and the beautifully designed furniture, all made for a striking effect.
  - C. The symbolic: the various parts of the tabernacle separately and in concert foreshadowed the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The relationship is that of shadow to reality, Heb.8:5 *"who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, 'See,' He says, 'that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain'"*; cp. Ex.25:40. The various materials used in the tabernacle complex each had typological significance.
  - D. The spiritual: the tabernacle was designed as an elaborate teaching aid to instruct Israel in the doctrines of Christology and soteriology, Gal.3:24; Heb.10:1.
- III. The service of the tabernacle included the Levitical priests and the Levitical offerings, Ex.28,39; Lev.15; Heb.9.
- IV. The linen curtains (the "tabernacle"), Ex.26:16; 36:8-13.
  - A. They represent the righteousness (+R) of Christ's humanity, Rev.19:8; cp. 1Jn.2:1.
  - B. There were ten, each measuring 42' x 6'.
  - C. They were sewn together in-groups of five, making two 42' x 30' segments.
  - D. They were placed over the outside of the 45' x 15' x 15' framework; cp. 26:12,13; the front was open.
  - E. They were 1 1/2' short on the sides.
  - F. Blue loops & gold clasps joined them.
  - G. The framework, the four pillars separating the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, and the five pillars at the entrance supported them.
  - H. They were embroidered with a motif of blue, purple and crimson cherubs, Heb.2:7 *"made a little lower than angels."*
- V. The goat's hair curtains (the "tent"), Ex.26:7-13; cp. 26:14-18, made of fine black cashmere.
  - A. They represent Christ (fine linen) bearing our sins, 2Cor.5:21 *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* Christ was imputed with our sins that we might be imputed with His +R.
  - B. There were eleven curtains, each measuring 45' x 6'.
  - C. They were sewn together into a group of five and a group of six, making a 45' x 30' segment and a 45' x 36' segment.
  - D. Observation: the "tent" was larger than the linen "tabernacle" by 3' wide and 6' long.
  - E. By overlapping, the tent was not allowed to hang lower than the linen tabernacle.
  - F. This illustrates the fact (inscrutable) that Christ bore all sins in His body.
  - G. The two sections were joined by bronze clasps.
  - H. When in position on the tabernacle, they hung over it on the exterior of the framework.
- VI. The two coverings, Ex.26:14; 36:19.
  - A. Both hung on the outside of the frame.
  - B. On top of the goat's hair tent was a covering of rams' skins dyed red.

- C. This signifies that Christ was singled out, as were the firstborn rams, Isa.53:7; Jn.1:29.
- D. Over the rams' skin covering was placed a covering of porpoise skins.
- E. This portrays Christ as He appeared to the average (negative) man of his day, Isa.53:2 "*no beauty that we should desire Him.*"

VII. The framework, Ex.26:15-30; 36:20-34.

- A. Composed of 48 gold overlaid boards, each measuring 15' long x 27" wide x 9" thick.
- B. Each board stood upright, with its two tenons inserted in two 75lb bases of solid silver (100 bases in all, 96 for the framework, + 4 for the pillars for the veil). The silver represented redemption, Ex.30:12-15; 38:25-28.
- C. There were twenty boards to a side.
- D. There were six across the back, plus one in each corner as a stabilizing factor.
- E. The dimensions: 45' long x 15' wide x 15' high.
- F. Five gold overlaid bars were inserted through rings of gold on each side and on the rear as horizontal stabilizers.
- G. The middle bar extended the full length, while the other four only went halfway.
- H. The gold overlaid wood portrayed Christ in hypostatic union.
- I. The obvious ruggedness of this framework depicts the integrity of God's plan.

VIII. The inner veil and the entrance hanging, Ex.26:31-37; cp. 36:35-38.

- A. The inner veil separated the Holy Place (30' x 15') from the Most Holy Place (15' x 15' x 15' cube).
- B. It had a cherub motif and was doubled over and hooked to 4 gold overlaid pillars, 2 side-by-side on each wall, each in a socket of silver.
- C. This prevented the high priest from exposing the Most Holy Place to the Holy Place.
- D. The veil speaks of Christ in the flesh, Heb.10:20.
- E. The veil being rent (in the temple, 4" thick, 60' high) meant the reality had come! Heb.10:19.
- F. The entrance hanging was a linen curtain with blue, purple and crimson embroidery, attached to five gold plated pillars set in bronze sockets, fastened with hooks. The blue, purple & crimson portrayed Christ's heavenly origin, royalty and sacrifice for sins.
- G. This emphasized that through faith in Christ we enter Phase 2 (Ph2, the Holy Place).

IX. The Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat, Ex.25:10-22; 37:19.

- A. The Ark was a gold plated box measuring 45" long x 27" wide x 27" high.
- B. It spoke of Christ's hypostatic union (four rings and two poles carried it).
- C. Inside it were three items.
  1. The two tablets of the Law, 34:1ff.
  2. Pot of manna, 16:33,34.
  3. Aaron's rod that budded, Num.17:8.
- D. Symbolizing:
  1. Christ kept the law.
  2. In Him is Bible Doctrine (BD).
  3. In Him is our resurrection, Heb.9:4.
- E. On top of the Ark was placed a solid gold lid called the Mercy Seat ("place of propitiation").
- F. This lid symbolized God's throne.
- G. There were two cherubs on the lid, one at each end, symbolizing God's +R and justice.
- H. The lid was always to be placed on the Ark inside the Most Holy Place.
  - I. This indicated divine acceptance of Christ as Savior.
  - J. Once a year the high priest would enter twice and sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat, symbolizing propitiation.
- K. Between the cherubs dwelt the Shekinah glory.

X. The furniture in the Holy Place.

- A. Table of Showbread, Ex.25:23-30; 37:10-16.

1. Dimensions: 3' long x 1 1/2' wide x 27" high, gold plated, with poles and rings for transport.
  2. Always held 12 loaves of bread, symbolizing Christ as the source of all life salvation, living grace, Ph2 blessing.
  3. Its main emphasis is the importance of BD in Ph2.
- B. The Golden Lampstand, Ex.25:31-40; 37:17-24.
1. Made of 75 lbs. of pure gold in the motif of almond flowers and buds.
  2. Had seven lamps which were to be burning at all times, Ex.27:20,21.
  3. Was the only light in the Holy Place.
  4. The Lampstand signifies Christ as the light of the world, Jn.1:4,5,9; 8:12.
  5. The seven lamps represent the mature believer radiating divine viewpoint in the cosmos.
- C. The Golden Altar of Incense.
1. Dimensions: 1 1/2' square x 3' high.
  2. Horns on each corner represent the power of prayer.
  3. The fragrant incense represents the content of prayer (four ingredients), Ex.30:1-10; cp. 34-38; 37:25-29.

XI. The Bronze Altar, Ex.27:18; 38:17.

- A. Dimensions: 7 1/2' square x 4 1/2' high.
- B. Planks overlaid in bronze: judgment on the humanity of Christ, cp. Num.21:9; Jn.3:14; 1Pet.2:24.
- C. Had four horns: the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.
- D. Foreshadowed Christ's cross.
- E. Had a grating recessed 2 1/4', upon which sacrifices were placed: no one saw Christ bearing our sins.
- F. Had poles to transport it: Christ carried His own Cross.
- G. Located in the court of the tabernacle: the cosmos.

XII. The Bronze Laver, Ex.30:17-21; 38:8.

- A. Located directly in front of the entrance to the tabernacle.
- B. The priest was required to wash his hands and feet before he entered the Holy Place or he would die.
- C. Speaks of the Rebound technique, Jn.13:5,10; 1Jn1:9.
- D. Made from the bronze looking glasses of the women (humor; also illustrates self examination, 1Cor.11:31).

XIII. The outer court, Ex.27:9-19; 38:9-20; Phase 1.

- A. Dimensions: 150' long x 75' wide.
- B. Made of white linen, attached to pillars in bases of bronze by means of silver hooks (silver capitals).
- C. Cords and bronze tent pegs also gave it support.
- D. Speaks of the issue of salvation presented to all men.
- E. Had a hanging on the front like the entrance to the tabernacle, speaking of Christ as the door, Jn.10:9; 14:6.

XIV. The Levites were responsible for the dismantling, transporting and assembling the tabernacle, Num.3:25; 4:49.

XV. The temple of Solomon incorporated the tabernacle, 2Kgs.8:4.