

# **Christ in the Tabernacle**

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

A little boy was in Sunday School class and listened intently as the teacher explained to him about the Tabernacle and sacrificial offerings in the Old Testament. At the dinner table his mother asked the little fellow if he understood about the important lessons of the tabernacle and sacrificial offerings. "Well," the boy said, "I didn't really grasp a whole lot but my teacher kept showing us pictures of Jesus and that helped me to understand that everything was pointing to Him." This is what we are going to study about in this series of messages. We are going to study about the Tabernacle and see that the pattern and primary emphasis of the tabernacle is to convey a picture of Jesus Christ. So in this study we want to promote Jesus Christ who is the only Savior of mankind and the personal Savior of our souls. We want to see the glories of Jesus Christ in the structure and design of the Tabernacle as I attempt to make this material preachable and teachable. It's important that we approach this tabernacle study simply, systematically, and scripturally.

## **The Points about the Tabernacle**

The Tabernacle was a moveable (portable) tent structure that God commanded Moses to build. It was called a "sanctuary" or consecrated place (Ex. 25:8) because it was set part for a holy God to use for His holy purposes and plans. It was to be a holy place and the same should be true of the Church today. The Church is to be God's sanctuary where His glory and holiness is honored and vindicated. It just so happens that all of the jazz and jive music of this generation and world system does not create a sanctuary that God is pleased with. Of course, it was called "a tabernacle" (Ex. 25:9) for it was the dwelling place of God among His people. It was called a "tent" (Ex. 26:36) because it was designated as a temporary dwelling place of God. It was called the "the tabernacle of testimony" (Ex. 38:21) for the law (testimony of God's words) that He gave to Moses was kept in the Ark of the Covenant located in the holy of holies. It was also called "the tabernacle of the congregation" (Ex. 29:42) because it was where God met with His people. It was called "the tabernacle of witness" (Numb. 17:7-8) for the rods of the various

tribes were placed in the tabernacle to verify which tribe was chosen to represent God to the others. It was called the “tabernacle of the Lord” (1 Kings 2:28) for it was God’s own personal dwelling place that He owned and promoted as the place of worship. Dear friend, let me say today that God still wants to meet with mankind today. He wants to have a part in your life in particular. The Tabernacle was a place where God would meet His people and manifest His presence to the Jewish people (the Israelites). God wanted to have fellowship with His people and communicate with them.

When studying the tabernacle we see the steps the Lord laid out for a sinful people to approach a holy God. We see in typology or picture form the wonderful provision of salvation found in Jesus Christ. This is why I have entitled the study “Christ in the Tabernacle.” *The Tabernacle is God’s picture of Christ.* In this study we are going to see how Christ and His saving provision for lost humanity are presented in the Old Testament teachings which are related to the construction and sacrificial system of the Tabernacle. Philip once asked, “Sir, we would see Jesus” (John 12:21). May this be true in our study of the Tabernacle! May we see Jesus in all of His saving wonder and splendor! May we see His love, compassion, and grace for lost sinners like you and me and never lose sight of the price He paid and the sacrifice He made.

The tabernacle structure was built in approximately 1440 B.C. and became the place where God dwelt with His people for 400 years. It was used from the time of the Exodus from Egypt until the time of King Solomon, when the permanent structure of the temple was built. Fifty chapters of the Bible are devoted to the construction and ministry of the Tabernacle so this is a very important topic and subject that we are studying. The Tabernacle was the center of the Israelite camp and worship. The 12 tribes of Israel camped around the Tabernacle in a special arrangement.

Numbers 2:1-2

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”

The tribes of Israel were commanded to pitch their tents in the area around the tabernacle, three tribes on each side. This camp that revolved around the Tabernacle signified that God and His sacrificial system was the center of their life and worship. My friend, is Christ the center of our lives today and worship? Do we revolve our lives around Him? Do our lives revolve around His passion and purpose for our lives today? Have we lost sight of the centrality of Christ? Have we lost the wonder of it all? Are we focusing on Him and the One who loved us and gave Himself for us (Gal. 2:20)? Paul said that "For to me to live is Christ" (Philip. 1:21). Everything was about Christ. Paul loved Christ, lived for Christ, and longed for Christ's fellowship (Phil. 3:10). Dear friend, what does Jesus Christ mean to you today? Is He just another man to you or is He the God-man who is your Savior, Lover, and Friend?

"All that thrills my soul is Jesus,  
He is more than life to me.  
And the fairest of ten thousand.  
In my blessed Lord I see."

### The Plans of the Tabernacle

Hebrews 8:4-5

"For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

This verse teaches that Moses erected the tabernacle, which was the prototype of the temple, under the strict divine direction of God ("make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee"). God gave Moses the blueprints for the tabernacle structure on Mount Sinai. God gave Moses a definite blueprint to follow for this structure. He could not cut corners or try and change the layout in any way. When God tells you to do something you had better follow His plans. By the way, if you want to get to Heaven you must follow the blueprint that God has given! And the blueprint is this. You can only fellowship with God

and go to Heaven through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). This is the message of Christ in the tabernacle.

Exodus 25:8-9 says:

“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”

Moses in the mount was instructed to follow the exact design that God gave to Him (“even so shall ye make it”) in order to properly portray God’s message to the people and to future generations, like you and me, who can look back and see the wonderful typology of Christ in this construction and sacrifices of the Tabernacle. You will note that God wanted to fellowship with the people and this is why He gave them the tabernacle (Ex. 25:22).

Please note that it’s God who takes the initiative to reach out to mankind in desiring man’s fellowship. This is the wonder of the ages! It’s the wonder of eternity! God wants to tabernacle among men (Rev. 21:3 – “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men”). God is interested in man’s fellowship and salvation. Dear friend, this helps us to see that God loves mankind (John 3:16) and wants to bring lost mankind into a right relationship with Him through Christ. Furthermore, this tells us that it’s God who seeks out man’s fellowship and salvation (Gen. 3:8-9; Luke 19:10).

“He was seeking for me, seeking for me!  
Though I knew Him not, still He loved me,  
Though I sought Him not, still He sought me  
He was seeking for me!”

God always makes the first move when it comes to man’s salvation (Gen. 3:9 – “Where art thou?”). God was interested in the eternal souls of men and created a way to bring salvation to their souls.

Galatians 4:4 says:

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”

Dear friend, it's God who takes the initiative to bring redemption to mankind. God had promised this redemptive plan about a Redeemer over 4,000 years ago (Gen. 3:15). It is God who makes the first move to save sinners and this is why Romans 5:8 says, "While we were ye sinners, Christ died for us." The Tabernacle was another reminder of the initiative God took in saving mankind. God moved to save man and if God had not moved man would be hopelessly lost and everlastingly condemned to an eternal hell.

### The Place of the Tabernacle

The place where the plans of the tabernacle were revealed to Moses was Mount Sinai. Hebrews 8:5 once again reveals that Moses was instructed to "make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." Of course, this was Mount Sinai, the mount upon which the law was given (Ex. 24:12).

#### Exodus 24:15-18

"And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights."

The Bible teaches that God gave Moses the plans for the tabernacle in the mountain. Let us draw some practical application from this for our lives today. Moses went up into the mountain with God and there He met with God (Ex. 24:18). In fact, God called him: "Come up to me into the mount..." (Ex. 24:12). Dear friend, there comes a time when we must meet with God and draw close to Him (James 4:8). Jesus went into a mountain to pray.

#### Luke 6:12

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

We all need to go into the mountain and seek God's face. Many of us today are too busy to go into the mountain and talk with God. Our lives are so far from God that we need to take time to walk up into the mountain and address God in prayer, devotion, and fellowship once again. We need mountaintop experiences with God today so God can get a hold of our hearts and change our lives forever. Moses was alone with God. To be shut up alone with God would transform any life. We need to get on the mountaintop with God once again and receive a message from Him that He wants to deliver to our hearts.

While Moses was on the mountain he fasted (Ex. 34:28), he feasted on God's Word (Ex. 34:28 – "the words of the covenant, the ten commandments") and he faced God (Ex. 33:9-11). Moses had an encounter with God that would change his life. God would reveal Himself to Moses and make a profound impression upon his life (Ex. 33:18-23). Dear friend, may it be true in our lives today. May we see the greatness of God's glory and power once again. May we see Him in all of His fullness, holiness, and splendor. When we do our lives will be changed on the mountaintop and when we come down off the mountain others will know that we have been with God (Ex. 34:29-30). Do others notice that you walk with God and commune with Him on a daily basis? Can others see God working through your life?

### The Preparation for the Tabernacle

Exodus 25:1 reads: "And the Lord spake unto Moses..." Now when God speaks we had better listen. We should catch every word that He says and get what He is telling us. God was about to reveal to Moses what he needed to do in order to prepare for the building of the Tabernacle. Moses was instructed to communicate His plans to the people and then the people were to respond and help prepare the Tabernacle structure. There are three points of interest connected to the preparation phase of the Tabernacle.

#### 1. The Person (Ex. 25:2a).

Exodus 25:2

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering ..."

Let us never lose sight that what we give we are giving to God. He is the person we are giving to. It's all about God!! We need to be reminded that we give to the Lord and not necessarily to the church. Although God expects us to funnel our money through the local church in a systematic way (1 Cor. 16:2) we are actually giving to God when we give to the local church ministry. Friend, giving should be an act of worship to God. We are giving to the One who has created us, who gives us life, and who saves us. We are giving to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! We are giving to the Sovereign and Sustainer of the universe. We are bringing God an offering. By the way, what kind of offering did you give to the King this week?

2. The people (Ex. 25:2b).

“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.”

This is God's plan for God's work. People are to bring an offering in order to build up the work of God. God did not tell us to raise money through manipulative methods and programs. He did not tell us to send our money into a televangelist in order to get a three-hundred fold return. God says that every person is to give “willingly with his heart.” By the way, this is the only way to give. If you can't give it willingly and from your heart then keep your money! God does not need it anyway. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills!

2 Corinthians 9:7

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

Dear friend, have you learned the secret of giving with an overflowing heart of gratitude and appreciation for the word of God and work of God? Do you know the joy of giving without expecting anything in return? Do you know the fulfillment of being part of the work of God? What a joy it is to give to God's work willingly, lovingly, graciously, and sacrificially. God wants us to be good stewards today and His overall plan for giving has not changed. Give with a willing heart. When you have heart trouble, you will not give, but when your heart is

right, then you will give willingly to God's House and work with overflowing gratitude and joy.

Exodus 36:1-2

"Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded. And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it."

Did you catch what the Bible said? People wanted to be involved in the work of God because their hearts were stirred to do God's work ("every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it"). When a person has a heart for God, His Word, and His work then you will not have to toot trumpets, have rock concerts, bake sales, and other pragmatic programs that are designed to get people serving God in the church. We don't need our pumps primed in order to give when we are truly in love with God and His work. We will just give! Dear friend, let your heart do the giving and when your heart is right, then your giving will be right.

3. The problem (Ex. 36:3-7).

"And they received of Moses all the offering, which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning. And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made. And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much."

Moses faced a unique problem when building the tabernacle. It's a problem that every preacher could only dream of having. The



problem was this. The people gave too much. They gave “too much” (vs. 7). Now let me tell something else about giving. When a person realizes that God has delivered them from an eternal Lake of Fire and from the depths of depravity and sin they won’t give to God’s work in a stingy way. They will give with generosity and gratefulness. When they are touched by the grace and mercy of God and are singing the song of the soul set free we will give like a soul set free! We will place our money in the offering and say, “Glory hallelujah, Christ has set me free.”

### The Purpose of the Tabernacle

When studying all the related texts on the Tabernacle one can conclude that God had some specific purposes related to the Tabernacle structure. This is what we want to study about in this particular point.

God had a four-fold purpose for constructing the Tabernacle:

1. To commune with His people.

Exodus 25:8

“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”

Exodus 25:22

“And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

Exodus 29:42-45

“This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.”

The Tabernacle was a tent where God met with His appointed priestly leaders who represented the people. It was not a place where the entire people of Israel gathered for group worship. However, the teaching behind the Tabernacle was that God was willing to make contact and commune with His people. God built a house of worship to demonstrate that He wanted to fellowship and commune with His people and interact with their lives. He wanted His people to know that He was not some kind of distant God way out in the celestial heavens that had no interest in their lives. The Bible says that “The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys” (Ex. 40:38). The Shekinah glory cloud represented God’s presence and was a continual reminder that God wanted to dwell among His people and fellowship with them.

The Tabernacle served as a visual reminder of God’s intent and desire to commune with His people. The same is true today with the Church. God wants to commune with His New Testament people. We are to have “fellowship one with another” (1 John 1:7). The difference today is that God tabernacles within us because our bodies are the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). The tabernacle was a portable structure and today we also have a portable place of worship where God resides and communes with us. God lives within us and His presence is made real when we separate from sin and all uncleanness.

2 Corinthians 6:16

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Dear friend, there is a joy that comes into our lives when we fellowship with God! There is a true satisfaction and complete fulfillment we possess when walking close to God. Close to God! Experiencing God’s tabernacle in our own lives is the greatest blessing we could ever have in life.

“Thou my everlasting portion,  
More than friend of life to me;  
All along my pilgrim journey,  
Saviour, let me walk with Thee.  
Close to Thee, Close to Thee,  
Close to Thee, Close to Thee,  
Gladly will I toil and suffer,  
Only let me walk with Thee.”

2. To communicate God’s character to His people.

Another purpose of the Tabernacle was to instruct the Israelites concerning God’s absolute holy character and their total sinfulness before God. God had already revealed to His people the importance of His holy character.

Leviticus 11:44-45

“For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”

The holiness of God and the sinfulness of man contrast sharply with each other. God’s holiness and man’s sinfulness are extreme opposites. In the Holy of Holies God was shut in so sinful man could not get to Him. Man could not approach God but one way and that was through the only prescribed way of blood sacrifice. No exceptions were tolerated. The way to be accepted before the presence of a holy God was through blood sacrifice. Man could not just barge into the presence of a holy God. This is because God is absolutely holy. The Tabernacle structure conveyed this teaching to the people. It pointed to the truth that God was holy and could only be approached when His holiness was vindicated and honored. Think of it this way. For man to enter God’s presence with sin would contaminate God’s holiness, but man was allowed to approach God on the basis of the blood sacrifice, for it was the blood that covered the sins of the people and allowed God to maintain His high standard of righteousness and holiness.

### 3. To cleanse His people.

The tabernacle was constructed to provide a sacrificial system that would provide a *ritual* cleansing and *temporary* covering (atonement) for the sins of the people. There were personal atoning sacrifices that were given by the people.

Leviticus 1:2-4

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.”

This section of God’s Word presents the sacrificial regulations from the viewpoint of the people offering them. The key word is “atonement” (kaphar - “to cover”) which means that the sins of the Old Testament saints and believers were temporarily covered through the blood sacrifices of animals. The concept of atonement means that God would pardon and purge the people of their sins in a temporary way and pass over their sins (Ex. 12:13) prior to the cross of Christ. Atonement through animal sacrifices could not actually remove or take away the sins of the people since the sacrificial death of animals has no saving value.

Hebrews 10:4

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

The simple truth is this. Old Testament saints were forgiven *ceremonially* but not *judicially* until the actual forgiveness was secured. This occurred when Jesus took their sins away and released them from God’s righteous wrath and judgment (Rom. 3:25-26; Heb. 9:15). The Tabernacle atoning sacrifices were God’s way to teach about cleansing from sin through blood sacrifice. It was all a panoramic picture of the cleansing that would one day become available through the sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus Christ.

There were also annual atoning sacrifices given by the High Priest for the nation as a whole. One a year the High Priest would enter the holy of holies in order to make a blood sacrifice for the people.

Leviticus 16:34 says:

“And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the Lord commanded Moses.”

The point is this. The sacrificial program of atonement instituted in the Tabernacle worship would enable the people to approach God and commune with Him. We know that the Tabernacle made God accessible or approachable to the Israelites but God could only be approached in holiness. Therefore, a sacrificial system was devised so unholy people could be cleansed of sin and fellowship with a holy God. The tabernacle showed to the people how a sinful man could come before a holy God and worship Him. How can a person get to Heaven? How can a man stand in the presence of God? How can a sinner stand uncondemned before God? The answer is shown in picture form in the Tabernacle. The ministry performed within the Tabernacle structure provides the answer and shows the way. The use of the sacrifice in the worship of the tabernacle was a constant reminder of man’s sinfulness, God’s holiness, and the need for cleansing through a blood sacrifice.

Leviticus 16:30 says:

“For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.”

According to Leviticus 16:30 the sins of all Old Testament saints were covered and the person was *ceremonially* cleansed.

We must remember that Hebrews 10:1-18 compares the benefits of salvation enjoyed by Old Testament saints before Calvary with the benefits we enjoy today as New Testament saints. OT saints had year-by-year sacrifices (vs. 1) which could not make worshippers “perfect” (to accomplish a goal or purpose – the purpose of complete forgiveness before God). The purpose these sacrifices could not accomplish is stated in vs. 2 and includes: (a) a once-for-all purging and (b) no more conscience [or consciousness] of their sins.

Throughout the Old Testament era there was a remembrance made of sins every year (vs. 3). This “remembrance” is important. Old Testament believers knew their past sins were covered and cleansed but they also knew they couldn't be sinless during the next 12 months and so another annual atoning sacrifice would be necessary to cover their sins for another year. This is because the Law only provided *ceremonial* and *typical* forgiveness through the system of “atonement” or temporary covering. It did not provide complete and eternal forgiveness or judicial pardon in God’s sight since Christ had not yet actually died on the cross.

The whole system of a yearly Day of Atonement and addressing sin on a yearly basis caused all the Old Testament saints to realize that the animal sacrifices were incomplete or insufficient and could not take away sins (Heb. 10:4). They were only a temporary system of covering awaiting a grandeur sacrifice and a glorious day when all their sins would be erased and wiped away due to Christ’s sacrificial death (Heb. 9:13-14; 10:11-14).

“Not all the blood of beasts  
On Jewish altars slain  
Could give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or wash away our stain.  
But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
Takes all our sins away;  
A sacrifice of nobler name,  
And richer blood, than they.”

Hebrews 9:11-12

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

This verse is actually teaching this. Because Christ shed His blood upon the cross (“his own blood”), He entered Heaven on our behalf to represent the efficacy (saving value) of His blood sacrifice before the Father, since he already obtained redemption for us (“having obtained eternal redemption for us”). The Bible clearly states that

Christ offered one sacrifice for sins upon the cross – not in Heaven (Heb. 10:12). There is no resacrifice in Heaven as the Roman Catholic Mass teaches. Christ’s blood was never shed in Heaven nor is it reoffered to God in Heaven. Christ’s blood was shed upon the cross (Col. 1:20 – “the blood of his cross”) and when His blood was shed upon the cross it was offered up to God as a “sweetsmelling savour” (Eph. 5:2). In God’s presence within Heaven there is no need for a repeated sacrifice and reoffering of Christ’s blood since the very One who was sacrificed is already there!

The presence of Christ in Heaven fully conveys the truth about His literal death and shedding of blood (Heb. 7:25; 9:24). The point is this. Christ’s offering for sin took place upon the cross and this sacrifice and shed blood is represented in Heaven by the presence of Jesus Christ Himself. Therefore, the Scripture is saying In Hebrews 9:12 that Christ’s blood is *represented* in heaven as the ground of our acceptance before the Father. The fact that Christ is in Heaven today as the mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), with the nail prints in His hands (Zech. 13:6), would be sufficient evidence that His shed blood avails for your eternal redemption and mine.

Leon Morris aptly remarks:

“While the sacrifice Christ offered took place on a physical cross on a definite day in a definite land on the physical earth, the essence of that sacrifice was that it was effective in the presence of God.”

The merits of His blood have been made known in the presence of God through the person of Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ was not offered in Heaven; it is represented in Heaven as the ground of our salvation and justification before God (Rom. 5:9). The offering and shedding of Christ’s blood took place on earth upon the cross of Cavalry whereas the representing of His blood takes place in Heaven through Christ’s risen life (Rom. 5:10; 7:25). This is the message of Hebrews.

“And now for me He stands,  
Before the Father’s throne.

He shows His wounded hands and names me as His own.

For me, He died, For me He lives,  
And everlasting life and light He freely gives.”

Hebrews 10:12 says:

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

The fact that Christ sat down in the presence of God indicates that His work was finished. *It's interesting that there was no chair in the earthly Tabernacle structure.* Why? It's because the work of the earthly priests were never finished. They had to continually offer sacrifices to cover the sins of the people. But the work of Jesus Christ was finished. This is why He sat down. Hebrews 9:28 says: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many...” Afterward He said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Dear friend, I believe in the finished work of Christ! Jesus Christ paid for the penalty of my sin in full when He was sacrificed in my place on the cross. He was sacrificed once, paid the penalty once, was raised from the grave once, and then sat down in the presence of God indicating that His saving work for our lives was finished. In short, the blood of Jesus Christ is the way every man is cleansed from sin and pardoned before God (1 John 1:7).

Horatius Bonar wrote:

“No blood, no altar now,  
The sacrifice is o'er!  
No flame, no smoke ascends on high,  
The lamb is slain no more.  
But richer blood has flowed  
From nobler veins  
To purge the soul from guilt  
And cleanse the reddest stains.”

Yes, “How much more shall the blood of Christ” (Heb. 9:14). In the Old Testament God chose to forgive sin on a yearly basis and this forgiveness was based on a temporary program of covering or atonement through animal sacrifices. The Old Testament believers were grateful for this covering of their sins and experienced forgiveness for their sins through God's temporary atoning program. But their actual judicial forgiveness and salvation before God was based upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ that would one day grant them judicial pardon in God's sight (Hebrews 9:15; 12:23; Romans 3:25-26). The *ritual* cleansing of the Tabernacle was but a faint



picture of the *actual* judicial cleansing that would come through Jesus Christ and His blood sacrifice. Because Jesus came and died on the cross we have the promise of complete cleansing from sin and that none of our sins will ever bring condemnation to us.

Hebrews 10:17

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

There is no more sacrifice for sins (Heb. 10:18) and because of this no more remembrance of sins (Heb. 10:17) under the New Covenant. This is because the shedding of Christ’s blood promises to take away our sins forever and the penalty that was associated with them. Dear friend, Christ will never call our sins back to His memory with a view to condemning the sinner. Why? It’s because He already paid the penalty for them in our place. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

“There is a green hill, far away,  
Without a city wall.  
Where the dear Lord was crucified,  
Who died to save us all.  
There was no other good enough,  
To pay the price of sin.  
He only could unlock the gate  
Of heaven to let us in.”

#### 4. To present Christ to His people.

Dr. A. J. Gordon, while preparing his Sunday sermon, was so tired that he fell asleep in his study. He dreamed that it was the next morning in the pulpit and the church was packed. A stranger walked in and a deacon let him have his seat. The stranger was so commanding yet attentive, and Gordon found himself as if speaking to him alone. He decided to meet this stranger after church.

As the congregation filed out one by one, the pastor (in his dream) looked in vain for the stranger until everyone was home. “Do you know him?” he asked the deacon. “Why, yes. He is Jesus Christ.” “Oh, how I wished I could have talked with him!” Gordon lamented. “It is alright, pastor,” assured the deacon, “He’ll be back next Sunday.” Gordon awoke, realizing in a new way that every time he preaches

and speaks about Christ that Christ is in the midst and hears every word. We must realize this today. We are speaking about Christ and Christ is interested in what we are going to say about Him.

The fourth purpose of the tabernacle was to present Christ or the coming Redeemer to the people of God. Although some dispensationalists seem to stress that the Jews had no realization of a coming Redeemer I would stress as a dispensationalist that they did. It was obviously passed down from generation to generation that there was a coming Redeemer through the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). The seed of the woman would one day bring forth a Messiah or Savior that could take away the sins of the people forever. Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, knew about the coming Redeemer.

John 8:56 says:

“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.”

Abraham had a clear revelation and understanding of the coming Redeemer and salvation through Christ. Jesus said that Abraham anticipated Christ’s day or coming into the world and His messianic salvation. Jesus was claiming that He fulfilled what Abraham looked forward to. Clearly Abraham did know that his seed, mainly Christ (Gal. 3:16), would become the channel of God’s blessing to the entire world.

God promised Abraham that all peoples on earth would be blessed through him (“in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” - Gen. 12:3). Abraham eventually understood this to mean that a coming Redeemer would emerge on the world scene to bring salvation to all people. How much of the messianic times God revealed to Abraham is unknown. But it is clear that Abraham knew of the coming Savior and salvation and he rejoiced in knowing about it and expecting it. Perhaps the reference to Abraham seeing “my day” (Christ’s messianic death and salvation) occurred when he offered his son Isaac on the altar (Gen. 22). When God ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son, he was thoroughly convinced that death would not have the last word, but that God, if necessary, would raise Isaac back to life (Heb. 11:17-19). Why? Because Abraham knew that Isaac was in the line of Messianic blessing that would bring the Savior into the world. *It*

*may be that God revealed to Abraham that the offering of his son Isaac upon the altar was a drama or picture of Messiah's death and resurrection.* Therefore, when Abraham offered his Son upon the altar he was reminded of the coming Savior and sacrifice that would come through Isaac's line.

God may have revealed this truth to Abraham and Abraham looked ahead in faith to the coming Redeemer. Then too, Abraham may have seen "my day" when he was given a revelation of Messiah's cross and salvation work in his visions of the stars (Gen. 15:1-6). One thing is for sure. Abraham knew about the coming Redeemer and Savior of mankind. Of course, if the father of the Jewish nation knew about the coming Redeemer, He would certainly pass this truth down to the future generations of Israelites. I'm convinced that the Jewish people knew about the coming seed and Savior and they understood that all the sacrifices upon the altar were but a faint picture of a grander and more glorious sacrifice and Savior to come that would one day save them and take away their sins forever.

When looking back upon the past centuries of Jewish brethren the writer of Hebrews states in Hebrews 11:13:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

This verse suggests that the people were given the promises of a great nation, a land, and a coming sacrificial seed through Isaac (vv. 8-12). All these promises were made to the people. They knew that they were recipients of these promises and the Bible says they "seen them afar off" by faith. The Old Testament saints never saw the fulfillment of these promises. However, through the eyes of faith they looked ahead to this coming day and joyful anticipation.

It's hard to deny that there was a messianic expectation taught during the Old Testament economy within the Hebrew Scriptures, a messianic salvation which included the Messiah's sacrificial death upon the cross (Psalm 16; 22; Isa. 53; Luke 24:27; I Pet. 1:10-12). The people were expecting a coming Messiah based upon the

Hebrew Scriptures (Matt. 11:3; Luke 2:25-26, 38; 3:15; John 1:19-28, 41; 4:25, 29, 42; Acts 10:43). No one can deny that there was an expectation of a Deliverer that dates from the days of Abraham to the time when the Messiah actually came into the world. There was a definite understanding that the Messiah was prophesied to be not only a political Savior (the kingdom) but a spiritual Savior (the cross). Those Jews who believed in the prophecies about the Messiah knew He also had to deliver the nation from their sins and become their Savior from sin's judgment.

The herald angel declared in Matthew 1:21

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

The people should have known about a coming Savior that would take away their sins for the centuries and millenniums of animal sacrifices had pointed to Christ and His future sacrifice. One thing is certain. The Tabernacle with its sacrificial system was a picture of Christ and His salvation work. What a beautiful picture it portrayed.

Louis Talbot said:

“Every part of this sanctuary has a finger pointing to Christ and a tongue to tell forth His glory.”

We will see at a later time that the Tabernacle with its construction and various offerings all pointed to Christ. The Tabernacle is all about Christ. There is an old tried and true saying that still illustrates the purpose of the Tabernacle, which was to reveal Christ. The saying goes like this:

“The New is in the Old concealed and the Old is in the New revealed.”

Hebrews chapter eight speaks of how Christ was the type and actual fulfillment of the Old Testament Tabernacle offerings. So let's try and grasp what the writer of Hebrews was saying in this chapter.

Hebrews 8:1 states:

“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”

This section of the epistle opens with a summary (“sum”). The word “sum” speaks of primary meaning, chief point, and key feature of the present discussion concerning Jesus Christ and His heavenly priestly ministry. The expression “the Majesty” speaks of God the Father’s presence which is represented in Heaven. He is greater than all the greatest and higher than all the highest! He is Majesty!

“Our God is far greater than words can make known,  
Exalted and holy, He reigns on His throne.”

Oswald Chambers said:

“God never tells us what he is going to do, he reveals who he is.”

Dear friend, the great and only God of creation and the universe is Majesty! He is greatness! He is full of splendor and magnificence beyond degree. Have you recently got a glimpse of the greatness and majesty of God? People ask me what it takes to change their lives. In all honesty it takes a new awareness of God’s majesty. When we see God we will change our lives and want to conform our lives to His character and ways. If we truly see God and know that God sees us we will change.

The little word “set” speaks of Christ’s finished work that allows Him to sit down in the Father’s presence. Jesus sat down! His work is forever finished! Poor little Aaron could never sit down. Christ did something which no priest in the Old Testament ever did. There was not a priest in the line of Aaron who ever had a chair in the tabernacle where he could sit down. He was on the run all the time. Why? It’s because he had work to do. His priestly ministry never ended since the blood sacrifices of bulls and goats could never take away sin (Heb. 1:3; 10:11-12). The priestly work could never satisfy God’s demands (Heb. 9:7-8). But Christ sat down indicating that His sacrifice on the cross was sufficient to take away the sins of the world and save a man forever and forever and forever (Heb. 11:17).

Hebrews 8:2 goes on to say:

“A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”

The word sanctuary literally means “the holy things” and refers to the holy places and furniture in the earthly tabernacle design, which the priests used for their service. What does the expression the “true tabernacle” which is in Heaven mean? The idea of the tabernacle is pointing to a specific place in the tabernacle. It points to the holy of holies since this is where the priestly service occurred (see Heb. 9:3 – “the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all”). The context tells us that the word “tabernacle” can refer to the specific place within the tabernacle where God manifested His presence, as is the case in Hebrews 8, since the priestly work is being considered.

Is the writer referring to a literal tabernacle or holy of holies in Heaven like the one that was built by man on earth? Is there a literal place in Heaven where Christ is doing priestly service today? To say that the heavenly dwelling place is an exact replica or structure of the Old Testament tabernacle seems to be more than the writer of Hebrews is saying in chapter eight as he describes Heaven’s tabernacle. To say that there is an exact replica of the earthly tabernacle in Heaven poses some problems. First, there can be no veil for the earthly veil was rent in two when Jesus died. Second, to say that there is a literal heavenly place where Christ sacrifices His blood goes against the whole argument of the book of Hebrews and the rest of the Bible, which states that Christ offered His blood on the cross – not in Heaven (Heb. 7:27; 10:11-14; 12:2; Gal. 3:13 Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20; 2:14).

It seems better to understand the terms “sanctuary” and “true tabernacle” of Heaven (Heb. 8:2) as a *representation of the priestly ministry of Christ in God’s presence*. The “sanctuary” (portrays Christ’s priestly service) and the “true tabernacle” (refers to the holy of holies of God’s presence). The total picture portrays the heavenly sphere where Christ’s service takes place. It’s not so much a place as it is a priestly service rendered in God’s presence. The sanctuary and true tabernacle is a metaphorical portrayal of Jesus’ priestly ministry in the presence of God for us! It refers to the heavenly dwelling place of God’s presence where Christ intercedes as our High Priest.

Romans 8:33-34

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

I believe in eternal security because of Christ's security! It's Christ who died for us, paying the penalty for our sins in full. He then rose again to continually make intercession for us in Heaven. This means that Christ maintains our standing of acceptance before God's presence on the basis of His risen life. He presents the value of His substitutionary sacrifice, which was made on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24; Rom. 4:25; Isa. 53:5), before the Father's presence, and names us as His own. Our salvation is sure because it's based upon Christ's work and not our own works in any way. The Father sees the work of Christ and that Christ paid the penalty for sins. This is the only thing that matters before the presence of God. We will never be judged or face the penalty for our sins. This is because Jesus Christ was judged in our place and intercedes in Heaven as our living High Priest declaring that the penalty was already and forever paid in full.

Hebrews 10:12

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

Jesus died for us and lives again at God's right hand to assure us that sin's penalty has been paid in full and that we are now accepted in God's presence. This is what the Old Testament Tabernacle was ultimately pointing to with all of its types, shadows, priests, and pictures. All the sacrifices and priests were pointing to a final sacrifice and priest that would one day come and provide eternal salvation and acceptance in God's presence for sinners. Hebrews 10:12 is a New Testament summary in capsule form of what Moses presented in the Tabernacle structure of the Old Testament.

Edith Cavell, the British nurse killed by Germans in World War I, was captured. Just before the bandage was placed over her eyes for the firing squad, she said: “I am glad to die for my country. But I realize that patriotism is not enough.” Then she gave clear and definite

testimony to her personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and assurance of salvation. She died under the firing squad in 1915.

As a Christian, do you have the assurance of your salvation? If not, will you look at Christ and nothing else? Christ died for you, paying the penalty for your sin, and He lives today as your High Priest, declaring to God the Father that He paid for the penalty of sin in full so that none of His children will ever pay for the penalty of their sins. The Tabernacle offerings and priests were but a faint shadow of the future and final work of Christ on our behalf. Dear friend, will you rest in Christ? If you will only trust in Him He will give you complete assurance. He died for you and He lives for you today declaring that your sins are forgiven forever and that no judgment will ever come upon your life. By the way, someday we are going to see the very One who loved us and who intercedes for in Heaven to maintain our standing of acceptance before God.

The hymnwriter Fanny Crosby gave us more than 8000 Gospel songs. Although blinded at the age of 6 weeks, she never held any bitterness in her heart because of it. Once a preacher sympathetically remarked, "I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when He showered so many other gifts upon you." She replied quickly, "Do you know that if at birth I had been able to make one petition, it would have been that I should be born blind?" "Why?" asked the surprised clergyman. "Because when I get to Heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior!"

The word "true" (Heb. 8:2) is used here as opposed to the temporary and typical tabernacle of the Old Testament days with its earthly priestly ministry. The comparison is between the typical and temporary tabernacle in the O.T. and the real and permanent tabernacle, which speaks of Christ's priestly work in God's presence. Christ is the real priest in the only real place where sin can be forgiven. In Heaven Christ represents the value of His sacrifice so that God sees our sins forgiven.

Hebrews 9:24

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."



We must once again understand that the tabernacle or holy of holies is compared to God's presence ("in the presence of God for us") and not so much to an actual building or edifice. The earthly Tabernacle is but a picture of the heavenly work of Christ on our behalf in Heaven ("figures of the true"). The figures or representations refer to the earthly tabernacle with its sanctuary and all of its furniture, articles, and sacrifices. But the true one is in Heaven and is best understood as being fulfilled in Christ who dwells in the inner sanctuary or shrine of God's presence acting as our priest. The true tabernacle is not a building or furniture but a living person (Jesus Christ) who is represented in His work or role, as High Priest, in the very presence of God – the true holy of holies or Tabernacle of Heaven.

Hebrews 8:2 then reveals that this is the true tabernacle that "the Lord pitched." This means that God was the architect that constructed the heavenly pattern (Christ as the High Priest in His holy presence) whereas the earthly tabernacle was constructed by man with animal skins. Man had nothing to do with the heavenly design ("not made with hands" – Heb. 9:11). Man had nothing to do with the saving plan of God! The metaphor of pitching speaks of the fastening of tent pegs. But the point is this. The work of Christ and His heavenly ministry in God's presence is the true tabernacle that God designed and it's this saving work, or sovereign design and arrangement of God, which brings the believer into God's presence. Salvation is of the LORD (Jonah 2:9). My friend, if God had not created this true tabernacle, or the plan of salvation, we would not have a chance to be saved. We would all be doomed to Hell. Praise the Lord. God pitched the tent! He loved us and was willing to give the life of His Son for us.

"Tell me the old, old Story,  
Tell me the old, old Story,  
Tell me the old, old Story  
Of Jesus and His love."

The Hebrew readers knew that there was a real temple with its holy of holies in Jerusalem since this epistle was written prior to the AD 70 judgment. They also knew that in the temple there were priests offering gifts and sacrifices. How easy it would be to go back into the traditional Mosaic system. But there was no need to do this since

God's tabernacle was pitched in Heaven, which is a metaphorical portrayal of Jesus' priestly ministry in the presence of God for us! God's presence is represented as the holy of holies in Heaven!

Hebrews 8:3 says:

"For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer."

The earthly priests had both gifts (referring to the thank offerings) and sacrifices (referring to the required sacrifices for sin), then it must be equally true that Christ also had an offering for sin. It was the chief function of priests to make offerings (Heb. 5:1). Therefore, Christ needed to make an offering for sin. And this is exactly what Christ did when He died on the cross of Calvary. The word "somewhat" in Hebrews 8:3 is in the singular, and the phrase "to offer" is in a Greek tense that implies "offer once and for all" (see Heb. 10:14 – "one offering"). On the cross, He offered Himself as the one sacrifice for sin forever ("thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" – Isa. 53:10). In other words, our Lord is "a living sacrifice" in Heaven. He is not offering Himself over and over again since this is unnecessary. It is actually blasphemous to say that Christ reoffers His sacrifice as the Roman Catholic Mass assumes.

According to Catholic doctrine, the mass is a re-sacrifice of Christ in which the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ when it is blessed by the Catholic priest. The authoritative Vatican II Council of the mid-1960s stated: "The Mass, the Lord's Supper, is ... a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated. ... In this sacrament Christ is present in a unique way, whole and entire, God and man, substantially and permanently."

The Roman Catholic Church, with its repeated sacrifices of Christ, denies the one time sacrifice of Christ and the eternal sufficiency of Christ's salvation. The sacrifice of Christ was a once for all event (Heb. 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10,12,14). When Christ died on the Cross, He said, "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30). This means His sacrifice can never reoccur again in some kind of wafer or wine. Never! Christ's sacrifice cannot reappear again in Heaven or on earth or anywhere. Why? It's because the work of Jesus Christ is finished.

Lifted up was He to die,  
“It is finished,” was His cry;  
Now in heav’n exalted high,  
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

The author of Hebrews has already stated that Christ offered Himself as a gift one time.

Hebrews 7:27 says:

“Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”

The author is conveying the truth that Christ offered Himself or His own blood sacrifice up to God when He died on the cross. Let us remember that the blood of Christ was shed and displayed on the cross (Col. 1:20 – “the blood of the cross”). Christ offered Himself upon the cross as the sacrificial Lamb that would pay for the penalty of the sins of mankind and bring a person into a right relationship with God. This is something the Old Testament sacrifices and priestly ministry could never do (Heb. 9:7-9 – “sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience”). Animal sacrifices and earthly priests could never take a person into the presence of God and give them an eternal standing of righteousness and acceptance before an infinitely holy God. It would take the sacrifice of a perfect man, the God-man, Jesus Christ the righteous, to bring a person into the presence of God and give them acquittal, forgiveness, and a right standing before God (1 John 2:1-2).

A pastor tells of an old Christian woman whose age began to tell on her memory. She had once known much of the Bible by heart. Eventually only one precious bit stayed with her. “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I committed unto him against that day.” By and by part of that slipped its hold, and she would quietly repeat, “That which I have committed unto him.” At last, as she hovered on the borderline between this and the spirit world, her loved ones noticed her lips moving. They bent down to see if she needed anything. She was repeating over and over again to herself the one word of the text, “Him, Him, Him.” She

had lost the whole Bible, but one word. But she had the whole Bible in that one word.

Hebrews 9:12 explains the work of Christ in this way:

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood (as a result of shedding His own blood on the cross) he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

Jesus offered His own life and blood up to God when He died upon the cross (Eph. 5:2; Isa. 53:10). We have already concluded that this verse in Hebrews 9:12 is teaching the important truth that Jesus entered Heaven as a result of His saving death upon the cross (“having obtained eternal redemption for us”), where He shed His blood, in order to present His finished work to the Father. The epistle of Hebrews states that Christ offered His blood up to God while He was on the cross through His one time sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:14). Dear friend, it is actually the resurrected and living Christ in Heaven (Heb. 7:27 - “he ever lives to make intercession for us”) which settles the question that our sins have been forgiven and that God now accepts us in Heaven on the basis of His blood (Rom. 5:9). The reoffering of Christ’s blood sacrifice is the blasphemy of the Roman Catholic Church. Jesus offered His one sacrifice for sins forever upon the cross (Heb. 10:12). Afterward He rose again and ascended to Heaven as the living Christ to *represent* (not reoffer) the value of His sacrifice by His very own presence. In other words, since Christ died on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended into God’s presence, He can now *represent* His finished work before the Father and assure us that God the Father accepts His payment for the penalty of our sins.

Hebrews 8:4

“For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.”

The author’s point is that another Levitical priest on earth was not needed. We don’t need any priest today! They had enough earthly priests who could offer sacrifices according to the Mosaic Law. But these sacrifices could not take away sin (Heb. 10:4). This is why no more earthly priest was needed after Christ died on the cross and took care of the sin question (Heb. 10:18). In fact, Jesus would not

qualify to be an earthly priest according to the earthly order of Aaron. This is because Jesus was after the order of Melchisedek (Heb. 7:17). Of course, this means that Jesus is part of God's new heavenly order. Since Messiah was not a priest in the order of Aaron, He could not officiate on earth, for the Levitical order of priesthood was established by the Mosaic Law. Instead, Christ would be a heavenly priest that would officiate in Heaven at God's right hand (Heb. 1:3). Let me repeat something. Jesus could not be a priest on earth. Since this is true, He must be a high Priest in heaven with a different work or sanctuary. And this is what the epistle of Hebrews reveals. *Christ is in Heaven, as the true tabernacle, representing the value of His saving sacrifice, and satisfying the penalty of a broken law in the presence of God.* This is because Jesus paid the price that God required to forgive sins or remove them from a person's record forever (Heb. 10:17). Dear friend, do you have your sin record cleared in the courts of Heaven? If you have trusted Christ as your Savior the record of your sin is cleared forever before God. This means you will never have to face the penalty for your sins. Why? It's best explained in this way:

“All my iniquities on him were laid.  
He nailed them all to the tree.  
Jesus the debt of my sin fully paid.  
He paid the ransom for me.”

Hebrews 8:5 goes on to say:

“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.”

This verse clearly tells us that the earthly Tabernacle was indeed a picture or type of Christ. Verse 5 sets forth three words that demonstrate the relation between the earthly tabernacle and heavenly tabernacle (Christ's priestly ministry in the presence of God). Let's examine the three words that link Christ to the Tabernacle.

### *Example*

First, the earthly tabernacle is called an example which mean a figure, copy, or imitation of the true Tabernacle in Heaven. In other words, the earthly Tabernacle was only a copy of the true Tabernacle which was represented in the heavenly work of Christ in God's presence. This word is used once again to express the relationship of the tabernacle furniture to the heavenly elements being conveyed (see Heb. 9:23 – "patterns of things in the heavens"). The earthly Tabernacle was an imitation of the heavenly. It was a figure or copy of the true tabernacle in Heaven which represents the work of Jesus Christ in God's presence. A person can eat imitation mashed potatoes out of a box or imitation eggs that have no yokes. Well, the earthly Tabernacle was an imitation of the true Tabernacle. It certain served its purpose but it was not as good and appealing as the true Tabernacle of Glory.

### *Shadow*

Second, the earthly Tabernacle is a shadow. *A shadow requires the existence of the real thing.* In God's mind the heavenly tabernacle has existed as long as its shadow - the earthly tabernacle. The Levitical priesthood with its Mosaic ritual is a shadow, but the reality is found in Christ's sacrifice on the cross and His priestly work in Heaven (Col. 2:17 – "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ"). The portrait of the tabernacle was a "shadow of heavenly things" which means it portrayed the priestly work of Christ in Heaven on our behalf, as He represents us in the presence of a holy God, assuring us that He paid for the penalty of sin in full and that God is now satisfied with His sacrifice.

Christ's presence in Heaven assures us that God has accepted the finished work of Christ on the cross. The resurrected Christ in Heaven *confirms* our justification or legal standing in God's sight (Rom. 4:25 – "raised for our justification"). Dear friend, we must no longer fear the penalty that was related to our sins, which was hell and damnation forever apart from God's presence. As our heavenly High Priest we can be assured that Christ paid the penalty for our sins on the cross and we no longer will have to face them in judgment. His priestly presence in Heaven reminds us of His sacrifice on the cross and the

complete and eternal forgiveness we have through Jesus Christ. Since Christ died on the tree and already paid the penalty for our sins God no longer holds our sins against us. How wonderful and liberating!

“The old account was large, Grew larger every day,  
For I was always sinning, and never could repay.  
But when I looked ahead, And saw such pain and woe;  
I said that I would settle, And settle long ago.

Long ago, Down on my knees, Long ago,  
Yes, the old account was settled long ago;  
And the record’s clear today, for He washed my sins away,  
When the old account was settled long ago.”

Today Christ is in Heaven representing the fact that He has already died on the cross, rose again, and paid the penalty of our sins in full. His presence in Heaven reminds us that His work is completed and final. In the book of Hebrews we find that Christ was the fulfillment of the typology of the Tabernacle which was but a “shadow” (Heb. 8:5; 10:1) and picture of the saving work of Jesus Christ. In Heaven Jesus presents the efficacy (saving value) of His own sacrifice which avails for every blood-bought believer (Heb. 7:25). We don’t live in the shadows any longer but in the reality of what those shadows pointed to – Christ and His saving work.

### *Pattern*

The third word related to the earthly Tabernacle is the word pattern (Gk. tupos – stamp, imprint, or model). We get our word type from this word. At this point, there needs to be a word of warning about types. If a person wants to understand true Biblical types they should follow one primary guideline. Every type should be confirmed in Scripture as a type. Extremists often over-spiritualize the Word of God to such an extent that they distort the true and plain meaning of a Biblical text. Their imaginations find types all over the Bible which are in no way intended to represent types. They emphasize numbers, colors, objects, and give their speculative conclusions about what they represent when the Bible gives no indication of their meaning. Without a doubt, the Tabernacle is the clearest type written about in

Scripture. There can be no question that God intended the construction and offerings of the Tabernacle to represent Christ in some magnificent way.

The Biblical writers used various words to express a type (1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Heb. 9:24; 1 Pet. 3:21; 2 Pet. 2:6; Heb. 4:11; 9:9; 11:19; Co. 2:17. Heb. 8:5; 10:11). However, they always express the idea of some likeness between two events, objects, or persons. The type (shadow) is always found in the Old Testament and is the preordained shadow of the antitype (real object). The antitype is found in the New Testament and is the reality or fulfillment of what the type prefigured.

This reminds us that the heavenly Tabernacle provided the stamp or imprint (model) from which the earthly Tabernacle came. The pattern, which was given at Mt. Sinai, was to be followed by Moses when he built the tabernacle (Ex. 8:5; 25:40; 26:30; Numb. 8:4). And the pattern (model) that he was following was patterned after the true tabernacle, spoken of in the Book of Hebrews, which was the picture of Christ's priestly work in the presence of God. *The typology of the Tabernacle not only found fulfillment in Christ's sacrifice but in His priestly ministry in Heaven.* Today we see the reality in the fulfillment of Christ's priestly work in Heaven, which was but a shadow or type throughout the Old Testament Tabernacle and the priests who represented the people before God. The point is this. If one sees only the shadow, their understanding of the reality or the object, will be limited. Dear friend, we must see Christ today as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament sacrificial system and more specifically His priestly work in Heaven today as our High Priest. Christ is our High Priest today who represents us before the Father's presence so that we must never fear being judged for our sins and fear God's wrath or condemnation. Christ was judged in our place (Gal. 3:13) and now represents us in Heaven as the very One who satisfies God's wrath and holiness on our behalf. Dear friend, we could never be accepted in God's presence without our High Priest.

As far as Christ and His ministry is concerned He was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) which would mean that God had the blueprints finished long before He got to Moses on the Mount. God's plans for Christ and salvation were in His mind long



before Moses received the blueprints that would in type form illustrate God's redemptive plan. Today the price of lambs varies from season to season and farmers listen to the radio and other farm reports to learn the current price of lambs. But my friend, there is a Lamb in Heaven whose price never changes. The Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) remains priceless and His value never changes. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18).

There is great value in the sacrificial death and shedding of Christ's blood. The blood will never lose its power! There is an old legend of Martin Luther that goes like this. During a serious illness, the Evil One entered his sickroom and, looking at him with a triumphant smile, unrolled a big scroll which he carried in his arms. As the fiend threw one end of it on the floor, it unwound by itself. Luther's eyes read the long, fearful record of his own sins on the scroll, one by one. That stout heart quailed before the ghastly roll. Suddenly it flashed into Luther's mind that there was one thing not written there. He cried aloud: "One thing you have forgotten. The rest is all true, but one thing you have forgotten: The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). And as he said this, the Accuser of the Brethren and his heavy roll disappeared.

Hebrews 8:6

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

A better covenant with better promises implies that the previous covenant of animal sacrifices and earthly priests was inadequate (Heb. 8:7; 10:4). The Old Covenant was nothing more than a brief set up that would give way to something far better, which was the New Covenant and Christ's sacrifice and priestly ministry on our behalf in the presence of God (Heb. 7:25). *Jesus and His ministry in God's presence is the true sanctuary or tabernacle in Heaven.* He died once, shedding His blood on the cross once, and He lives today in the presence of God forever to represent the saving value of His sacrifice before God, as the only sacrifice that could pay for the penalty of mankind's sins. This is the better covenant and better sacrifice! There is no other sacrifice that can save us. In short, I'm

saved today because Christ died on the cross, paid the penalty for my sin, and now is risen again to represent His sacrifice in Heaven on my behalf. No one can deny me of the sufficiency of Christ's death and the assurance of eternal salvation that I have through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The penalty of judgment for every sin that you have ever committed or will commit has been removed through the death of Christ. He died for every sin paying the penalty and judgment for that sin and lives today as our High Priest to tell the never-ending story of a finished and eternal salvation. This is why I can trust fully, finally, and forever in Jesus Christ.

“Sing, O sing of my redeemer!  
With His blood He purchased me;  
On the cross He sealed my pardon,  
Paid the debt and made me free.”

She was only a tiny girl, unused to traveling, and it happened that in the course of the day, her train crossed two branches of a river and several wide streams. The water awakened doubts and fears in the child. She did not understand how it could be safe to cross. As they drew near to the river she saw a bridge across a body of water. Two or three times the same thing happened: finally, the child leaned back and relaxed. She said: “Somebody has put bridges for us all the way!” Dear friend, today in our study we are going to see that God has built a bridge from earth to Heaven and we must get on that bridge if we are going to ever get to Heaven.

### The Particulars of the Tabernacle

Now that we have seen how the Tabernacle was designed to present Christ in typical fashion we can begin to study the particular details of the Tabernacle and see how beautifully it reflects Christ and His salvation. In the details or particulars of the Tabernacle we see portraits of Christ and His redemptive work for mankind. John 1:14 seems to draw a parallel between the Tabernacle and Christ when it says: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” The Greek word translated “dwelt” in this verse literally means “tabernacled.” The fact that Christ tabernacled among men is a direct parallel to the purpose of God in the Old Testament:

“Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8). Thus, the Old Testament Tabernacle, which permitted God to dwell among the people, prefigured the time when Jesus Christ would take upon Himself a human body and tabernacle among men. The Tabernacle with its many symbols and types, was a shadow pointing the Savior who, in the fullness of God’s time (Gal. 4:4), tabernacled in this world and opened the way for God to bring redemption to mankind. As we study the particulars about the Tabernacle we are going to see portraits of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

### ***The Tabernacle’s Fence***

The overall structure of the Tabernacle can be divided into two general areas. First, there was the outer court area, the larger portion of the Tabernacle structure. Second, there was a smaller area called the Tabernacle proper, where a tent was erected with two rooms – the holy place and holy of holies. What we are studying under this heading is the fence that surrounded the entire Tabernacle structure of the outer court. It was 100 cubits (208 feet) in length, fifty cubits (104 feet), and 5 cubits (12 and a half feet) high – Exodus 27:18. This was the cubical measurements of the outer court of the Tabernacle, according to the standard measurement of the Egyptian cubit (25 inches), and would be the general parameters of the entire structure (Ex. 27:9-18; 38:9-20; 40:33). The fence was made out of long pieces of fine linen that were held up by 60 posts or pillars which surrounded the Tabernacle structure. There are several notes of application concerning the linen fence that surrounded the Tabernacle court. What are the lessons we learn from the wall?

1. Man cannot access God.

The wall of the court was too high for man to look over. In addition, the linen curtain wall or fence reached down to the ground so that man could not see in under it. The wall would definitely portray the separation and distance from God, which is the condition of every unsaved person (“having no hope, and without God in the world” – Eph. 2:12). The wall was an unremovable and insurmountable barrier. *God’s holiness could not be compromised.* Therefore, man could not enter into the presence of God without a blood sacrifice.

In my study I have a picture of a dead looking tree that is standing out in the middle of nowhere. It is the saddest looking tree I have ever seen. Half of its giant limb is broken off and there is absolutely no life in the tree. It looks hopeless and lifeless. Underneath the tree this verse is written - "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Like this tree the unsaved man of this world has no hope. We are separated from God by a great wall that cannot be penetrated. The height of the wall would also speak of the human impossibility of man gaining access and acceptance before God based upon his own human merit (Eph. 2:8-9 – "not of works lest any man should boast"). Listen friend, we have absolutely nothing to boast about. We are good-for-nothing sinners. There is a wall erected that keeps sinners out of God's presence. You are fooled if you think you can reject Christ as your Savior and somehow jump over the wall, or dig under the wall, and enter Heaven someday. Listen, you can't get over this wall without Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:20-22 says:

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference."

Man cannot produce the righteousness that the law demands (Rom. 3:19; 8:3; 10:4-5). This is because man is a sinner. Let's get it straight. The law can't save a man because it was not made to save a man. The law shows man how crooked and sinful he really is and why he can't be accepted before a holy God. In a similar way, the height of the wall that surrounded the Tabernacle teaches how the worthlessness of human works, culture, reformation, self-effort, and religion cannot save us and bring us into God's presence. Your humanitarian deeds, Sunday School badges, Sabbath-day keeping, church membership, living by Christ's teaching, following Christ, or law observances will never get you over the wall and into God's presence. The only way the lost sinner can be accepted in God's presence is through the righteousness of God which is supplied through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). God has established a wall that no one can penetrate without the right of access. And let me say

today that the only way to get past the wall and into God's presence is through Jesus Christ. Man cannot access God without God's help. We need to be clothed in the perfect righteousness that God has provided through His Son in order to get over the wall and into God's presence.

## 2. Man cannot understand God.

1 Corinthians 2:14

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The unsaved man is termed as the natural or soulish man – the place where the old nature resides and operates. The natural man is the animal man. Americans today are living like animals. They want sex outside of marriage, they want to have their own way, they want to do whatever feels good or seems right to them. They want to roam free, have no moral restraints over their lives, and live as though there is no God. The natural man is the man who lives by the dictates of His own nature and does not understand how the Gospel, truth, and Bible relates or applies to his life. He is spiritually discerned or unable to understand the relevance and importance of God, salvation, and the Bible. The point is this. Man, who is outside the wall. He is far away from God's presence, fellowship, and salvation and does not comprehend spiritual things. It takes the moving of the Spirit of God upon his heart to bring salvation into his life so that he can understand the glories of Christ, salvation, and eternal life. The natural man of this world is “without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). He is away from God's presence and has no clue how the Bible and the Gospel relates to his life.

## 3. Man needs God.

Exodus 27:9 states:

“And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side.”

### a. He needs God's righteousness.

The usage of a word elsewhere can determine its symbolism, especially when it relates to the colors and materials used in the construction of the Tabernacle. The fine linen curtain (Ex. 27:9) evidently speaks of righteousness (Rev. 19:8) and would typically portray in the Tabernacle structure the righteousness of Christ. Since the Tabernacle is a type and portrait of Christ, as we have seen, everything in some measure points to Christ. The fine white linen that was flawless portrays how Christ has become our righteousness before the Father (2 Cor. 5:21). God demands perfect righteousness to enter His presence. He requires perfect righteousness from every individual if they are going to be accepted by Him (James 2:10). God cannot condone any sin in His holy presence. This poses a problem. Man does not possess righteousness or holiness before God based on his own merits and living (Rom. 3:10 – “There is none righteous, no, not one”). From God’s perspective every person has sinned and does not possess perfect righteousness to stand in His presence. This makes the sinner an outcast from God.

The point is this. Man cannot produce his own righteousness and is therefore shut out from God. He is outside the wall. If he is ever going to be accepted in God’s presence he must be hidden in the righteousness of God’s Son if he is going to be accepted before God (1 Cor. 1:30). Once the self-righteous sinner recognizes that Christ and His perfect righteousness is all that can give Him acceptance before God he will cry out to God for mercy and pardon. He will say, “Woe is me!” (Isa. 6:5). He will acknowledge that all of his efforts for salvation are seen to be nothing but “filthy rags” in God’s sight (Isa. 64:6). He will know that there are no works of righteousness that could ever make him fit to enter God’s holy presence (Titus 3:5-6 – “not by works of righteousness which we have done”).

Dear friend, we can only be made right before God through Jesus Christ. The fence of fine linen surrounding the Tabernacle’s outer court reminds us of the perfect righteousness of Christ, which surrounds us. We are clothed in His righteousness (Rom. 7:9) and the Father sees Christ’s perfect righteousness in our place, so that we must never again face the judgment before God. Christ’s very own righteousness becomes ours if we choose to believe on Him (Rom. 3:22).

“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”

Jesus not only takes away the penalty related to our sins by dying in our place, but He also provides us with His own goodness or righteousness to get us into Heaven. He suffered on the cross taking our sin penalty upon Himself and then turns around and gives to us His own righteousness so God can accept us in His presence. What a Savior! No wonder this is called “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3).

b. He needs God’s remedy.

Exodus 27:10

“And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver.”

The posts and corresponding bases for each post were made out of brass. There were also brass pins used as stakes to help hold the linen curtains in place and sturdy the entire fence (Ex. 27:19). Brass in the Bible typically portrays judgment and this is a clear type of Christ’s judgment for us (Numb. 21:9; John 3:14). The Tabernacle will have many portraits of Christ that point to His judgment on our behalf such as the brazen altar. The Bible teaches that Christ was judged in our place when He died on the cross. He endured the wrath of God that should have fallen upon us (Gal. 3:13 – “Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree”). When the Bible teaches that Jesus died “for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3) it means that He paid the penalty that sin required (Rom. 6:23), which was death, hell, and judgment - the full wrath of a holy and righteous God. He took God’s judgment upon Himself so that we might be forever set free from His judgment. Brass then speaks of Christ’s judgment on our behalf.

“Sing, O sing of my redeemer!  
With His blood He purchased me;  
On the cross He sealed my pardon,  
Paid the debt and made me free.”

c. He needs God's redemption.

Exodus 27:10 says "the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver." There were also clasps and rods that were used to keep the linen curtain or fence in place which surrounded the Tabernacle. These clasps and rods were made out of silver. Silver portrays the typical meaning of redemption (Exodus 30:11-16). The Israelites were instructed to pay a tax to help maintain the tabernacle and services. This tax was considered a ransom (Ex. 30:12) or a price paid to redeem and set a person free from plaguing diseases. The shekel (vs. 13) was silver and it was viewed as a redemptive price that had to be paid if the people would be set free from disease and plagues. The silver money was appointed for the service of the tabernacle (38:25–28), and was used primarily for making the sockets of silver, the foundation of the entire tabernacle. Silver then speaks of redemption, which is the foundation of our faith. We need to be redeemed or set free from another disease – the spiritual malady and disease of sin (John 8:32, 36). The unsaved man needs God's redemption. He needs to be set free from the condemnation and power of sin. This can only happen through Jesus Christ and His liberating power.

There was also the practice of redeeming the firstborn among the people with silver money (Numb. 3:13, 46-51) in order to give themselves to a lifetime of service. This had a special application to the Levites in this passage of Scripture. Dear friend, this is why God has redeemed us. He wants us to express our gratitude to Him and commit ourselves to a lifetime of service to His cause. *We have been saved to serve!* Is this not God's plan for us today. He uses His redeemed children to serve Him and save others. This redemptive silver money typically portrays our redemption from sin and freedom to now serve God the rest of our lives. The silver in the Tabernacle structure would then speak of God's redemptive plan for mankind. The mention of silver with the expression of redemption typically speaks of God's redeeming plan for lost mankind. How wonderful and glorious that Jesus Christ has come into this world to redeem a lost human race. He has come to set us free from sin's judgment and slavery.



“Redeemed—how I love to proclaim it!  
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;  
Redeemed thro’ His infinite mercy,  
His child, and forever, I am.

Redeemed, redeemed,  
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;  
Redeemed, redeemed,  
His child, and forever, I am.”

An orphaned boy was living with his grandmother when their house caught fire. The grandmother, trying to get upstairs to rescue the boy, perished in the flames. The boy’s cries for help were finally answered by a man who climbed an iron drainpipe and came back down with the boy hanging tightly to his neck. Several weeks later, a public hearing was held to determine who would receive custody of the child. A farmer, a teacher, and the town’s wealthiest citizen all gave the reasons they felt they should be chosen to give the boy a home. But as they talked, the lad’s eyes remained focused on the floor. Then a stranger walked to the front and slowly took his hands from his pockets, revealing severe scars on them. As the crowd gasped, the boy cried out in recognition. This was the man who had saved his life. His hands had been burned when he climbed the hot pipe. With a leap the boy threw his arms around the man’s neck and held on for dear life. The other men silently walked away, leaving the boy and his rescuer alone. Those marred hands had settled the issue.

Dear friend, Jesus Christ paid the redemption price for you and me when He died upon the cross. It’s the only price that God the Father would accept to grant our freedom and liberty from sin’s condemnation and power (Eph. 1:7 – “we have redemption through his blood”). What a glorious liberty this is!

### ***The Tabernacle’s Door***

The Israelites would approach the Tabernacle and first see the high fence around the outer court. They knew that the Tabernacle was the place to make things right with God, to worship Him, and to personally offer a sacrifice and have their sins forgiven. However, to do so they had to enter through the door or gate of the Tabernacle. It

is called “the gate of the court” (Ex. 27:16). The gate is commonly called the door of the Tabernacle which gave access into God’s sacrificial plan for redemption. It always faced to the east (Numb. 3:38). Other names used for this entrance were the court gate (Ex. 38:15) and door of the court (Ex. 35:17) since it allowed a person to enter the outer court of the Tabernacle edifice. The door was actually a curtain or veil (“an hanging” – Ex. 27:16).

#### a. The Declaration of the Door

The door that leads into the Tabernacle court was a typical declaration or announcement of Jesus Christ who has gained access into God’s presence for us. The door is a very clear type and picture of Jesus Christ who said of Himself in **John 10:9**, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” Christ is the door. Dear friend, Christianity is not a creed, or a church. It is a Person and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us, rose again, and made our access and acceptance before God possible.

##### 1. It’s the door of salvation.

When I was just a young boy we used to play cows and horses. We would often build an enclosure with sticks and pretend we were cows grazing in the meadow. This is the concept that Jesus is speaking about in John 10:9. After a shepherd’s flock has been separated from the other sheep, he would take them to pasture. Near the pasture there would be an enclosure for the sheep. It was called the sheepfold. The sheepfold was usually an enclosure made of rocks, with an opening for the door. The shepherd (or porter) would guard the flock, or flocks, at night by sometimes lying across the opening. The shepherd takes his place in the doorway or entrance and functions as the door or gate. Knowing this the sheep can go out to the pasture in front of the enclosure, or if afraid, they can retreat into the security of the enclosure. The spiritual meaning is that Jesus is the only gate or door by which people can enter into God’s saving provision for their lives (“he shall be saved”).

When you place your faith in Jesus Christ by understanding that He died for you, paid sin’s penalty, and that the Father will accept you

into His presence through Christ, it's then that you can be saved. But you must come through the door ("by me if any man enter in" – John 10:9). This door is open for all today ("any man") as it was for the fold of Judaism in Christ's day (John 7:37 – "If any man thirst"). Any man can be saved if he wants to. Only his disbelief will keep him out of the sheepfold of Christ's salvation and security. However, to be saved, a person must enter in ("if any man enter in" – John 10:9). This means a person must receive Christ by faith (John 1:12). He must place only his faith and all of his faith in the death and resurrection of Christ for his salvation from hell. Have you entered in? Have you walked through the door that leads to salvation and eternal life? This is a personal act, and without it, there is no salvation. Those who do enter in are saved from the penalty and the power of sin.

Please note that the door of the Tabernacle was wide enough to accommodate the people. It was twenty cubits wide (Exodus 27:16) or approximately forty one feet in width. This was a big door. There was plenty of access for all who wanted to enter through the door. There was more width to it than any person would ever need to pass through. The width of the door speaks of the wideness of God's mercy (Rom. 11:32 – "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all"). God's mercy extends to all and this is the message God was portraying by the large size of the door or entranceway that leads into the Tabernacle.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in His justice,  
Which is more than liberty.

There is welcome for the sinner,  
And more graces for the good;  
There is mercy with the Saviour;  
There is healing in His blood."

The door or gate was easily distinguished from the fence. It was easy to find and spot. Let me just say that no one will ever be able to say, "I wanted to be saved but God would not let me." The way is open. The door is easy to see. The wideness of the door also speaks to the fact that Christ provided salvation for all men (John 3:16; Titus 2:11; 1

John 2:1-2; Heb. 2:9). God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9). He wants all men to enter through the door of His provision into the joys and blessings of salvation. The lesson is very plain: the Gospel invitation is to all the world (Rev. 22:17 – “whosoever will”). The door is wide enough for you to pass through. There’s room at the cross for you. Yes, Jesus is the door! Jesus described Himself as a passageway that leads to salvation and eternal life. He used similar words later on in His ministry.

John 14:6

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Acts 4:12 echoes the same truth:

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

A name stands for who a person is and what He has done. The name of Jesus actually means Savior (Matt. 1:21). Christ is the Savior. He is the only Savior. He is a wonderful Savior. And He’s a wonderful Savior to me! Is He your Savior? Do you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus Christ has saved you?

Let us not miss this important lesson. There was only one door leading into the Tabernacle where man could find redemption and access into God’s presence through blood sacrifice. The same is true about Jesus Christ. He is the only way of access into God’s presence and the only way of salvation from hell and eternal damnation. Mark this down. The way of salvation is to come through the door. The way to be saved is to come to Christ and trust in His saving provision. There is no other door and no other way. The way of the cross leads home!

## 2. It’s the door of seclusion.

The door that allowed people to come into the Tabernacle also kept out those who did not want to enter. The Tabernacle secluded or shut off and isolated people from entering its inner court who did not want to enter by way of the door. There was only one way to enter the Tabernacle and it was by the door or gate. It excluded all who would

not come the prescribed way. It shut out all those who refused to come the one way. My friend, if you think that you will enter God's presence someday without coming through the door (Jesus Christ) that leads to salvation and acceptance before God, then you are sadly mistaken. If you don't come through the door you will go to hell for all eternity (John 3:36). When Noah and his family went into the ark God shut them in while at the same time he shut out all those who did not want to come in. Those who refused to come in would end up in a watery grave and die and go to hell. Listen my friend, the door is open today but it will be shut after you die (Heb. 9:27). You had better pass through the door while there is yet time. Inside the door there is grace, mercy, forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. Why don't you pass through the door today? Don't turn Christ away and refuse to enter. Don't seal your doom and damnation by refusing to come and trust Christ as your Savior today. If you walk through the door today you can be saved.

### 3. It's the door of security.

There is security for those who do come through the door into God's glorious plan of salvation. The door of the Tabernacle also shut in those who came inside and God gave safety to those who came the proper way ("the Lord shut him in" – Gen. 7:16). The security of the believer who comes by the one way of salvation is a reminder of Jesus' words in John 10:28, "And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." The door that leads into the Tabernacle is the door of eternal security. Once the sinner entered the door, bringing his sacrifice that pointed to Christ, he was surrounded by the white linen and safe because of the atoning blood. Likewise, when a sinner puts his faith in Christ He is surrounded by the righteousness of God's Son and is safe through God's substitutionary provision found in Christ (Rom. 5:9 – "justified by his blood").

Oh think of it! If there had been no door or gate there would have been no hope of access unto God. And where there is no hope of salvation the case becomes one of utter despair. Think of being condemned without any hope. Think of being lost with no hope! Think of being shut out of God's presence forever and forever. Think what it means to be lost forever! Praise God there was a door that led into

the Tabernacle. Praise God that Jesus is that door today and the way of access unto God. Without Him, how lost I would be!

#### 4. It's the door of sustenance.

Please note that in John 10:9 it says that those who enter find pasture. Christ is not only the Savior; He is also the Sustainer and Satisfier. His sheep find pasture through His abundant life (John 10:10). Jesus gives constant sustenance or nourishment that is necessary to maintain our spiritual lives. Where can I go but to the Lord to find power and strength for daily living. It's Christ's life and power (Phil. 3:10) that makes the difference. The Holy Spirit unleashes the power and presence of Christ to us so that we live in the green pastures (Ps. 23:1-2) and find God's sweet provision for our lives. Dear friend, He won't let you down. Jesus is still the answer. It's not psychology, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, or psychosomatic treatment that you need. You need Jesus Christ to keep you fulfilled and overflowing with joy, gladness, and peace. I want the good life. I want the green pastures.

#### b. The Description of the Door

Exodus 27:16

“And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four.”

In this verse and others (Ex. 38:18) we have the description of the door which led into the Tabernacle court. The description of the door is very interesting.

#### 1. Consider its colors.

The door was said to be a “hanging” which means that it was a covering or curtain (veil) beautifully decorated with needlework of blue, red, and purple. Colors in the Tabernacle are always symbolic and significant. They have meaning. The door consisted of fine white linen that was woven with beautiful colors, all of which speak to us of the Lord Jesus Christ. These colors were produced by dyeing the thread: blue from a shellfish, purple from the secretion of a murex

snail, and crimson from powdered eggs and bodies of certain worms, which attached themselves to holly plants. Deriving different colored dyes from different natural sources demonstrates a substantial degree of technical sophistication with textiles and fabrics.

The blue (Ex. 27:16) undoubtedly speaks of Christ's deity. Blue reminds us of the color of the sky. It is the heavenly color. Our blessed Lord came down from heaven to dwell among men so that He might become man's Savior. Blue reminds of Christ's heavenly origin and His deity (1 Tim. 3:16 – "God was manifest in the flesh"). Matthew 1:23 says, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Jesus Christ came down from Heaven as the one and only true God.

The color purple (Ex. 27:16) reminds us of the color of royalty (Judges 8:26). Purple was the color of the garments of kings. It was a very expensive dye that when worn displayed the dignity of a king and gave expression of his official standing (Esther 8:15). Purple was then a badge of honor and a sign of royalty. Purple in the gate or door of the Tabernacle would undoubtedly speak of Christ's kingliness and the dignity and power of His glorious exalted person (Phil. 2:9 – "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name"). Jesus Christ is the King (1 Tim. 6:15 – "the King of kings, and Lord of lords"). Our Lord already possesses the power and dignity of a King but will not wield this power until He returns to earth again (Rev. 11:15; 19:11-20:5). Someday He's coming back as the King. The question is this. Is He your King today? Does He have control of every area of your life? Did you give Him the keys of every room in your heart? King of my life I crown Thee now!

The color scarlet (Ex. 27:16) speaks of the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. It is the blood color. The suffering and death of Jesus Christ was divinely predetermined (Acts 2:23; Rev. 13:8 – "the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world"). 1 Peter 1:19-20 reads: "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." Christ's death was foreshadowed in types and figures (Gen. 3:21; 4:1-5; Exodus 12; Lev. 23; 1 Cor. 5:7). There is a scarlet line that runs throughout the Bible

that prefigures and portrays the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Joshua 2:18). My friend, it's the blood of Jesus Christ that was ultimately shed on the cross that takes away your sins forever and gives you a justified standing before God (Rom. 5:9 – “justified by his blood”). If you will put your trust in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the sacrificial death of Christ to save you, then you can be saved from hell and eternal judgment.

In Philippians 2:6-11 we see a portrayal of the colors in the Tabernacle's door as it relates to Christ. Philippians 2:6-11 says, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God (*blue and deity*): But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (*scarlet and sacrifice*). Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (*purple or kingliness*).”

The “fine twined linen” (Ex. 27:16) was a material that had no flaws in it. It was not coarse but very smooth. It was material of the highest quality and grade. It was superior. The fine twined linen in this door hanging reminds of Christ's holy and sinless life. Hebrews 7:26, “For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” The Bible teaches that Christ offered Himself “without spot to God” (Heb. 9:14). My friend, Jesus did not sin, would not sin, and could not sin. Do you know why? It's because He is God incarnate in the flesh. God cannot sin! Pilate found “no fault” in him (John 19:4) and neither can you. He was the sinless Son of God on whom the wrath of God fell. God demanded a perfect sacrifice to take away sin and Christ was the only sacrifice that God would accept as a sin offering that could actually remove sin and bring a person into the presence of God (“a lamb without blemish and without spot”). You see, it would take a perfect sinless sacrifice to appease God and satisfy His justice (1 John 2:2). The man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5) had to die for a sinful human race to meet the demands of the Law and vindicate God's



holiness, righteousness, and justice for those who express faith in Him.

## 2. Consider its construction.

Exodus 27:16-17 goes on to say:

“... and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver; their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass.”

We know already from previous studies that the silver pillars (posts) and hooks (clasps) speak of Christ's redemption (Exodus 30:11-16). The brass sockets (bases) point to Christ's sacrificial judgment on our behalf (Numb. 21:9; John 3:14). However, we don't really know the typical meaning of the four posts. The pillars or posts with its sockets or stands were four in number. We can only suggest that there are four pillars of truth related to Christ that are foundational to our salvation. First, He lived a sinless life while on earth and was the perfect sacrifice (Heb. 7:26). Second, He died on the cross of Calvary to become our Savior (Heb. 9:26). Third, He rose again from the grave on the third day to prove that He paid for sin's penalty, that God has accepted His sacrifice, and to assure us of eternal life (Heb. 1:3). Fourth, He ascended back to Heaven to intercede for His people forever presenting the efficacy (saving value) of His own sacrifice (Heb. 7:25; 10:12). These are the four pillars that our salvation is built upon. You can't take away any of these pillars without destroying the Gospel story and plan of God.

### c. The Demand of the Door

Do you hear the demand of this door? It is saying, “This is the way. Enter here!” No one every dared climb over it or crawl under it. Jesus said that anyone who tries to be saved any other way than by the door is a “thief and a robber” (John 10:1). God warns us that “there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12). All other ways outside of Jesus Christ lead to eternal death and separation from God. Some say that they will live a good life, do the best they can. Or join a church. Others say they will be baptized or confirmed. The sad thing is this. All these ways lead to death and destruction. You must come through the door!

Postmodernism philosophy and pluralism are teaching that “we are all heading to the same place, we are just taking different roads.” This is a lie straight out of hell and from the devil. If you are ever going to be saved you must walk through the door. You must come through Jesus Christ and the blood of Christ. This is what God demands. There is a door wide enough to let you in if you want to be saved.

#### d. The Decision at the Door

It took just one step to be inside the gate and enter the Tabernacle. Today it takes but one step, a single step of faith to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. But you must take that step for yourself. No one can force you. If you want to be saved from hell just enter the door through Christ. He will save you and take you to Heaven when you die.

John 10:9

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

Have you passed through the door? Have you entered in? There is a door and way of access into God’s presence that will give you salvation and security forever. The door to salvation and eternal life is Jesus Christ. It’s your decision. It’s your choice. Are you ready to take that step of faith and trust in Christ and His provision to save you? Galatians 3:26 says, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Step through the door today. Place your faith in the only Person who can save your soul from Hell and give you eternal life. His name is Jesus.

#### ***The Tabernacle’s Brazen Altar***

I read about a small boy who was consistently late coming home from school. His parents warned him one day that he must be home on time the next afternoon or else he will be punished. In spite of the warning the boy arrived later than ever. His mother met him at the door and said nothing. At dinner that night, the boy looked at his plate. There was a slice of bread and a glass of water. He looked at his father’s full plate of meat and potatoes and then at his father, but his father remained silent. The boy was crushed and tears began

rolling down he cheeks. The father waited for the full impact to sink in, then quietly took the boy's plate of water and bread and placed it in front of himself. He then took his own plate of meat and potatoes, put it in front of the boy, and smiled at his son. The father ate the bread and drank the water and allowed the son to eat the feast that he did not deserve. When that boy grew to be a man, he said, "All my life I've known what God is like by what my father did that night. I recognize that God lovingly sacrificed His only Son for me so that I could enjoy the feast of salvation. I will never forget this day." And dear friend, how can we ever forget this day? It was a day of tremendous loving sacrifice when God sacrificed His Son for you and me. It was a day that will live on throughout eternity and the unending ages of time. We will sing of it as Christians and glory in it forever and forever. As we continue in our study of the particulars of the Tabernacle we want to address the subject of the altar of sacrifice (Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7). It was called the brazen altar (Ex. 38:30; 39:39) for it was overlaid with brass. It was called the altar of burnt offering (Ex. 30:28; 31:9) for it was upon this altar that animals were burned to ashes.

This was the place where animals were sacrificed and burned. It was a place of death, doom, blood-shedding, fire, and judgment upon helpless animal victims. If the animal activists were alive during these days of sacrifice there would be many who would oppose God's remedy for sin and atonement. But let me say today that God's way of salvation has always been through a blood sacrifice. It was at the Brazen Altar where Aaron, his sons, and the guilty Israelite would meet in order to slay the sacrifice and sprinkle the blood upon the horns of the altar. It was a place of death and horror and yet a place of grace and mercy. This is what we want to see in our study of this altar.

Inside the court there were only two pieces of furniture – the Brazen Altar and the laver for washing. When the Israelite walked through the door of the tabernacle he smelled burning roast beef. They stood in awe, gazing upon at the blood-stained altar, as the smoke from previous sacrifices curled into the sky. The Brazen or Brass Altar stood in the court, close by the gate or the door of entrance (Ex. 40:29). When coming into the Tabernacle they were immediately reminded that God had only one way for sinners to come into His

presence. It was through blood sacrifice. *No doubt millions of animals were slain on this altar throughout the years of Israel's existence.* Millions! The altar was the largest single piece of furniture of the Tabernacle. It was square (Ex. 27:1) measuring five cubits (ten feet four inches long) and three cubits (six feet, three inches) high. As we will see, it was overlaid with brass or bronze (a metal composed of copper and zinc) so it would be fireproof.

The Brazen Altar stood at the gate of entrance representing God's claims. God was saying something to every person who walked into the Tabernacle court. He was teaching that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). He was teaching that the sinner must present a blood sacrifice before God can fellowship with him. The altar demanded a sacrifice by blood. No blood, no access to God, and no remission of sins. This is God's claim and eternal sentence (Heb. 9:22 – "without the shedding of blood there is no remission"). This has been God's story from the beginning (Lev. 17:11). It would take the blood sacrifice of animals to atone for sin and ultimately the blood sacrifice of Jesus to take away sin forever (John 1:29).

"Tell me the story often,  
For I forget so soon;  
The early dew of morning  
Has passed away at noon."

### 1. The Picture of the Altar

The Bible is very clear on the typological picture of this altar (Ex. 27:1). There is a connection between the altar's sacrifices and the coming Messiah and Redeemer – Christ. We know this is true for the lamb's sacrifices on the altars are linked to the Messiah's death who is personified as a lamb (Isa. 53:7 – "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" and 1 Pet. 1:19 – Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"). Thus, the lambs and animals sacrificed on the altar of the Tabernacle were an "example," "shadow," and "pattern" (Heb. 8:5; 9:23) of Christ and pointed to the "good things to come" (Heb. 9:11; 10:1) which was Christ and His blood sacrifice on the cross. *The altar with its sacrifices and the Tabernacle itself presented shadows of the Messiah.* Generally speaking, the altar was a picture of the cross of Jesus Christ where He bore the weight and penalty of sin's judgment

(1 Pet. 2:24 – “Who his own self bare our sins in his won body on the tree”). The cross of Jesus Christ is our altar and unless you come to the foot of the cross and place your faith in Christ, as your only Savior and hope of Heaven, you will die in your sins and go to hell. The Brazen Altar of the Old Testament becomes the cross of Christ in the New Testament (Col. 1:20 – “the blood of his cross”).

At the altar, an innocent lamb bore the judgment of the guilty. In the New Testament the connection to Christ cannot be missed for Christ is pictured as the Lamb of God (John 1:29, Rev. 13:8), who died on the altar of the cross, bearing the judgment of God’s wrath against sin on our behalf. The epistle of Hebrews repeatedly reminds us that Christ was the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices that were made on the brazen altar (Heb. 10:4-12). God has no pleasure in the “burnt offerings” (Heb. 10:6) upon the Old Testament altar since Christ has already fulfilled all of these types by the shedding of His blood and sacrifice on the cross (“after he had offered one sacrifice for sin” – Heb. 10:12 and “for by one offering he hath perfect for ever” – Heb. 10:14). In fact, God never did take any pleasure in animal sacrifices for the very reason that they could never satisfy His justice, His righteous demands for deliverance from the penalty of sin. God never accepted the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament as the basis or foundation of the people’s justification and salvation (Heb. 10:4). It’s clear that all of these sacrifices pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:1 – “a shadow of good things to come”) and God could justify and save the Old Testament saints on the basis of Christ’s future work on Calvary. When Jesus died on the cross (“when he cometh into the world” – Heb. 10:5) He brought us out of the shadows of the past into the realities of the present.

“Behold! a spotless Victim dies,  
My Surety on the tree;  
The Lamb of God, the Sacrifice,  
He gave Himself for me!”

The connection of the Old Testament altar and sacrifice is fulfilled in Jesus Christ who is the Lamb that has shed His blood in fulfillment of the millions of sacrifices made on the altar (1 Pet. 1:18-19). One thing is certain. What was true of the Old Testament Brazen Altar was also true of Christ and the cross. Jesus shed His blood upon the cross,

paying the price for sin's penalty (hell and judgment), so that we could escape the penalty or wrath of God. In the Old Testament there was an altar but in the New Testament there was a cross. Every time we read about the Israelites offering an animal sacrifice in the Old Testament we can remember that in some way it pictured the cross of Calvary.

The altar is full of symbolic and spiritual pictures that teach about the person and work of Jesus Christ. In a brief way let's consider the typical picture and symbolism of this altar.

### 1. The height represents the cross of Christ.

The meaning behind the word "altar" (Ex. 27:1) speaks of a high place or that which is lifted up. It stood up and whatever was placed upon it was therefore lifted up (Lev. 9:22). This becomes a picture of how Christ was lifted up on the cross to die for doomed sinners.

John 3:14

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."

As the animal was lifted up upon the altar to be burned so Christ was lifted up on the cross to suffer God's wrath and judgment on our behalf.

Lifted up was He to die,  
"It is finished," was His cry;  
Now in heav'n exalted high,  
Hallelujah! what a Savior.

### 2. The wood represents the humanity of Christ.

The "shittim wood" (Ex. 27:1) or acacia wood, as it is commonly known, was a very hard and enduring wood that foreshadowed the humanity of Jesus. The wood comes from the earth and would be typical of the humanity of Christ. Jesus was compared to "a root out of dry ground" (Is. 53:2). He was "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5) and the Son of man (Matt. 9:6). The way He became a man was

unique. He was born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14) and remained sinless in His earthly existence (Heb. 7:26). In order for Christ to be the Savior of lost mankind it was needful for Him to be both human and Divine. Jesus was the God-man (John 1:1) and the only mediator to bring man to God (“one mediator between God and man” - 1 Tim. 2:5). God cannot die in a human sense for He is a spirit (John 4:24). Therefore, God had to send forth a God-man who would take on a human form (“a body hast thou prepared me” – Heb. 10:5) in order to physically die from a human standpoint. So the wood from the realm of earth portrays Christ in His humanity and humility (Phil. 2:7 – “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men”). Jesus became man so He could become man’s Savior.

“Man of sorrows,” what a name  
For the Son of God who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim!  
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

### 3. The shape represents the measure of Christ’s death.

The Bible teaches that “the altar shall be foursquare” (Ex. 27:2). This means that it was the same on all sides like the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:16). The equal symmetry of the Brazen Altar suggests that the death of Christ equally reaches out to all men. The Gospel extends in every direction for Jesus Christ made a sacrificial provision for all men when He died on the cross. The measure and breadth of Christ’s death extends to all men. The foursquare dimension of the altar would suggest that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross was equally available for all people (“one died for all” – 2 Cor. 4:15 and “tasted death for every man” – Heb. 2:9). Christ’s death was also equally valid for all men to receive (“But as many as received him” - John 1:12). When Jesus died on the cross He died for everyone and made the way of salvation available to all peoples (John 3:16). We might state it this way. When Christ died on the cross He had no favorites. His death was sufficient to save all mankind and can be equally shared by everyone who places faith in Him (“whosoever will may come” - Rev. 22:17). The foursquare dimension tells us that we must take the Gospel into all the world (Mark 16:15). We must take the

Gospel in every direction and to every tribe as God commanded. The world desperately needs to hear of the Gospel of Christ. The “good news” is that Christ died for everyone, wants to save everyone, and that all men are included in the sacrificial plan of the Savior (Acts 1:8). The Brazen Altar was foursquare. No one has to die and to hell.

#### 4. The horns represent the power of Christ’s cross.

The altar had four horns (Ex. 27:2). There was a horn at each corner of the altar. In Scripture horns were symbols of power (1 Sam. 2:10; 2 Sam. 22:3 – “horn of my salvation” and Dan. 7:7-8). The horns on the Brazen Altar would be connected to Christ’s passion and death and suggest that there is power in the message of the cross of Christ. The Scriptures verify this. Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” When a person flees to the cross of Christ for refuge and salvation God will save that person by the power of the cross. The power is in the message of the Gospel. It’s not in the pragmatic programs of man. You can’t save people by so-called Christian rock music or any other method. It’s the message of the Gospel and that message alone that saves lost man. The power is in the message and not the method. The church does not and should not become like the unsaved to win the unsaved. We must simply share the Gospel message and allow the power of the message of the cross of Christ bring people to faith.

It’s interesting that when Adonijah feared that Solomon would kill him, he “arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar (1 Kings 1:50). The same was true for Joab when he turned against David. He “fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar (1 Kings 2:28). Why? It’s because the horns on the altar were a place that represented God’s power to save and keep a man safe. Today if a person wants God to save him he must flee to the altar of the cross of Christ and find refuge from the evil clutches of sin and Satan.

Hebrews 2:14-15

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And



deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

There is power in the blood of the Lamb! There is a saving and liberating power in the cross of Christ. The horns on the altar represent the power of Christ’s cross and saving provision. Have you been to the horns of the altar? Have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb?

“Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow’r?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?  
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

The animals who would await their death would be tied to the horns of the altar. This is verified to us in Psalm 118:27 where we read these heart-searching words:

“God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.”

The sacrificial animals were actually killed and quartered before being put on the altar (Lev. 1:11-12). However, the animals that were awaiting their sacrifice and death would apparently be tied to these horns. This was especially true during a Passover feast day when there were a large number of animals being offered. Some suggest that the animals were tied to the altar in order to be killed and prepared for the altar. What a beautiful type this is of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our blessed Lord was bound to the altar of the cross by the cords of love! His own fathomless love kept him bound to the horns of another altar – the altar of the cross. It was His love that led Him from Heaven’s glory to Calvary. Christ’s love for us nailed Him to the accursed tree! He willingly bound Himself to the cross for you and me. He could have called then thousand angels! But instead of calling legions of angels to come and rescue Him he bound himself to the altar of the cross and paid the penalty for your sin and mine.

The sacrifice bound to the horns of the altar, awaiting it death, reminds us of Christ’s unfailing commitment to do the Father’s will.

Christ allowed Himself to be bound to the cross ready to do the Father's will.

Matthew 26:39

“And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Jesus Christ was bound to God's altar – the cross. He was willing to suffer the wrath of God on your behalf and mine. The cords of love bound Him to Calvary's cross.

Exodus 29:10-12 also states this about the horns:

“And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar.”

The horns of the Brazen Altar were sprinkled with the blood of atonement. The same was true of Calvary's cross. It was stained with the precious blood of our Lord and God. It was on the cross where He suffered and bled for you and me. He was willing to pass through great physical agonies there on Calvary in order to free us from God's wrath and judgment for sin. There was once a cross stained with the blood of Jesus Christ. It was an emblem of grace and mercy beyond degree and description.

“Was it for crimes that I have done  
He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity! grace unknown!  
And love beyond degree.”

The bloodstained cross of Jesus Christ reminds us that we have acceptance before God on the basis of His sacrificial death and shedding of His precious blood. Romans 5:9 Says, “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” Oh the blood of Jesus! Oh the blood of Jesus!

“Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.”

#### 5. The brass represents the judgment of Christ.

There was a reason He became a man and this is indicated in the last of Exodus 27:2b – “thou shalt overlay it with brass.” Not only was the altar itself overlaid with brass but the vessels connected with the altar were made of brass (“shalt make of brass” – vs. 3b and “network of brass” – vs. 4a). The brass that was used in connection with the altar is a symbol of judgment. We have already studied the typical teaching of brass in connection with the brass serpent that was erected upon the pole.

Numbers 21:9

“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

God judged the people with fiery serpents as a reminder of their sinfulness and need for judgment. Likewise, when the serpent was placed on a pole it reminded them of their sin and judgment which they deserved. It painted the picture that the same serpent that should have judged them with death would now give them life if they looked upon it with faith. Jesus used this Old Testament type as a figure of His cross.

John 3:14

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.”

In the New Testament Jesus interpreted this brass serpent as a type of how He would be lifted up on the cross to die the sinner’s death. The serpent represented the people’s sins and judgment. Jesus bore the sins and judgment of a lost human race when He died upon the cross. The brass serpent was a type of Christ dying on the cross as

the sinner's replacement. He took the wrath of God and paid for the penalty of sin. This is why the Brazen Altar was overlaid with brass. It was typical or symbolic of the judgment that Jesus bore on the cross for lost sinners. The altar and vessels connected with the altar were made of brass. This is all typical of the death of Christ when He was judged for sinners of a lost human race.

In view of the typology of the Brass Altar I think it would be good for us to remember exactly why Jesus had to die on the cross. Consider four points dealing with the necessity of Christ's death.

- a. The seriousness of sin (Rom. 3:23 – “all have sinned” and “sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4).

The Bible teaches that every human being is born in sin and commits untold acts of sin throughout his life. When we sin we break God's holy law or the moral code that is expressed in the Ten Commandments. A simple test would reveal that we have all broken God's Laws many times and as a result “we have all gone out of the way” (Rom. 3:11) and “there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom. 3:12) and “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). In other words, God only sees us as sinners that have broken His Law. Even more serious, we have sinned against God and His holiness by offending His righteous character (Psalm 51:4, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight ...” and Luke 15:18, “I have sinned against Heaven”). The world today does not understand the severity or seriousness of their sin in God's sight. Their sin is a stench in God's nostrils. Their sin offends God's holy and righteous character. Sin is serious for it breaks our fellowship with a holy God who cannot condone any sin in His presence or sight. This brings us to our next point.

- b. The sanctify of God – Habakkuk 1:13, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity ...”

God's sanctity or holiness cannot sweep any sin under the carpet. No sin or sinner could ever stand in His presence (Psalm 1:5) and be accepted by God. God's inflexible reaction to sin rises from His holiness of character (Isa. 6:1-3) and His hatred of evil (Prov. 6:16-19). God is a righteous God that cannot overlook sin (“righteousness

and judgment are the habitation of his throne – Ps. 97:2). God’s holy and righteous character compels Him to deal with sin and sinners which brings us to our next point.

- c. The severity of judgment – (Rom. 5:12 – “death passed upon all men for that all have sinned” and Rom. 5:18 – “judgment came upon all men to condemnation”).

God judges people for original sin that was inherited through Adam and by their individual acts of sin which they commit throughout their lifetime (Rom. 2:5; Rev. 20:13). Sin must be judged for God is holy. God’s justice demands that sin and the sinner be punished (John 3:18; Rom. 6:23). This condemnation, judgment, and punishment can be viewed as a *penalty* or *debt* that one must pay for breaking God’s Law. God must judge sin and sinners who sin. He must give sinners what they deserve. This is because God is holy and righteous in His being.

Psalm 145:17

“The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”

- d. The Savior of mankind (John 4:42 ; 1 John 4:14 – “the Saviour of the world”).

In order to save lost mankind from God’s wrath and His punishment of sinners in the judgment of hell (Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9) Jesus had to die on the cross. God’s holiness cannot be compromised. Therefore, man cannot enter into the presence of God without Christ’s blood sacrifice. He can only be judged and go to hell. It’s for this very reason that Jesus had to die on the cross. His perfect or sinless blood sacrifice (Heb. 7:26; 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19) satisfied God’s holiness and justice. It became a propitiation or satisfying sacrifice to God for sinners (1 John 2:1-2) that had broken His Law and who could not be accepted in His Holy presence. *God required a holy sacrifice to take the place of the sinner and He required that this same sacrifice would experience His wrath and judgment in order to become a substitute for the sinner.* In other words, only a perfect sacrifice could take the place of imperfect sinners and die in their place in order to cleanse sinners and bring into the presence of God.

1 Peter 3:18

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

Let's state it in a simple fashion. God cannot accept you and your sin. He is a righteous judge. Could a righteous judge overlook a criminal and allow him to go free? Never! God is a righteous Judge (Rev. 15:3) and cannot overlook sin. His holiness, righteousness, and justice demanded that you die the sinner's death and go to hell (Rom. 6:23). But God made a plan of salvation whereby Jesus could become our Savior and save us from hell. Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice, died on the cross. Jesus bore our sins and the penalty for those sins (1 Pet. 2:24). The penalty was the righteous expression of God's wrath (Rom. 2:5). Jesus also bore the penalty of the broken law (“handwriting of ordinances that was against us” – Col. 2:14) when He died on the cross (“nailing it to his cross” – Col. 2:14) and removed our guilty charge before God. The penalty that we deserved Christ took upon Himself. He bore God's wrath and judgment against sin in every way when He died on the cross in our place.

Galatians 3:13

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”

There on the altar of God's cross, overlaid with brass, Jesus experienced the wrath of God's judgment that we deserved. Christ took the penalty of all guilty lawbreakers on Himself. Thus the “curse of the Law” (the judgment and doom of hell) was transferred from sinners to Christ, the sinless One (1 Peter 3:18), and He delivered people from it. Christ redeemed men (set men free from hell's condemnation) by dying in their place, enduring the dreadful wrath of God against sins. The curse of God fell on Him as man's Substitute. He did not become sinful in Himself, but man's sins were placed upon Him.

“In evil long I took delight,  
Unawed by shame or fear,  
Till a new object struck my sight,  
And stopp'd my wild career:

I saw One hanging on a Tree  
In agonies and blood,  
Who fix'd His languid eyes on me.  
As near His Cross I stood.

Sure never till my latest breath,  
Can I forget that look:  
It seem'd to charge me with His death,  
Though not a word He spoke:

My conscience felt and own'd the guilt,  
And plunged me in despair:  
I saw my sins His Blood had spilt,  
And help'd to nail Him there.

Alas! I knew not what I did!  
But now my tears are vain:  
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?  
For I the Lord have slain!

A second look He gave, which said,  
"I freely all forgive;  
This blood is for thy ransom paid;  
I die that thou may'st live."

Thus, while His death my sin displays  
In all its blackest hue,  
Such is the mystery of grace,  
It seals my pardon too.

With pleasing grief, and mournful joy,  
My spirit now is fill'd,  
That I should such a life destroy,  
Yet live by Him I kill'd!"

Of course, what Christ did on the cross can only be applied and made real in our lives when we express our faith in Him for salvation (John 1:12; 3:15-16; 6:47; Rom. 10:13). When we place our faith in Him for salvation from hell God saves us and delivers us from hell forever.

Dear friend, when Christ died on the cross He met the demands of the law (Col. 2:14), vindicated God's holiness (1 Tim. 6:16), and appeased God's wrath against sin (John 3:18). This was done when God's judgment fell upon Him as the "Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19). The lamb of sacrifice on the Brazen Altar took the place of the condemned sinner, in death, and suffered the judgment of God that was due the sinner. These altar sacrifices were a type of how Christ on the cross died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3). This means that Christ took upon Himself the judgment of God against sin, a judgment that every guilty sinner deserved, so that the sinner could go free, be acquitted in God's sight, and go to Heaven when he dies. A redeeming price had to be paid (1 Pet. 1:18 – "ye were ... redeemed") in order to set lost people free from condemnation. Jesus paid the penalty for our own sins and the price He had to pay in order to free us was His own death on Calvary. So the altar was overlaid with brass and when Jesus died on the cross He was overlaid with God's judgment for sin. It was a judgment that we deserved. It was a judgment or penalty for sin that all of us should have faced. Jesus bore our hell and judgment when He died on the cross as the perfect sinless sacrifice.

Isaiah 53:5-6

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Yes, Jesus Christ bore the iniquity of us all! He bore our sins and the righteous judgment of God's wrath for our sins. He bore sin's penalty and became our personal Substitute and Savior from sin's penalty. This is what He accomplished on the cross. Romans 4:25 says that Jesus "was delivered for our offences" or placed upon the cross to suffer the penalty for all of our sinful acts that were against God. It was for you that He died! It was for me that He died.

When the Brazen Altar was first put into use God sent fire down from Heaven to consume the first sacrifice made on the altar. This was done to demonstrate that the sacrificial animal would experience God's wrath and judgment in the place of the sinner.



Leviticus 9:23-24

“And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.”

Now listen. When God brings fire down from Heaven it is going to cause a worshipping response. What does the fire represent? Fire often speaks of judgment in the Scriptures (Deut. 4:24; Ps. 50:3; 68:2; Matt. 3:12; 5:22; 18:8; 25:41; Heb. 12:29; 2 Pet. 3:7; Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8) and there can be no question that this fire was depicting God’s judgment upon the sacrificial animal on the altar. This teaches us that all judgment on sin must come from God in order for Him to be satisfied. You can’t judge yourself and deprive yourself of something in order to appease God’s wrath. God alone must send the judgment on the righteous sacrifice if you are going to be freed from judgment. If God decided to judge us we would be separated from God forever in the Lake of Fire. But the good news is that Jesus took the fire of God’s judgment in our place and we are delivered from the fire of God’s judgment by believing in Christ as our personal Savior (John 1:12). God consuming fire of judgment was placed upon Christ when He paid the penalty of sin.

When the people saw that God had judged the sacrifice in their place they shouted and fell down and worshipped the Lord. What else can we do when we understand that Jesus bore the weight of the world’s sin upon Himself and experienced our personal judgment for sin so that we might not be judged in hell for all eternity. I tell you, we should fall on our faces before the Lord and praise Him today with all of our hearts, souls, and minds.

The fire upon the Brazen Altar was first kindled in Heaven. God brought the fire down and devoured the sacrifice. This was divine fire commissioned by God. From this point onward the fire was never to go out. Leviticus 6:12-13 records this divine act:

“And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the

peace offerings. The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.”

Why did God command that the fire never go out after He started the fire on the Brazen Alter? It's because the people never would stop sinning and the sacrifice was made only as an IOU for past sins. There needed to be continual sacrifices for the sins of the people all throughout their lifetime. Why? It's because the sacrifices of animals could never take away the sins of the people (Heb. 10:4) and give them judicial acceptance before God. God required the continual burning and sacrifices to prove that animals could never take away sin. In addition, the continual burning fire upon the altar taught the people the clear message that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) and that another had to take their place in judgment so they could live and be accepted by God. Day after day, year after year, century after century, Israel brought the continuing sacrifices for sin. The fires kept burning because the sin question was never fully and finally answered. But when our Lord offered Himself upon the altar of the cross, when He endured the fires of condemnation for our sins, He did it “once for all” (Heb. 10:12, 14).

Hebrews 7:27

“Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”

My friend, once for all Christ rescued me! Once for all Christ rescued me from the fires of God's eternal judgment. When He died on Calvary's cross my penalty was paid in full by the sinless sacrifice of the Savior and He arose again to prove to the world that the penalty was paid and that the fire had finally gone out! God has placed the full fury of His wrath upon His own Son so that the fire was finally finished burning upon the altar. The Bible says “for this he did once, when he offered up himself” (Heb. 7:27). Now we can sing:

“Free from the law, O happy condition,  
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;  
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,  
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

Now are we free—there's no condemnation,  
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;  
“Come unto Me,” O hear His sweet call,  
Come, and He saves us once for all.

“Children of God,” O glorious calling,  
Surely His grace will keep us from falling;  
Passing from death to life at His call,  
Blessed salvation once for all.

Once for all, O sinner, receive it,  
Once for all, O brother, believe it;  
Cling to the Cross, the burden will fall,  
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.”

Is there any greater message in all the world than this message? Christ died in our place and experienced the fires of God's wrath so that we might escape the Lake of Fire and go to Heaven to be with Him forever. I am sad and yet glad that the fire fell on the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus on the Brazen Alter of the cross so that judgment need not fall on us.

There is one more thing that needs to be mentioned at this point in view of the Brazen Alter. The sacrifice was killed in plain view but burned in the pit halfway down inside the altar out of the site of the people (Lev. 1:11-13; 9:22 – “And Aaron ... came down from offering”). The altar of burnt offering was evidently high enough that the priest climbed up a slope of earth to sacrifice the animal. Exodus 20:26 forbade any steps to the altar to prevent the altar itself from becoming an object of worship. Altars with elaborate craftsmanship and elevated platforms with staircases were common in the worship of false deities. The ramp leading up to the altar was to be unadorned by craftsmanship. It was to be a simple slope of built-up rocks or stones (Deut. 27:5-7), and without steps so the priests would not be indecently exposed. So a natural sloped area from the altar was made that could allow the priests to make their way to the top of the altar and then come down from sacrificing (Lev. 9:22). In any event, the sacrifice would be placed on the altar inside the pit where it would burn and be consumed where no man could see it. In a similar way, when the Lord Jesus hung on the cross it was in plain view (John

19:16-33). But when God “laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6) darkness came over the earth so that no one saw Him suffering on the cross with our sins on Him from the sixth to the ninth hour (Matt. 27:45-46).

Jesus was separated from the eyes of the world and the Father when He hung on the cross in those hours of blackness and darkness. It's during this time when He cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me” (Matt. 27:46). The darkness represented our sins and during those three hours Jesus endured the judgment and wrath of God for our sins. Jesus suffered the penalty for our sins all alone in the darkness. When our sins and God's wrath were poured upon Jesus Christ, He suffered much more than just physical agony. He suffered the mental and spiritual agony of being separated from the Father. It was a time of darkness and gloom. Our sins were placed upon Him, our judgment was experienced by Christ in a judicial way, and the Father forsook the Son in a judicial sense. And there on the cross Jesus, the little Lamb of God, bore the weight of the world's sins and suffered, bled, and died alone. The sacrificial animal was placed down into the pit on the Brazen Alter where no eyes could see it. My friend, there was something too sacred for sinful human eyes to behold. God would not reveal His Son to the eyes of men when He actually bore the weight and judgment of the world's sins. This is why God placed a supernatural darkness over the land. He wanted to hide His blessed and beloved Son from the gaze of men during this time. These was the most sacred and solemn hours that the world has ever known. No man would set his eyes on the suffering servant who took the weight of our sin and the fire of God's judgment upon Himself. There in the blackness of sin and separation from God, Jesus paid for the penalty for your sin and mine. And He did all alone.

“Alone upon the cross He hung  
That others He might save;  
Forsaken then by God and man  
Alone, His life He gave.

Alone, alone, He bore it all alone;  
He gave Himself to save His own,  
He suffered, bled and died alone, alone.”

We are talking about the brass symbolism of the altar. Brass is type of judgment. In continuing this theme we are introduced to the utensils and grate that were made of brass which also pictures the sacrificial death and judgment of Christ on the sinner's behalf.

Exodus 27:3

“And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass.”

The serving utensils or vessels that were used in connection with the Brazen Altar were also types of Jesus Christ. The pans and shovels were used to remove the precious ashes of the sacrifices and carry them outside the camp to be disposed of in a clean place. These ashes were sacred and highly esteemed. The ashes reminded the people that the sacrifice was finished. *The ashes then spoke of the finished work of Christ upon the cross.* Just as the animal was finished with its sacrifice so Christ, after taking the sins of the world upon Himself and paying the price for sin's penalty, yelled from the cross, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The price for salvation had been paid in full. The work of salvation and redemption was finished. It was done! Nothing could be added to what Christ had done! It was finished. The way of salvation had been accomplished through Christ. The ashes were then put into a clean place (Lev. 6:10-11) and in a similar way Christ was taken down from the cross and placed into a clean or new sepulcher at His burial (John 19:41). The body of Christ was tenderly cared for like the ashes of the animal (Matt. 27:57-60).

There were also brass basons (Ex. 27:3) that were used to catch the blood of the slain animal and the blood was then poured out at the base of the altar (Ex. 29:12; Lev. 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34). This act apparently was a means of disposing the overflow of blood. Nevertheless, the pouring out of the blood under the altar typified Christ, who poured out His blood on our behalf at the New Testament altar of the cross (Heb. 9:12-15 – “by his own blood” and Col. 1:20 – “the blood of the cross”). The blood of the offering was poured out round the base of the altar, foreshadowing the Lord Jesus, whose precious blood flowed out when His side was pierced on the cross by a Roman spear (John 19:34).

The piercing of Jesus' side following His death and the final discharge of blood was a reminder that His sacrifice was finished and that God had accepted the sacrificial death of His Son. The blood of Christ flowed freely from the cross even after His sacrifice to indicate the importance of the infinite saving value of His sacrificial death. It was a reminder and memorial of what Jesus Christ had done on the cross of Calvary.

The Scriptures place emphasis on Christ's *blood* and *death*. The two should never be separated for the sake of some theological argument. Both were precious and important to God ("the precious blood of Christ – 1 Pet. 1:19). The blood of the Brazen Altar was then typical of the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed upon the cross.

"Oh the blood of Jesus  
Oh the blood of Jesus  
Oh the blood of Jesus  
That makes me white as snow."

In other words, God grants us forgiveness on the basis of Christ's shed blood, which has paid the penalty for our sins. Through Christ's blood sacrifice our sins are taken away providing forgiveness in God's sight. The expression of forgiveness is comparative to a new white snowfall ("though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" - Isaiah 1:18). The blood will never lose its power! It's the sacrificial death and blood of Jesus Christ that God sees as sufficient to pay for sin's penalty, take away our sins, and grant us justification and acceptance in God's sight. The repeated emphasis on the blood of sprinkling, smearing, and pouring is all descriptive of how Christ shed His blood on the cross. The Tabernacle typology of blood keeps reminding us that God demands blood to be shed and poured out in order for man to be saved.

Hebrews 9:22

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Leviticus 17:11 says:

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

Since the blood is the literal vehicle of all life, whether animal or man, only it could adequately typify life, and give full meaning to God’s saving provision for mankind through Christ. Blood needed to be shed, life needed to be taken, in order to provide forgiveness and eternal life for a lost human race. Both the death and shedding of the blood was important and necessary to God (“the blood ... I have given it to you” and “it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul”). *God has always highlighted the shedding of blood as necessary and important.* This is why one should never separate the death of Christ from the shedding of His blood. Both Christ’s death and shed blood are important to God in the plan of salvation (1 John 1:7). The blood of Christ is more than just metonymy (another term) for Christ’s death. The words death and blood are used in the same context (Rom. 5:6-9) connoting that God saw both the death and shedding of Christ’s blood as important in the plan of redemption. They work together as a harmonious God places value in the shedding of blood, and just as the animal blood was shed on the altar, so Christ’s blood needed to be shed on the cross in order for God to be satisfied with Christ’s sacrifice and accomplish the plan of redemption through death and the sacrificial blood.

Colossians 1:14

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

Revelation 1:5

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

After the blood was poured out the burnt offering was entirely consumed by burning and the only products that remained were ashes and aroma. The burning offering on the altar was a pleasing and sweet aroma to God (Lev.1:9,13,17) that visually demonstrated how a person needed to be accepted before God and forgiven on the basis of a sacrifice (Lev.1:3-4). In Ephesians 5:2 Paul shows us

clearly that the burnt offering was an exact picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, who "loved us, and hath given himself for us and offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour (aroma)." The death of Jesus Christ was a sweet aroma to God. This is because Christ's death satisfied God's righteous demands for sin and His absolute standard of holiness. His death paid the dreadful penalty for sin in full so God no longer had to remain separate from the sinner. The death of His Son pleased God and satisfied God in every way ("He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied – Isa. 53:11). God was satisfied when He left His Son die on the cross and this is why the death of Jesus Christ became the "propitiation" (satisfying sacrifice) for our sins (1 John 2:1-2).

Dear friend, the blood of Christ will never lose its power to save a man completely and forever. This is demonstrated by the continual burnt offering that was offered on the Brazen Altar.

Exodus 29:38-39 commands:

"Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even."

It's clear that a lamb was burnt at the altar every morning and every evening. The continual burnt offering reminded the people that God would constantly provide them with a way of acceptance and forgiveness. God would not back down on His promise. He provided a way of atonement for the sinner that would keep them safe from God's judgment. The continual burnt offering was a reminder of God's pledge to them. In a similar way we must remember that Christ provided a way for the sinner to be forever cleansed and forgiven in God's sight on the basis of His shed blood (Rom. 5:9 – "justified by his blood"). We are commissioned to remember our Lord's death when taking the Lord's Supper ("This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" – 1 Cor. 11:25). But we must also daily remember to reflect upon the cross and what Christ has done for us lest we lose sight of the tremendous price that was paid at Calvary. The people could see the morning and evening smoke ascending up into the heavenly sphere and this continual burnt offering caused the people to be constantly aware and appreciative of what God had provided for them. In a similar way, we



should practice reflecting upon the sacrifice of Christ in a greater way and come to appreciate the sacrifice and payment that was made for our sins. As the people saw the sacrificial smoke rising into the sky so we should see Calvary afresh and anew and live in light of the cross. A proper view of Calvary will bring forth a proper life of service. Dear one, let us live and serve in light of Calvary's cross. Let us remember the judgment that Jesus bore on the cross in our place and never allow the scene of Calvary to become commonplace and mundane to our hearts. Like the continual burnt offering we need a continual reminder of what Jesus went through on our behalf.

“Show me the cross of Calvary, Open my eyes to see  
Thy dying form in agony - Lord make it real to me.  
Show me the cross of Calvary, Open my ears to thy plea:  
Father, forgive them! can it be? Lord, make it real to me.  
Low at the cross of Calvary, Bowed is my heart as I see  
Grace that can save eternally, Lord make it real to me.

Lord make Calvary real to me!  
Jesus dying in agony,  
Thy great sacrifice let me see:  
Lord make Calvary real to me!”

Going back to Exodus 27:3 we find that the fleshhooks (three-pronged forks) were used to separate the parts of the animal in their proper order on the altar (Lev. 1:8; 1 Sam. 2:13). The animal pieces were fastened or hooked in their appropriate places. These hooks represented the cruel hands of the men who nailed Christ to the cross (Luke 23:33; Acts 2:23). The firepans were censers (Lev. 10:1; Numb. 10:1) which were used to transport the burning coals from the Brazen Altar to the candlestick and Altar of Incense in the holy place. These firepans were also used to keep the fire burning upon the altar when traveling and when sacrifices were not being made (Lev. 6:13). Every priest had his own firepan (Lev. 10:1; Ezek. 8:11). These firepans that kept the fire burning upon the altar would represent how Christ's work on the cross would continually be made known to the Father through His intercessory work (Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1). Today Christ is before the throne in Heaven as our High Priest and He represents the continuing saving value or efficacy of His own sacrifice before the Father. *As the firepans kept the altar fires burning to*

*remind the people of sacrificial judgment so there is a constant awareness in Heaven of Christ's sacrificial judgment on behalf of sinners.* The fire of the Son's judgment upon the cross will never be forgotten. It's this same fire of judgment that is remembered in Heaven to assure the believer of their acceptance before God. There is a continual awareness in Heaven of the sacrifice of Christ (Rev. 5:12 – "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain").

There was a brass grate under the Brazen Altar on which fuel and offerings were laid (Ex. 27:4-5). There was also a ring in each corner. Carrying poles made of "shittim" or acacia wood covered with brass and were used to carry or transport the altar (Ex. 27:6-8). This was done by placing the poles through the rings on the four corners of the altar. As already indicated by a previous study the brass and wood features of these pieces would indicate the sacrificial judgment that Jesus bore on the cross as the God-man. The brass points to sacrifice and judgment (Christ's sacrifice) while the wood points to that which is earthly (Christ's humanity). Christ became man so that as a man He could be judged on the behalf of sinners. *But the fact that the altar was transported and kept before the people means that the Israelites were never to lose sight of God's requirement for sacrifice.* As already mentioned, the truth about Christ's sacrifice on the cross will never be lost. All of heaven's occupants will be reminded of the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on Calvary's cross as Jesus presents Himself in Heaven (Heb. 12: 22-24 – "to the blood of sprinkling"). Christ's blood will be represented in Heaven in the sense that we will see the living Lord Jesus Christ and His life will remind us that the Father has fully, finally, and forever accepted His blood sacrifice as the only ground for our forgiveness in God's sight. We will never forget the blood! When we look at Jesus we will look at the One who died for us and shed His blood on the cross. When we look at Him we will be eternally reminded of what He did for us. As the altar was transported to the next destination in order to remind the Israelites of the importance of sacrifice so the occupants of Heaven will be eternally reminded about the message of the blood of Jesus. The message of the blood will never become an old story to the redeemed of Glory. It will continually be a fresh and never-ending story. Down from His glory never-ending story!

Revelation 5:9 says:

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

The altar was transported or moved in order to continually remind the people of sacrifice. In a similar way the message of Christ’s blood and sacrificial death has been transported inside the Heavenly gates and throughout eternity the redeemed of God will sing about it and praise God for His redeeming blood (“which he purchased with his own blood” – Acts 20:28).

## 2. The Purpose of the Altar.

Why was there a brass altar on which sacrifices were placed? What purpose did the altar and sacrifices play in the people’s minds and hearts? Why did God establish a sacrificial system? In short, God instituted sacrifice in order to temporarily cover or atone for the people’s sins (Ex. 30:10; Lev. 1:4; Lev. 16:34; Heb. 9:7) until Christ would come and provide the actual sacrifice that would remove the sins of Old Testament saints (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:15). Before Christ would come the sacrificial system was God’s way of revealing man’s need for salvation and pardon. The animal sacrifices served as a tangible means for the Old Testament saints to show their belief in and obedience to God’s plan of redemption. Through animal sacrifice God would continually educate the people of their sin and need for forgiveness (Heb. 10:3). Through the altar of sacrifices God would continue to give them a shadow of His plan of redemption. The Tabernacle atoning sacrifices were God’s way to teach about cleansing from sin through blood sacrifice. The sacrifices were object lessons to God’s children pointing them to the coming Redeemer and Messiah who would be “the lamb of God without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19). There is ample evidence that the Jews expected a coming Redeemer and understood the sacrifices as pointing to this Redeemer (Gen. 3:15; John 8:56; Isa. 53:5-11; Heb. 11:13). The Jews knew about the Messianic prophecies and what they pointed to (Psalm 16; 22; Isa. 53; Acts 2:25-28, 31; Luke 24:27; 1 Pet. 1:10–12; Luke 24:44). The teaching and tradition of sacrifice had been passed down through the centuries and the Jewish people were well aware of

the coming Redeemer. The people were expecting a coming Messiah based upon the Hebrew Scriptures (Matt. 11:3; Luke 2:25-26, 38; 3:15; John 1:19-28, 41; 4:25, 29, 42; Acts 10:43). Therefore, the sacrifices upon the altar served as an object lesson to remind them of their need for this Redeemer and final cleansing through His sacrifice for them. Every time an Israelite brought an offering to the altar they knew that Someone was coming who would one day take the place of the animal sacrifices and remove their sins and guilt forever (Heb. 10:16-17). The people knew that Someone was coming!

### 3. The Prominence of the Altar.

The large altar was the prominent structure that was seen when entering the courtyard. Of all the Tabernacle furniture the altar was used the most. The high priest went into the Holy of Holies only once a year but he was at the Brazen Altar all through the day as the people came with their sacrifices. Of course, the altar was the very first thing the Israelites saw when they entered the door of the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:29 – “and he put the altar of burnt-offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation”). Why did God do this? It’s because the people needed to be constantly reminded that their forgiveness and atonement was based upon only one thing – the sacrificial blood of the animal. No one could miss and God didn’t want any person to miss it. Why? It’s because there is no other way to have acceptance before God without blood sacrifice. Since the Brazen Altar with its sacrifices pointed to the death of Jesus Christ, as our Lamb, we need to remember the importance of keeping the Gospel message about the cross and death of Christ before a lost and dying world. It must be our prominent message and theme.

1 Corinthians 2:2

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

As the Brazen Altar was the prominent article of furniture that was used to remind people of their sin and need for cleansing. In a similar way our Gospel preaching and witnessing today must keep the message of the cross, the death of Christ, and man’s need for salvation in the forefront. A lost world must come face to face with the Brazen Altar. A lost human race must see themselves as dreadful

sinner in need of the cross of Christ to remedy their sin and bring them into a right relationship with God. In many Gospel tracts today there is not one word about Christ suffering on the cross for sin's penalty and taking the judgment and wrath of God in the place of people. The Word of God clearly tells us to preach the Gospel "how that Christ died for our sins ... was buried, and ... rose again (1 Cor. 15:3). Much of what is called Gospel preaching today is a million miles away from the Gospel! There is not one word mentioned about the cross or Christ's death for sinners. Sinners are simply told to "Ask Jesus into their hearts" or "Commit themselves to Jesus." My friend, we have no hope without the death of Jesus Christ. Listen, when you fail to share Christ death and man's need for salvation through Christ's shed blood on the cross; it's then that you take away the altar. You have missed the truth about God's Gospel and man's need for salvation through Christ's death. The cross must be prominent in our preaching and witnessing today even as the altar was the prominent item of furniture in the Tabernacle that was used by God to teach man that he needed forgiveness through a blood sacrifice. If you take away the altar, if you take away the cross, then you have no Gospel message. Don't avoid the cross and its meaning in your Gospel witnessing and when you share your faith.

Vance Havner said this of most preachers:

"They almost say it, and most will think they have said it, but they make a neat detour at the cross."

We cannot detour from the cross. The cross is to be our theme and central message to lost sinners. We must keep the cross of Christ, the New Testament altar, as the theme of the Gospel message and our own heart.

Galatians 6:14

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

I am not to glory in myself or my accomplishments. I am not to glory in others and their positions and greatness. The Bible says I am to glory in the cross. The more we glory in the cross and the more we survey the wondrous cross the more we will love Christ, serve Him,

and express our gratitude and thanks. Too often we forget about the great price that was paid for us (1 Pet. 1:18-19 – “the precious blood of Christ”). Too often we lose sight of the central and prominent theme of Scripture and the Gospel – the cross. We must embrace the cross once again – the cross of Jesus. It must be the theme of our hearts, songs, and lives once again. In our study of the Brazen Altar we are reminded of how Christ bore the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross. He took the wrath of God that was against us and experienced God’s judgment in our stead. On the cross Jesus died for you, as you, and in your place.

“I love the cross of Jesus,  
It tells me what I am  
A vile and guilty creature,  
Saved only through the Lamb;  
No righteousness nor merit,  
No beauty can I plead;  
Yet in the cross I glory,  
My title there I read.”

The penalty that the animal sacrifices incurred prefigured the penalty that Christ would have to bare for the sins of the world. God demands a penalty for sin (Rom. 6:23) and Christ as the righteous One took that penalty upon Himself which was death (1 Cor. 15:3 – “Christ died for our sins”) and separation from God (Mark 15:34 – “Why hast thou forsaken me”). Jesus Christ paid the full penalty so we could escape God’s wrath and separation from Him forever in hell. The animal died in the place of the people and took the wrath that the people deserved. In a similar way, Christ bore the penalty that we deserved for our sins. On the cross He experienced the wrath and judgment of God for our own sins (Gal. 3:13), so that we, through faith in Jesus’ provision (Acts 16:31), could go free and never be penalized for our sins (“shall not come into condemnation” – John 5:24). We have been set free from sin’s condemnation and power of sin through the liberating death of Christ on our behalf. This is why we can shout and sing today:

“Tis the song of the soul set free,  
And my heart is every ringing.

Tis the song of the soul set free,  
Joy and peace to me it's bringing.

Tis the song of the soul set free,  
And my heart is ever ringing.  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,  
The song of the soul set free!"

Here is an important question to ponder in light of our present study on the Tabernacle and its typical meaning of Christ. How can God associate with sinners and still maintain His honor and holiness? God's holiness could not be tainted nor compromised to achieve His desired result, which was man's salvation. It follows that only God could meet His own requirements and in Christ He did just that. The Father poured out His judgment upon the perfect sacrifice of His only Son (John 3:16) and in doing so allowed the lost sinner to come to faith in Christ and be accepted in God's presence forever (1 Pet. 3:18). You see, the sinner can only meet God through the cross, or on the basis of the shed blood and merit of Christ Himself (Rom. 5:9), who opened the way of forgiveness an access to God (Rom. 5:1-2).

Because God is holy He cannot condone sin, overlook it, or wink at it (Hab. 1:13). He must punish it and the punishment for sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Yet God loves the sinner (John 3:16) and wants to save the sinner from doom and damnation. There is then a dilemma. *God's holiness and righteousness demands the sinner's death but His love desires the sinner's eternal salvation.* The Gospel reveals how God can save sinners without compromising His holiness or righteousness. Jesus, as the perfect untainted sacrifice, died for your sins in order to pay the penalty for those sins. It was a penalty that God required. However, when Jesus died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice (Heb. 9:14), He satisfied the righteous demands of God and the justice of God, so we can go free and be eternally accepted in God's presence (Rom. 8:33-34). Jesus then rose again (1 Cor. 15:3-4) the third day to authenticate Himself and His claims, to verify that the Father had accepted His payment for sin, and so He could give us the gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23). What a Savior!

#### 4. The Presentations of the Altar.

There were five principal offerings presented to the Lord and placed on the Brazen Altar. Every one of these offerings is significant for it points to the work of Christ. The fire of this altar burned several kinds of offerings as they were given according to the instructions of God. These are called Leviticus offerings (Heb. 7:11), not because they appear in Leviticus, but because the priests which came from the tribe of Levi offered these sacrifices for the people. At the altar the priests sacrificed various offerings to God; some offerings were for their own sins and for the sins of the people. Another word for sacrifices was the word offerings. The offerings that were given on the Brazen Altar were sacrificial offerings and when taken as a whole they portray in shadow and type the one perfect offering of Christ upon the cross. They were indeed “a shadow of good things to come” (Heb. 10:1).

#### a. The Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1).

The Levitical offerings speak of the finished work on Calvary and of all the offering the burnt offering presents the highest type. In the burnt offering of Leviticus chapter one Christ is seen as suffering the judgment of God on our behalf. He is seen taking the penalty of sin that we deserved. One might wonder how many animals could be burned on an altar with such a small surface area. You might get the picture of a large number of animals being heaped upon the altar waiting their burning. Actually, the only offering in which the entire animal was burned was the burnt offering. For the other offerings only the fat, blood, kidneys, and caul were offered on the brazen altar.

#### 1. The Obvious Picture

The expression burnt offering is used in Leviticus chapter one (vv. 3, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17 – “burnt sacrifice” and “burnt offering”). The fact that the animal was burned to death upon the Brazen Altar signified how Christ would suffer the fire of God’s judgment when dying upon the cross (Gal. 3:13 – “cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree”). When Jesus hung on the cross during those dark hours He was enduring the wrath and fire of God’s judgment for a world of lost sinners. This is the obvious meaning that is portrayed by the burnt offering. Jesus was fully consumed with God’s fiery wrath and



judgment when He hung upon the cross. He experienced the fury and fullness of God's holy wrath when He hung upon the tree.

1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

There are on the cross Jesus "suffered for sins." This means much more than just physical suffering. *It means that Christ was consumed with the fire and wrath of God on Calvary's cross.* Jesus Christ became a burnt offering upon the cross so that God's holiness could be vindicated through a perfect sacrifice, so God could be satisfied with a sacrifice that could save sinners, and so God's anger could be appeased toward sinners who come to Him in faith. Have you been to the altar of the cross where Jesus experienced the fire of God's wrath on your behalf? The smoke ascending up toward heaven indicated that God had accepted the sacrifice on behalf of the sinner. In a similar way, when Jesus rose from the dead and ascended back to heaven (Acts 1:10-11) to be seated at the Father's right hand (Heb. 1:3), it signified and confirmed that God the Father had accepted the sacrifice of God the Son as our only means of justification before His presence (Rom. 4:25 – "raised again for our justification"). Someone wrote:

"I have been at the altar and witnessed the Lamb  
Burnt wholly to ashes for me;  
And watched its sweet savour ascending on high,  
Accepted, O Father, by Thee."

So here was the message of God to the Israelite. Either you must die, or the offering can die in your place, a life for a life. If the offering dies, then there is atonement and forgiveness (Leviticus 1:4). If the offering does not die then there is judgment and no hope for the sinner. The message was very clear. No Jew could miss what God was teaching by this sacrificial system.

## 2. The Offerings Presented

It's interesting that nowhere in the sacrificial system was a hen or a rooster ever used as a burnt sacrifice. Only clean domesticated

animals were to be used as stipulated by the law. An old Jewish custom prescribed that roosters be sacrificed or killed on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) because there was no temple in which to sacrifice. But this is not according to God's requirement. The people were actually allowed to bring several types of offerings and present them to the Lord as a burnt offering in their place. There were bulls, (oxen – Lev. 1:2, 5), male sheep and male goats (vs. 10). There were also offerings of turtledoves and young pigeons (vs. 14). The types of animals offered by the Israelites were in accordance with what they could afford. Turtle doves and pigeons were poor people's offerings (Lev. 12:8). This is why Joseph and Mary offered birds for a sacrifice at Jesus' dedication (Luke 2:21-24). Rich people brought bulls, the middle class brought sheep or goats, and the poor brought turtledoves and young pigeons. This tells us that there is no excuse for anyone not to offer a sacrifice. Furthermore, there is no excuse why you can't be saved today! God provides an opportunity for everyone to be right with Him if they want to be. The trouble with many today is that they really don't want to believe what God says, respond to the voice of the Spirit, nor do they want what He has to offer them. If you will just bring a little turtledove you will be accepted. This is what God says.

Now let's think about the animals that were offered. The docile animals such as the doves and pigeons pictorially represented Christ as the One who was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29). They represent how Christ "humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8) and how He "became poor" so that we "thought his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). The sheep reminds us how Jesus was led as a lamb before the slaughter to die the sinner's death (Isa. 53:7). The bullock or ox speaks of Christ's strength and determination to follow the Father's will (John 4:34) and how Jesus became "obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:8) bearing the dreadful curse for your sin and mine. Oh what a Savior! There is no other Savior!

The animal sacrifices had to be at least eight days old (Lev. 22:27; Ex. 22:30). The purpose of this commandment is not clear, but it was perhaps given in order to impress upon the Israelites the importance of keeping sacred the relationship existing between parent and offspring. One thing is certain. Only perfect animals were acceptable

since they represented a perfect sacrifice, like Christ's (Lev. 22:17-25; Deut. 15:21, 17:1). When it came to the vow or votive sacrifices that were offered they had to be clean and without blemish. The Lord reminded the people of this earlier when the burnt offering was introduced. The offering was to be "without blemish" (Lev. 1:3). Of course, this was true of Christ who was personified as "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19). The demand for unblemished sacrifices prefigures Jesus Christ who was offered as the sinless Son of God upon the cross of Calvary ("offered himself without spot to God" – Heb. 9:14). Any departure from a clean offering was to lower the concept of the person of Christ and the holy demands of God. We know that Israel failed miserably in this area. At one point they began to bring those sacrifices which were torn, lame, and sick for their offerings. For this reason God called forth from the prophets a denunciation of their offerings.

#### Malachi 1:7-8

"Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts."

Malachi is evidently referencing the Brazen Altar on which the burnt offering was offered. The offerings upon the altar are likened to "polluted bread" for these offerings were called the food of God (Lev. 21:6). There is a practical lesson in all of this. Our worship of the Lord, what we bring to Him in our time of worship, must be clean and not polluted by the world system. Our worship must be holy and righteous (2 Cor. 6:14-17 – "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"). This is an important question and lesson for the present hour in which we live today. God is looking for wholesome worship that represents and honors His holiness. Much of what is called worship today is despised, disgraceful, and disrespectful to the Lord. We have polluted God's house and altar today with a type of worship or sound that mimics the world system and which is unholy (1 John 2:15-17). The table of the Lord is contemptible (vs. 7). The table of the Lord is polluted (vs. 12). It is despised and disgraced today by modern, evangelical, worldly music and manmade

pragmatism. The lesson of Leviticus and the Tabernacle offerings is that God does not use just anything in worship nor does He accept that which is unholy. You cannot just barge into the presence of God with anything that you please.

Malachi 1:10

“Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.”

Malachi is saying that someone could shut down the temple services and it would not matter to God for the services and sacrifices were useless and worthless to God. Malachi said the whole temple service might as well be shut down if this type of unclean and unholy worship continues. Let me just say something that is very candid and straightforward today. I would rather shut down this church than see it become polluted with a type of worship that reflects Satan and His work. Malachi said it was useless to come and worship the Lord with the wrong kind of sacrifices. It was even useless to light the fires on the altar of burnt offering (“do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought” (for nothing, without cause). God was not pleased. Therefore, they were worshipping for nought (without cause). This is because God would not accept any offerings from them since they were unholy. Imagine what God is saying. The LORD of hosts wishes that someone would shut the doors of the temple so that the sacrifices might stop. This is because the sacrifices were utterly unacceptable to Him. I believe the same thing could be said today in light of what is going on in many churches. I know I’m not going to win a popularity contest for saying this but the truth cannot be swept under the carpet any longer. It’s been ignored too long in many of our churches. Let’s set the record straight. God does not accept just any kind of worship! It would be better that some churches would close their doors than to keep on polluting God’s holy altar.

People repeatedly say to me today, “But my heart is right when I sing contemporary rock and religious songs. My feelings are stirred and I feel like I’m worshipping God. When I hear the driving beat I become excited about God and spiritual things. I’ve prayed about it and found out what God wants for me. Let’s stop all of our worship wars and feel

the music and really worship together.” My friend, many people today talk like this but I’m convinced that they are worshipping their style of contemporary worship, their groovy music, and their fleshly feelings instead of truly worshipping God. God is not interested in how you feel or what kind of electrical impulse you get when you come to church. He is not interested in what you think is right for you. God is only interested in only one thing - clean sacrifices! God is interested in holy worship. This is the message of the animal sacrifices which were to be without blemish. It’s the message of Leviticus, Malachi, and the entire Bible.

We had better make sure our worship is not man-centered, worldly, and a carnal diversion from what God wants and accepts as true worship. Whenever we try to use the same approach or sound that the devil uses to promote His agenda of rebellion, sex, and drugs we are attempting to mix the unrighteous with the righteous, light with darkness, Christ with Satan, the lifestyle of a believer with an unbeliever, our body (the temple of God) with the temple of idols (see 2 Cor. 6:14-16). As a result our worship becomes polluted. God commands us “to touch not the unclean thing” (2 Cor. 6:17) such as pagan worship and practices that reflect a system that is against God and His righteous ways. In essence, God is saying, “I don’t want the maimed, the blind, and the polluted bread. I want that which is holy and honoring to Me. I want worship that is unblemished and clean.” God is not pleased with the meat of blind, crippled, or diseased animals; in fact He will not accept it. Would you give a diseased portion of meat to your leader? If not, then don’t give it to God (Malachi 1:10). God asks, “Should I accept this of your hand?” (vs. 13). Dear friend, how can God accept worship that is tainted? God is very clear on the type of worship that He accepts. Beware lest your worship becomes diseased and you don’t know it. This was the case with the people of God during the days of Malachi for he says, “Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?” (vs. 7). How sad when God’s people become gradually insensitive to what is holy or right and no longer can see their own polluted ways and worship before the Lord. Dear friend it takes an encounter with God’s holiness to free a person from worship that is fleshly and patterned after the world system that is against God and righteousness. This is an important message for the present hour in which we live. May God speak to our hearts today.

Now there is another lesson in these offerings that we should take to heart today. Even though all Scripture is not to us it is for us (Rom. 15:4). Now think of this. Although the poor were allowed to give a turtledove or pigeon, the middle class sheep or goats, and the rich an ox, all were expected to give their best. Doesn't God want believers to give their best today? Give of your best to the Master! Often Christians bring gifts to the Church that are of no value. They are old and worn out. They bring their old stoves, mowers, and garden shovels that are worn out and which costs them nothing. The same is true of their financial offerings. We bring God a turtledove when we know we can give him a sheep or ox. God does not want us to offer that which costs us nothing.

2 Samuel 24:24

"And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."

What have you offered to the Lord this Sunday or last Sunday? What was your offering to God? Did it cost you something? Did it hurt a little? Now listen. God's plan for giving has always been according to what we have and not what we don't have ("according to what a man hath, and not according to that he that not" - 2 Cor. 8:12). If you can only give a pigeon then praise the Lord but make sure that you give the pigeon and not a sparrow! Make sure that what you give is a sacrifice that costs you something. God blesses sacrificial giving (2 Cor. 8:1-2). Sacrificial giving always costs us something. One thing is certain. No matter where we are at in the pay scale God wants us to give the best that we have. God doesn't want a pigeon when we can give a goat. God doesn't want a sheep when we can give an ox. This truth pertains to all that we do for the Lord. Doesn't God deserve our very best?

"Give of your best to the Master;  
Give of the strength of your youth;  
Throw your soul's fresh, glowing ardor  
Into the battle for truth.  
Jesus has set the example;  
Dauntless was He, young and brave;

Give Him your loyal devotion,  
Give Him the best that you have.

Give of your best to the Master;  
Give Him first place in your heart;  
Give Him first place in your service,  
Consecrate ev'ry part.  
Give, and to you shall be given;  
God His beloved Son gave;  
Gratefully seeking to serve Him,  
Give Him the best that you have.

Give of your best to the Master;  
Naught else is worthy His love;  
He gave Himself for your ransom,  
Gave up His glory above:  
Laid down His life without murmur,  
You from sin's ruin to save;  
Give Him your heart's adoration,  
Give Him the best that you have.”

### 3. The Offerers

My friend, when Jesus died on the cross He paid for the penalty of sin in full and there is nothing else we can do to make ourselves accepted before a holy God. It's interesting that the offerer himself had no contact with the altar. He was not allowed to touch the Brazen Altar (Num. 4:15; 18:22). This tells us that “salvation is of the LORD” (Jonah 2:9). Man has nothing to do with salvation. He might like to think that he does but man cannot do anything that Christ on the cross has not already done. The offerer had no contact with the Tabernacle and offerings for he had nothing to do with his salvation. He simply came by faith and received all the benefits of salvation and reconciliation to God. The same is true today. Man cannot touch the cross. Jesus paid it all on the cross and the work has nothing to do with man. In a similar way God started the fire on the altar in a miraculous manner (Lev. 9:24) to indicate that salvation in its origin was totally unrelated to man. This also teaches us an important and serious lesson concerning salvation. God will not permit any mixture

of human works in His plan of salvation – it is all of grace (Eph. 2:8-9). Works can never pay the penalty for sin. It must be the fire of God! It must be God’s judgment upon His Son that saves a man completely and forever. Only God’s consuming fire upon His Son can pay the penalty for our sins. Any other fire that is offered on the altar is called “strange fire” (Lev. 10:1-3).

“Love moved Jehovah’s hand to smite;  
Love moved the Son to bear:  
How sweet on Calvary to stand!  
The God of love is there.”

Leviticus 1:3

“If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord.”

Now the Israelites offered their own voluntary sacrifices at the door of the tabernacle (“his own voluntarily will” - Lev. 1:3). Dear friend, this reminds us how salvation is a matter of free choice and of a person’s voluntary decision. A person must voluntarily come to Jesus Christ if they are ever going to be saved (John 3:16; Rev. 22:17).

John 7:37

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”

Leviticus 1:4

“And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.”

When the Israelite pressed their hands on the head of the burnt offering (vs. 4) a meaningful identification took place. The offerer identified himself with the sacrifice understanding that the animal was his personal substitute – the animal was substituting its own life for the Israelite. Placing their hand upon the sacrifice expressed their faith in the sacrifice to accomplish what God had promised – atonement for sin (vs. 4). In a prophetic and anticipatory way the Israelite’s faith also took hold of the promise of a Redeemer (Gen. 3:15) that would one day shed His blood upon the altar of the



Calvary's cross. They believed what God has said about the coming Seed and Savior knowing that the animal was but a temporary covering for sin. The sacrifice was accepted by God as an atonement for the offerers in order to protect them from God's divine wrath and judgment ("be accepted for him" – vs. 4). In a similar way God accepted Christ's offering on our behalf when "he hath made him to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21). Let me stress once again that there is only one offering that the Father accepts for the salvation of lost people. It's the offering of His Son upon the cross of Calvary that the Father accepts as eternally efficacious for the sin of lost man (Eph. 5:2).

Hebrews 10:14

"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

The Israelites killed the animals on the north side of the brazen altar ("northward before the LORD" - Lev. 1:11). The north was the direction of Heaven and suggests that God was accepting their sacrifice for sin. When the Israelite drew the sharp knife across the animal's throat, killing him, his responsibility was fulfilled concerning the burnt offering ("And he shall kill the bullock" – Lev. 1:5). This act left an indelible impression on his mind concerning the significance of sacrifice. The offerer realized that the innocent animal was suffering a death that they deserved. It must have presented an unforgettable picture of the horror of sin and the price that had to be paid to atone for it. Let me say today that we must never forget how horrible and terrible it was when the sins of the entire world were placed upon Jesus Christ on the cross. The cross is a place of horror for it was a place where Jesus Christ paid the penalty for the sins of the lost human race. On the cross Jesus suffered the death that we deserved much like the innocent animal that suffered the death for the offerer.

1 Peter 2:24

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

How terrible. What horror! It was there on the cross that Jesus bare the sins of the world. The word "bare" is a word of substitution. Jesus

bore the penalty for our sins, the penalty that we deserved, upon Himself. He experienced the wrath and separation of God on our behalf so that we might never experience wrath and separation from God. This is what really happened on Calvary. My friend, Calvary is a horrible site. Do you know why? It's because sin is a horrible and terrible thing. Yes, Calvary is a place of grace and love. But Calvary is also a place of horror for on Calvary Jesus took the incalculable wicked and vile sins of a human race upon Himself and suffered the death that we deserved. Sin is a terrible thing. It took the life of our Lord. We look at sin so lightly today but God takes it seriously. TV shows and our society make fun of sin and speak lightly of sin. But sin is terrible in God's sight and it was our sins that Jesus took upon Himself causing Calvary to become a scene of horror, much like the scene at the Brazen Altar, where the animal sacrifice was killed, where the blood began to flow, and where the animal was consumed by fire. Isaiah 53:6 says that "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." What a terrible and awful thing.

A.J. Gossip once said:

"Get the people in the sight of Calvary. Pause there... hushed and reverent; enable them to look, to see it, make it real to them, not just an old tale that has lost its wonder and its stab, but a tremendous awful fact."

Calvary was an awful fact. Jesus took the heinous and horrible sins of the entire world upon Himself and bore their penalty before God. Before a man can get saved he must see just how terrible his sin is in the sight of God. He must then see Jesus taking that sin upon Himself on Calvary to be judged in his place. When a man fully grasps this he will come running to the cross for refuge and salvation crying "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

#### 4. The Officiating Priests

The Mosaic Law detailed the specific functions that were required by the officiating priests at the Brazen Altar. First, the priests caught the blood that gushed from the slain animals and sprinkled it "round about upon the altar" (Lev. 1:5). The priests functioned as mediators between God and the people when they sprinkled the blood on the altar and offered the animal upon the altar. In a similar way Christ is

the believer's mediating priest or mediator who offered His own blood when He died on the cross.

1 Timothy 2:5-6

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

When the priests also took the sacrifice from the Israelites this became a beautiful picture of how Christ gave Himself over to the Father's will. During His agonizing time in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). What really happened in the Garden of Gethsemane? It was here that the Son demonstrated His surrender to the Father's will. The dreaded cup of Calvary, the separation from the Father, was something that Jesus did not look forward to. However, the Lord Jesus was willing to be separated from the Father and endure the wrath of the Father for you and me. As the priests were willing to take the offerers sacrifice so Jesus was willing to give of Himself on the cross and be separated from the presence of the Father.

Second, the priest would then meticulously cut or flay the animal into divided pieces (Lev. 1:6-8). Birds were handled differently (vv. 14-17). Their heads were removed (vs. 15) by the priests and the blood was then drained out on the side of the altar. The bird's crops (stomachs) and feathers were removed and cast on the ash heap near the east side of the altar (vs. 16). The birds were not divided like the other animals. They were cut down the center, spread open (vs. 17), and the insides were removed.

Third, the priests were responsible for preparing the altar by putting on wood in order to keep the fire burning ("put fire upon the altar" - vs. 7). The fire was to be kept burning perpetually by the priests (Lev. 6:13). The fire mentioned in connection with the altar speaks of God's righteous judgment (Lev. 10:1-2). Dear friend, God's word is very clear from the very beginning. God demands the judgment of another in order to appease His wrath. For Adam and Eve He demanded "coats of skins" (Gen. 3:21) and for Cain and Abel a blood sacrifice. God demands a sacrifice to be judged in order for man to be

accepted by Him. So Jesus Christ was judged on our behalf. The Father judged His Son with His own fiery judgment on the cross so that we could go free and escape the wrath of God (John 3:16). Jesus became the sinner's burnt offering.

Fourth, the priests were given the responsibility to ceremonially wash the organs and legs of the animals before placing the pieces on the altar (Lev. 1:9) since these parts were subject to defilement. This act presents Christ to us in a most wonderful way. Jesus Christ was perfect sacrifice. He was clean both inwardly and outwardly (1 Pet. 2:22 – "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth"). Then too, when Jesus was placed on the cross He was placed "without spot" (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19). Jesus was clean during His earthly ministry and clean when He was offered upon the cross.

"Guilty vile and helpless we;  
Spotless Lamb of God was He;  
"Full atonement!" can it be?  
Hallelujah! what a Savior!"

Fifth, the priests would then offer the washed pieces in the same order in which they appeared in the animals' bodies (vs. 8). All we can say is that God is a God of order (1 Cor. 14:40) and when He left Jesus die on the cross it was according to His plan that had been ordained and ordered from eternity past (Rev. 13:8).

Sixth, after completing the sacrifice, the priest set aside his priestly garments, put on linen attire (Lev. 6:10), carried the ashes outside of the camp, and put them in a clean place (Lev. 6:11). Disposing of the remains spoke of Christ's burial and as we have already noted Christ's body was taken from the cross by Joseph of Arimathaea, wrapped in clean linen, and laid in a new tomb (Matt. 27:57-60) "wherein was never man yet laid" (John 19:41).

The message of the burnt offering is clear. Jesus was judged by God's righteous wrath on the cross. He was burned to death by God's wrath and judgment for you and for me. The animal that was burned to death upon the Brazen Altar signified how Christ would suffer the fire of God's judgment when dying upon the cross.

## b. The Meal Offering (Leviticus 2)

Keep in mind that when we are looking at the various Levitical offerings they are representing various aspects of the life and death of Christ. We now move on to the next offering. There was one exception to the blood sacrifices that were offered on the altar. It was the meal offering. The word “meat” (Lev. 2:1) can also be translated meal offering. The King James Version was written when the word “meat” was used in a more generic sense that referred to food – not necessarily flesh. This was not a meat as we know meat today but a meal offering. The meal offering, being bloodless, speaks of the life of Christ and not His death.

There were several kinds of meal offering. One offering was made out of uncooked flour mixed with oil and frankincense. The “fine flour” (Lev. 2:1) was a type of flour that was very fine and even. It was the highest grade of flour. There was nothing coarse in this flour. This typified the impeccability (sinlessness) of Christ. During Christ’s earthly ministry He went through the sifting process of Satan’s temptations and testings of the religious leaders. However, Jesus passed all the temptations and tests with perfection. Jesus Christ could not sin, did not sin (Heb. 7:26), and was the sinless sacrifice on the cross (Heb. 9:14) that God the Father could accept to finally take away sin. Jesus Christ could die as the sinner’s substitute only because He was sinless man and the eternal and all-powerful God. The fire consumed the meal offering which tells the never-ending story how Christ was obedient even unto the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8).

The flour was mixed or mingled with olive oil (Lev. 2:1 – “he shall pour oil upon it” – also vv. 4-5, 7, 15-16). The oil may represent the Holy Spirit indwelt and empowered Jesus during His earthly ministry. Oil is used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit (1 Sam. 16:13). The anointing, as in the experience of Saul, was accompanied by the coming of the Spirit of God mightily on the young lad. This was the supernatural authentication of God’s will for David. Later David was anointed king over Judah (2 Sam. 2:4) and then over Israel (2 Sam. 5:3). Oil then speaks of the ministry of the Holy Spirit and in a special way points to the kingship of our Lord and how He was anointed to do God’s work while on earth. Think of what Jesus said:

Luke 4:18

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”

Jesus seems to link and even compare the Holy Spirit to anointing with oil. Certainly oil can in various Bible passages portray the personal presence and power of the Holy Spirit's ministry. Such is the case here. Jesus was anointed with power from the Holy Spirit to do His saving and deliverance work. We need this same anointing today. And if we are ever going to help people to be set free from sin, Satan, and shattered lives then we must first experience this anointing ourselves. Dear friend, we need the oil of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts and lives today. We can't keep the cylinders of our lives running without oil.

Think of what John said of Christ.

John 3:34

“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.”

The Holy Spirit played a major role in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus was conceived (Matt. 1:18-20; Isa. 7:14), baptized (Matt. 3:16; Isa. 11:2), anointed (Heb. 1:9), empowered for service (Luke 4:14, 18), and resurrected (Rom. 8:11) with the Holy Spirit's presence. No wonder the flour was mixed with oil. Just as the oil made the flour useful for baking, so the Holy Spirit enabled Christ in His humanity to be useful for God's purposes. Dear friend, the same is true of us today. We need to depend on the person, power, and presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives as well (Gal. 5:25). We are nothing without the Spirit's ministry and enablement. Charismatics are not the only Christians that have and who need the Holy Spirit. I once told a Christian man who was defeated and down in the dumps something that stunned him. I told him, “You can't live the Christian life.” He looked at me rather startled. It's true. You can't live the Christian life. It takes the Holy Spirit to live it through you. If you rely upon your own psychological tricks and gimmicks you will fail. It takes the power of

the Holy Spirit to give you victory and a life of true and lasting freedom.

The “frankincense” was used as a fragrance (Lev. 2:1, 15-16). When it was burned it would distribute a wonderful scent among the people. The life of our blessed Lord was a wonderful fragrance to the Father for Jesus said “I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). The Father’s voice from Heaven at Christ’s baptism said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). The fragrance of the Christ’s sinless life was something special to the Father. The Father was pleased with the Son in every way.

Leviticus 2:1 reveals that the meal offering was a “sweet savour unto the LORD.” The burnt offering was also called “a sweet savour unto the LORD” (Lev. 1:9, 17) or aroma unto God, as it went up to God as a smoky vapor. The same is now said of the meal offering (Lev. 1:2, 9) and later the peace offering (Lev. 3:5, 16). These three offerings are called “sweet savour offerings” because of what they portrayed about Christ. *The first three offerings set forth the perfections that God the Father finds in the Son.* Jesus lived a perfect life while He was on planet earth. His life pleased the Father (meal offering). When Jesus was judged by God’s fiery wrath He was judged as the perfect offering and sacrifice (Lev. 1:3) who knew no sin (the burnt offering). Paul spoke of Christ’s sacrificial work as “a sweet-smelling savour” (Eph. 5:2). As we will note in the next offering, when Jesus died on the cross He provided a peaceful settlement between God and the sinner whereby the sinner can be reconciled and made right before God (peace offering). The peace offering was also called “a sweet savour unto the LORD” (Lev. 3:1, 5, 16) or aroma unto God for the simple reason that the Father was pleased with what the Son accomplished for a lost human race. The Son opened the way for man to have peace before a holy and righteous God.

Now back to the meal offering. We also discover that there was another type of offering that was baked with “unleavened cakes” (Lev. 2:4-5). Unleavened cakes of bread were not to be used in any of the offerings.

Leviticus 2:11 says:

“No meat (meal) offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire.”

Leaven is a lump of dough that has been allowed to ferment. When only a small amount of leaven is mixed with a new batch of dough it will produce fermentation of the whole amount. Leaven is then a fermenter and corrupter of the Levitical offerings and is used to teach the message of spiritual corruption. Leaven in the Bible is a consistent type of sin, impurity, and evil (1 Cor. 5:6-8; Matt. 16:12). When applied to Christ we must once again remember that His life and ministry contained no leaven. He was absolutely sinless in all of His dealings and through all His temptations (Heb. 7:25). There was no leaven in our Lord. None! How could there be? He was God incarnate who is “Holy, holy, holy” (Isa. 6:3). No leaven was to be placed in the offerings that were given to the Lord (Lev. 7:11-12) when they portrayed the person of Jesus Christ. However, leaven was allowed in the offering that portrayed the offerer or sinner (Lev. 7:13 – “leavened bread” – see also Lev. 23:17). There was no leaven in the Son of God our Savior but there was plenty of leaven to go around in sinners like you and me. The “leavened bread” portrays the sin in the sinner’s life that needs to be forgiven through Christ who was unleavened when He died upon the cross.

Honey was also forbidden from the meal offering (Lev. 2:11) for the simple reason that honey is also a fermenter and corrupter. Honey ferments and then becomes sour. It was subject to fermentation. Honey also becomes sour in the stomach if too much is eaten. Proverbs 25:16 says, “Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.” If you overdo the honey the honey will do you in. Lastly, honey also was offered in the abominable religious practices of the heathenistic people living around the Israelites. For all these reasons honey was not used in the sacrifices. It did not portray the message of Christ’s personal holiness and sinlessness. The Holy Spirit was very careful how Christ was typified in the Levitical offerings.

The meal offering that was offered as a cake was baked in an “oven” (Lev. 2:4), in a “pan” (Lev. 2:5 – griddle), or a “fryingpan” (Lev. 2:7 – stew pan). This baking procedure pictures the intense suffering that



Jesus Christ went through for you and me. He suffered at the hands of men (Matt. 27:27-31), at the hands of Satan (Gen. 3:15), and at the hand of the Father (Matt. 27:45-46) when the penalty for our sins was poured upon Christ as our sin offering. Christ suffered great pain and agonies beyond measure for you and me.

Isaiah 52:14

“As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.”

Jesus Christ was beaten and tortured to such a degree that He could no longer be recognized as a man. He hung on the cross deformed and then while He was deformed and dripping with blood He bore the sins of the world upon Himself. He bore sin’s penalty which was death, hell, and judgment. He bore it all for you and me. He paid the price that we deserved – death, judgment, and hell. Jesus was placed through the oven for your and me.

“Have I a heart of stone, So cold and dark within,  
That I can view the Savior, In anguish for my sin,  
And never sorrow feel, For all He sacrificed?  
Have I a heart of stone, To watch the bleeding Christ?  
Have I no eyes to see, That I can stand so near,  
And watch the Savior wounded, But never shed a tear?  
Can I but coldly gaze, Upon His painful loss?  
Have I no eyes to see, God’s Lamb upon the cross?  
As I behold the blood, And view the Crucified,  
The piercing thought o’erwhelms me: Twas for my sin He died.  
Lord make my soul to feel, Thy suffering on the tree.  
Lord, break this heart of stone. Lord make my eyes to see.”

Leviticus 2:13

“And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.”

Salt was to be cast on all meal offerings (Ezek. 43:24; Mark 9:49). The Scriptures seem to emphasize this for a reason. Salt, unlike leaven, seasons, preserves, and helps control bacteria and

fermentation. Salt would preserve the cakes from spoilage and corruption. The physical attributes of salt portray how Jesus Christ came into this world to save mankind from spiritual corruption (Matt. 1:21) and keep mankind from being overcome and empowered by sin and Satan (Heb. 2:14-15). Jesus is compared to salt for this very reason. He came to save and preserve mankind from corruption and sin. What a Savior!

A final type of meal offering that was offered was “green ears of corn dried by the fire” (Lev. 2:14). This sounds like a corn-on-the-cob roast. The corn was dried on the fire and then removed from the cob. The corn was scorched over the fire and then beaten to remove the grain (“beaten out of full ears” – vs. 14 and “the beaten corn” – vs. 16). In John 12:24 Jesus pictured Himself as a grain of wheat that had to die to produce more fruit (“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die”). Dear friend, this beating of the corn once again speaks typically of our blessed Lord who went through great suffering to redeem mankind. Beating the grain typified Christ’s scourging and beating as the hands of wicked sinners.

Matthew 27:26

“Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.”

Matthew 27:30

“And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.”

The offering was to be the “firstfruits” (vs. 14) which is a definite type of Jesus Christ who is the first fruits of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20, 23). In other words, Christ was the first to rise from the dead and because He arose from the dead others will follow Him in glorified bodies (Phil. 3:20-21). What a glorious future awaits those of who have believed in Christ and His saving work. The meal offering is then rich in typical meaning. Of course, like all the Levitical offerings, they foreshadow the person and work of Christ.

c. Peace Offering (Leviticus 3)

Another Levitical offering that was presented to the Lord was the peace offering. The peace offering was another offering presented to the Lord on the Brazen Altar which was right inside the door of the Tabernacle. In this study we will once again break down the offerers, offerings, and officiating priests.

## 1. The Offerers

The offerers performed the same ritual for the peace offering as for the other blood sacrifices. They led the animals to the door of the Tabernacle and laid or pressed their hands on their heads (Lev. 3: 2, 8, 13). This once again indicates how they were trusting in the animal to take their place as a substitute. Their pressed hands upon the animal indicated how the animal would die in their place. The sinner must be identified with the sin bearer and trust that God would accept the sacrifice in His place. My friend, let me say once again that we must trust only in Christ for our salvation. We must place our hands upon the cross of Christ and only trust in the merits of Jesus Christ to bring us to God and Heaven (Gal. 3:26). We must cling to the cross and trust only in Christ if we are ever going to get to Heaven (Acts 4:12). As the offerer trusted in the atoning animal sacrifice to provide him peace before God, so we are to only trust in Christ to bring us salvation and peace before God.

“Come, ev’ry soul by sin oppressed,  
There’s mercy with the Lord,  
And He will surely give you rest  
By trusting in His word.  
Only trust Him, only trust Him,  
Only trust Him now.  
He will save you, He will save you,  
He will save you now.”

Each offerer had to personally come on their own (Lev. 7:29-30). They had to bring the offering themselves which reminds us that no other person can come to Christ and represent you. You must come on your own. There is no way that any other person can come for you. Salvation is your own decision and own step of faith in Christ. You must come if you are ever going to be saved. When it comes to making your decision for Christ, when it comes to casting your faith

totally upon Christ, when it comes to reaching out to Christ for salvation through personal faith – only you can do it!

Revelation 22:17

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

The Israelite killed the offering by slitting the throat of the animal (Lev. 3:2, 8, 13). After the prescribed portions were sacrificed on the altar the Israelites took the remaining breast portion of the sacrifice (probably shoulder portion) and presented it to the Lord in a ceremonially way with a horizontal or side to side swinging motion. It was called a wave offering.

Leviticus 7:30

“His own hands shall bring the offerings of the Lord made by fire, the fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved for a wave offering before the Lord.”

This breast portion was not burned on the altar but given to the priests (vs. 31). However, the waving action was an act that dedicated the offering to the Lord. It symbolized several things. As far as Christ was concerned, we know that He was dedicated to do the Father’s will to the very end. Jesus was willing to endure the cup of Calvary and be separated from the Father’s presence for you and me.

Luke 22:42

“Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

As far as the offerer was concerned, the wave offering demonstrated the consecration or dedication of the offerer to God as a result of accepting his offering (Lev. 8:22, 29). The application of this ceremonial waving to our lives today reminds us of how we need to dedicate ourselves to God in view of the great sacrifice that was made on our behalf (Rom. 12:1-2 – “present your body a living sacrifice”). Why would you want to dedicate yourself to the old way of life instead of to God when you know that Jesus Christ died for you

and rescued from the eternal damnation of hell? It only makes sense to dedicate our lives to Him. It's our "reasonable service" (Rom. 12:2). Friend, it only makes sense to serve God! We should give him complete dedication, devotion, and worship. Dear friend, we should be willing and ready to wave the banner of the cross before the Lord and dedicate ourselves to His service and work today. As the offerer waved the breast portion of the offering before the Lord, dedicating the offering and himself before God, so we must be willing and ready to wave the banner of the cross before God, say thank you to God for His great sacrifice, and then dedicate ourselves wholly to the Lord.

"There's a royal banner given for display  
To the soldiers of the King;  
As an ensign fair we lift it up today,  
While as ransomed ones we sing.  
Marching on! marching on!  
For Christ count ev'rything but loss,  
For the King of kings, we'll toil and sing  
Beneath the banner of the cross."

The thing that should motivate us to dedicate ourselves to the Lord is our appreciation for His great sacrifice on our behalf. Are you willing to wave the banner of the cross before the Lord and say:

"Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love;  
Take my feet, and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing  
Always, only, for my King;  
Take my lips, and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold:  
Not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my intellect, and use  
Ev'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine:  
It shall be no longer mine;  
Take my heart it is Thine own:  
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store;  
Take myself and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee!"

## 2. The Officiating Priests

As with the burnt offering, the priests caught the blood that gushed forth from the animals. They would then sprinkled the blood on and around the alter (Lev. 3:2, 13). By now we are very familiar with the typical teaching of the blood which pointed to the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross (Col. 1:20 – "the blood of his cross"). Where there is no shed blood there can be no forgiveness or remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). It's the blood-sprinkled way of the cross that leads to heaven.

"I must needs go on in the blood-sprinkled way,  
The path that the Saviour trod,  
If I ever climb to the heights sublime,  
Where the soul is at home with God.  
The way of the cross leads home.  
The way of the cross leads home.  
It is sweet to know as I onward go,  
The way of the cross leads home."

The priests and their families (Lev. 10:14; Numb. 18:11) were given a portion of the peace offerings to eat (Lev. 7:31-36; Ex. 29:26-28). They also received some of the breads that accompanied one of the peace offerings (Lev. 7:9, 12-14). God made sure that those officiating in His work were taken care of through an ample supply of

food. Their needs were met by the people. This has always been God's pattern for ministry.

1 Corinthians 9:14

"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

This has always been God's way. God's people should take care of God's man as he seeks to do God's work in God's way.

On a rare occasion Spurgeon went to preach to a small gathering of believers. He had been promised reimbursement of his expenses, but someone had warned him they were a miserly crowd, and if his sermon struck too hard at their pet sins, they would withhold their gifts to show their displeasure. After delivering a powerful, soul-convicting message, he had to take the offering himself. Seeing no collection box, he took his hat from a nearby chair and passed it to the few disturbed-looking individuals. When it was returned, nothing had been contributed, but Spurgeon was equal to the occasion. Bowing his head, he said, "I thank Thee, Lord, that these skinflints have at least given me back my old hat!"

### 3. The Offerings

The Israelites would present a bull or cow from the herd (Lev. 3:1), a lamb (vs. 7), or a goat (vs. 12) for the peace offering. This differed from the burnt offering in a number of ways. First, the people could choose the type of offering that they wanted to present since a portion of the offerings went to the priests for food (Lev. 7:34; Numb. 18:11). Today people must choose whether or not they are going to believe in the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross. They have a choice in the matter of their salvation (Matt. 11:28; John 3:16; 2 Pet. 3:9). Second, no birds were allowed since they would not provide enough food for the priests and their families. This establishes the principle that God always wants to meet the needs of those who serve in God's work and ministry (Luke 10:7; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). God's man should be rewarded and taken care of by the people.

Third, there was no sex distinction in the peace offerings (Lev. 3:1, 6). There is no reason stated in Scripture why this was so. Perhaps the

male offerings, which were to be used for the higher and more important offerings, were in such demand that female offerings were allowed for the peace offerings. Even so, the offerings had to be “without blemish” (vs. 1, 6) which symbolized the sinless sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was “the lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19). Only the “holy, harmless, and undefiled” (Heb. 7:26) sacrifice of Jesus Christ could be accepted by God as a sufficient payment for the penalty for man’s sin. God could never accept any other sacrifice to pay for the penalty for man’s sins. There is no room for accommodation, dialogue, or compromise on this matter! Man could not pay the penalty for his sins because he is a sinner and since “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination” (Prov. 21:27). God will not accept the sacrifices of the sinner for they are worthless in His sight (Isa. 64:6). Salvation can only come into our lives because Jesus Christ, who was without sinful blemish, paid for the penalty of our sins in full, enduring the wrath of God in our place. God could only accept a spotless sacrifice of Christ to take away our judgment and penalty for sin. Perfection and complete righteousness as required to satisfy God, and Christ was the only sacrifice that could satisfy God, when He offered “himself without spot to God” (Heb. 9:14).

Fourth, only the fat and kidneys were offered to the Lord on the altar (vv. 3-4, 9-10, 14-16; Ex. 29:13, 22). God is interested in fat! Doesn’t that amaze you? We want to get rid of fat but God views fat as something special. The fat of the animal with its two kidneys was put on the altar and burned. The fat that covers the intestines was used (vs. 3) and both kidneys with the fat around them (vs. 4), and the covering or long fatty lobe attached to the liver was burned on the altar (vs. 4 – “caul”). Also, the fat and the tail was used (vs. 9 – “the fat therefore, and the whole rump”). Fat was a sign of an animal’s health and vigor. It was the richest part of the animal. Thus, it was offered to God on the altar. Fat was apparently synonymous with the best (Lev. 3:17; 7:23; Gen. 4:4; 45:18) and it may symbolize how God the Father gave His very best for us when He left Jesus Christ die on the cross. It took the very best to save our soul. The fat that covers the “inwards” and the “kidneys” also metaphorically pointed to a person’s true inward being – his heart and emotions (Jer. 17:10 – “try the reins” or kidneys). Let me just say that when Jesus died on the cross only the Father could fully appreciate the hidden, secret



emotions that His Son experienced when He “poured out his soul unto death” (Isa. 53:12). The word for “poured out” means to “make naked” or “expose” and suggests that the inward being or soul of Jesus experienced great agony and despair, as He bore the weight of our sin, and when the Father forsook Him on the cross. Jesus cried out on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Jesus experienced tremendous inward agony of soul when He hung on the cross as our Savior and the Son of God. Many times we only emphasize the physical agony that Jesus went through but Jesus suffered emotionally and inwardly on Calvary. The inward fat and organs of the sacrifice are reminders of how Jesus experienced inward sorrow and suffering when He hung upon Calvary’s cross. They remind us of the tremendous internal agony that He passed through while hanging on the cross as He experienced the forsaking of the Father.

Fifth, the offering itself was called the “peace offering” (Lev. 3:1; 7:11). What was the typical significance behind the peace offering? Since the offerings are Christocentric in nature I would suggest that the main typical teaching behind this offering was how Christ’s sacrifice brings the believer into a place of peace before God. Christ is our peace offering before God. His death upon the cross gives the Gospel believer a peaceful standing before God.

Colossians 1:20-21

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled: In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight.”

This is the wonder of the ages! A dreadful sinner who was once estranged from a holy God, who was once God’s enemy (Col. 1:21-“sometime alienated and enemies”), has been forgiven and justified through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and has now been brought into a peaceful standing before a holy God of wrath and righteousness. Jesus “made peace through the blood of his cross.” This means that we are no longer God’s enemy and separated from God. We have been brought into a near (close) and new (caring)

relationship before God (Eph. 2:13 – “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”). We have been reconciled to God (“yet now hath he reconciled” – Col. 1:21). Reconciliation means that our relationship before God has been completely changed (2 Cor. 5:18-20). We once were God’s enemy under His wrath and judgment but now through the shed blood of Jesus Christ we have been brought into a peaceful standing before God. Many say today that they have made their peace with God. Before they die people tell you that they make peace with God. My friend, you don’t make peace with God. God makes peace with you through the shed blood of Jesus Christ!

Romans 5:1

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jesus Christ is our peace offering before God. Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for our sins, erasing our record of sin before God. As a result He has provided us with a justified position (legal position of righteousness) before God through His shed blood (Rom. 5:9 – “justified by his blood”). Since the penalty for our sins has been paid by Christ’s shed blood or sacrificial death God can now declare us righteous and accepted in His presence. Jesus has removed our sin, our judgment (Heb. 9:26), and the enemy relationship we had with God (Rom. 5:10), when dying on the cross, providing us with an acceptable and peaceful standing before God. When we place our faith in the merits of Jesus Christ we are brought into a peaceful standing and relationship before God (“justified by faith” - Rom. 5:1).

“Oh, the peace forever flowing  
From God’s thoughts of His own Son!  
Oh, the peace of simply knowing  
On the cross that all was done.  
Peace with God! the blood in heaven  
Speaks of pardon now to me:  
Peace with God! the Lord is ris’n!  
Righteousness now counts me free.”

Dear friend, we would have no standing, no acceptance before God, and no hope without Jesus Christ! Without Him how lost I would be!

Through Christ God can now accept us in His presence. God is now at peace with us if we have come to rest our faith in His Son. He sees us cleansed and perfected in the merits of Jesus Christ and says, "You are now my friends and children (Eph. 2:11-19). I'm at peace with you. Stop all of your striving and worrying. It's okay. My Son has brought you into my favor, blessing, and home. I accept you. I'll take care of you. You are mine now." The peace offering certainly pictures this wonderful New Testament teaching of how Christ has brought us into a peaceful standing before God. In Christ God and the sinner meet in peace!

On January 30, 1973, Patrice Tamao of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, allowed himself to be nailed to a cross "as a sacrifice for world peace and understanding among men." As thousands watched on television, six-inch stainless- steel nails were driven through his hands and feet. Tamao had planned to remain on the cross for 48 hours, but after only 20 hours he had to cut short his voluntary crucifixion because of an infection in his right foot. The newspaper article had as its heading, "Crucifixion-for-peace falls short."

My friend, there was another crucifixion-for-peace that did not fall short. It was when the true sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, died on the cross of Calvary for us, shedding His own precious blood. When Jesus died on the cross taking away our penalty for sin and all the sins that barred us from God's presence, it was then that the believing sinner could be brought into this peaceful standing before God. Jesus' peace offering did not fall short of its intended goal and purpose.

It's interesting that the peace offering was always laid on top of the burnt offering or sacrifice (Lev. 3:5; 6:12). The burnt offering served as a foundation for the peace offering. When placed on the altar it was extremely flammable and quickly consumed by the fire. The fat that was consumed on the altar was called "the food (bread) of the offering ... unto the LORD" (Lev. 3:11). In other words, this was the part of the peace offering that God received. God does not need food or fat to eat but the expression the food of God tells us that God enjoyed seeing the fat and kidneys burning on the altar. This is why it was called a sweet aroma unto God. This fat (Lev. 3:16), like the whole burnt offering (Lev. 1:9, 13, 17) and the memorial portion of the

grain offering (Lev. 2:2, 9), was called a “sweet savour” or an aroma pleasing to the LORD, and symbolized God’s acceptance of the sacrifice. This is because it was not offered to God as a sin or trespass offering. God is never pleased with sin! The fat was offered with the burnt offering in order to create even more aroma that would please God. This reminds us once again how God was pleased with the sacrifice of His Son in every way.

Ephesians 5:2

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

Since God was pleased with His Son, He can now be pleased with me. I can have peace before His presence and know that God will always love me and accept me and that nothing will ever separate me from Him (Rom. 8:37-39). What a blessed assurance.

There were three kinds of peace offerings that were presented before the Lord. This is very interesting to see and practical for our lives today.

a. A peace offering of thanksgiving

Leviticus 7:12-15

“If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried. Besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings. And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation for an heave offering unto the Lord, and it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.”

When the peace offering was given as a thanksgiving offering it had to be accompanied with cakes of unleavened bread. We have already spoken about the significance of the unleavened cakes which pointed to the sinless of Christ (Heb. 7:26). What we need to see for this point

is that when the peace offering was offered it could be presented as a thanksgiving offering. My friend, the people were to be thankful for what God had done for them. They were to be thankful for the sacrificial provision that God had provided them and the pardon they had received. I wonder how thankful we have been for the blood sacrifice of Christ and the peaceful standing we now have before God through His sacrifice. Dear brother and sister, “Be ye thankful” (Col. 3:15). When was the last time we thanked God for accepting us through Jesus Christ. When was the last time we really poured our hearts out to God and said, “Thank you.” We were all a bunch of dirty birds before Jesus saved us, cleaned us up, and then brought us into God’s presence. It seems like thanks is not enough. But God will accept our thanksgiving.

“How can I say thanks for the things You have done for me,  
Things so undeserved,  
Yet You give to prove Your love for me,  
The voices of a million angels,  
Could not express my gratitude,  
All that I am, and ever hope to be,  
I owe it all to Thee.

To God be the glory,  
To God be the glory,  
To God be the glory,  
For the things He has done,  
With His blood He has saved me,  
With His power He has raised me,  
To God be the glory,  
For the things he has done.”

Please note that the Bible speaks of “the sacrifice of thanksgiving” (Lev. 7:13). This parallels to what the New Testament says about thanksgiving as being a sacrifice to God.

Hebrews 13:15

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”

As a New Testament priest we are to be sending up thanksgiving to God in our time or prayer, praise, and personal worship. Our life is to be one of constant thanksgiving and gratefulness for the marvelous blessing we have through His grace and goodness.

“When thou hast thanked thy God  
For every blessing sent,  
What time will then remain  
For murmurs or lament?”

b. A peace offering of a vow

Leviticus 7:16

“But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten.”

Another kind of peace offering that was offered was called “a vow.” We are not commanded to make vows in the New Testament church era but there is still some practical lesson for us in this peace offering. A peace offering was made with a vow or votive when a person was committed to do something for the Lord or change their manner of life in some way. Let me just say this. When you think of the great grace and mercy that has been showered upon your life through Jesus Christ, it should have a profound impact upon your life. It should cause you to change your life where necessary and make new commitments and a fresh start for God.

“But drops of grief can ne’er repay  
The debt of love I owe:  
Here, Lord, I give myself away,  
“Tis all that I can do!”

God has forever settled the sin debt question before Him and granted me a peaceful standing in His presence. I am safe, settled, and sure of God’s acceptance and love. I have been rescued from the danger and damnation of hell forever. Should not this cause us to take some action on our part and say, “Lord, I love You for what you have done for me and want to change my life in this particular area. I want to make a new commitment to You, to be faithful to You, and to serve

you more.” Let me just say this. When the wonder and thankfulness of God’s salvation grips your soul you will not want to be the same person, live the same way, go to the same places, and do the same things. Grace changes us (Titus 2:11-12). It inspires us and motivates us to live different, think different, and be different (1 Pet. 4:4).

One teacher I had during my Bible training days, used to express His gratefulness to God for the saving sacrifice of Christ, and the tremendous change it had brought in his life following his salvation. He would often say with a tear in his eye three words: “Never the same.” This should be the story of our lives as Christians. As a result of His tremendous sacrifice on our behalf we can never really again be the same. In fact, we are never the same! Jesus makes all the difference. When we see His love for us and the great salvation we have received, we will want to commit ourselves to Him anew and plan to serve Him and do everything we can that will please Him. We will vow our lives to Him. We will give Him everything and anything. No doubt there is someone who needs to give the Lord something today. You need to make a new commitment to the Lord. God is putting His finger on it. Do it!

c. A peace offering that is voluntary

Leviticus 7:16

“But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten.”

This verse also mentions a free will offering. The peace offering could also be presented as a freewill offering (“voluntary offering”). This means that there was no specific time or occasion that was set for this particular offering. Israelites could simply bring this type of peace offering and present it before God at any time. It was given out of appreciation to God for all that He had done for them and given to them. There were no set reasons to bring this offering other than gratitude to God. Today God is looking for free givers and liver. He wants people to give to Him and serve Him out of a willing heart.

2 Corinthians 8:12 states:

“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

Are you willing? Are you willing to just give to the Lord out of gratitude? Some people need to be coerced, tricked, manipulated, or bribed in order to do something for the Lord? They need to be promised something in return or they give out of necessity instead of willingness. God is simply asking us to bring an offering willingly. I am willing Lord! I willingly give this to you. This is all that God is looking for today. He is looking for voluntary servants. In Matthew 10:8 Jesus reminded His disciples that “freely ye have received, freely give.” This is the true spirit of giving. This is what living the Christian life is all about. We received everything we have from God freely. Now we should turn around and serve Him freely and willingly. I give because I want to. I give because I’m in love with the One who gave everything for me.

Two women walking down a city street came to a corner where a representative from a worthy charity was soliciting donations to help feed needy children. One of the women stopped and placed a large contribution in the collection box. Her companion, remembering that the woman had recently promised to make such a gift, said with a chuckle, "I'm glad you did that. Now your conscience is clear." Her friend quietly responded, "I wasn't thinking about my conscience, but about those starving children." Her gift had come from a willing heart. The same should be true about us. Our gifts and service to the Lord should come from a willing heart.

Please notice that the offerings that were presented to the priests had to be eaten according to God’s prescribed pattern. The offerers could eat the remains of the offering that were not given to the priests. If it was a thanksgiving or vow peace offering some of the meal had to be eaten on the day that it was offered and the rest on the next day (Lev. 7:16). Nothing could be eaten on the third day. Why? It’s because by the third day the meat would have decayed and been impure for consumption. If any of the meat remained after the third day it was to be burned immediately (Lev. 7:17-18). To eat any meat on the third day disqualified the entire offering (“shall not be imputed unto him” – vs. 18) and made the violator subject to divine punishment. He would have “to bear his iniquity” (vs. 18). My friend, if you don’t allow Christ



to bear your iniquity then you will have to bear the weight of your own sin on your shoulders. Either you will allow Jesus to pay the penalty for your sin or you must pay for it in the endless judgment of hell and damnation. The choice is yours even as these people had a choice. Going to hell is a choice. Going to Heaven is a choice. Make the right choice!

This command to not eat meat on the third day was very important for from a typically standpoint Christ was raised from the dead on the third day (John 2:19-21). The body of Jesus would not remain in the grave to rot and decay. Instead, Jesus was raised the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3-4) and would not suffer bodily decay (“neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” – Ps. 16:10). The Israelites who ate the meat of the animal on the third day would commit an “abomination” or a detestable act (Lev. 7:18). In a similar way, to teach that Jesus did not rise from the dead after three days is an abominable teaching that destroys the Gospel message. Attempting to keep Christ in the grave is a deathblow to Christianity. If you take the resurrection out of the Gospel you have no Gospel!

“The person of the Christ,  
Enfolding every grace,  
Once slain, but now alive again,  
In heaven demands our praise.”

The sacrificial meat could not be touched by anything unclean nor could it be eaten by an unclean person (Lev. 7:19-20). That which made an individual unclean is discussed in the laws of ceremonial purity in Leviticus 11-15 and 22 - 23. Leviticus 7:21 speaks of “the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing.” The obvious point is this. God demanded purity in the lives of His people when they ate the remains of the sacrifices. In a similar way God demands that we live a holy and consecrated life before Him while we eat together and fellowship around the Lord’s Table.

1 Corinthians 11:28

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.”

To eat of the peace offerings in a state of ceremonial uncleanness was a serious breach of God's law and resulted in being "cut off from his people" (vv. 20-21). Anyone who ate the fat (God's portion - vs. 25) or meat from which the blood had not been drained (vs. 27; 1 Sam. 14:33) would also be "cut off" (Lev. 7:25, 27). This expression can signify excommunication or exile (banishment) from the nation of Israel but in this case it may very well refer to the death penalty as in the case of the Sabbath violation (Exodus 31:14).

Paul said that those today who eat the Lord's Table in an unworthy manner can suffer, weakness, sickness, and even death (1 Cor. 11:30). When we focus on the cross, or when we are remembering the sacredness of the cross, unholy living is not tolerated by God. This has always been true. Christians must examine their hearts and confess their sins (1 John 1:9). For the Jews living under the law certain sins brought forth the death penalty (Ezek. 18:4, 20) and they would be cut off or experience death for their sin. Let me say one more thing about this severe judgment in light of Christ, the cross, and salvation. The sinner who dies before repenting of his sin and coming to simple faith in Christ has lost all hope of ever being saved.

Hebrews 9:27

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

When God cuts you off and sends you to hell there is no hope for you to be saved. You will be cut off from the blessing of salvation and the Lord forever!

Revelation 20:15

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Think what it means to be cut off from God's salvation, blessing, and Heaven forever. Think what it means to be lost forever! Think of what it means to spend millions of years in hell. Someone once said that a sign on the outside of hell would probably read something like this: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." In no uncertain terms, the Bible declares that the condition of the damned in hell is hopeless. When a person is cut off and goes to an endless hell all hope is gone.

“Does it make any difference to you?  
Does it make any difference to you?  
If a soul dies in sin God has told you to win,  
Will it make any difference to you?

Will His blood be required at they hand?  
Do you warn the lost as He planned?  
Do you make plain the way?  
Do you work while its day?  
Is the Lord working daily through you?”

#### d. The Sin Offering (Leviticus 4)

In the Grace Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Dr. Russell Conwell, who was the pastor, always wanted to present a clear picture of Jesus Christ. To this day one sees inscribed upon the back of the pulpit the simple words, “We would see Jesus.” These words, visible only to the preacher, stared Conwell in the face every time he rose to preach. They were placed there at his own request. It was his desire to present Christ to the great congregation.

#### Hebrews 2:9

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

In these studies of the Tabernacle we are teaching about Christ. What a great joy it is to see Jesus Christ in all of His passion and saving grace. It’s my prayer that we might see Jesus in this next Levitical offering in a way that we have not seen Him before. May the Holy Spirit reveal the glories and greatness of His sacrifice to us today.

#### a. The provisions of the sin offering

##### 1. Its provision for atonement

The fourth of the five Levitical offerings was the sin offering. This was actually the foundation of all the other offerings. Without this offering

the Israelites could not receive atonement for their sins. The Bible says that these offerings atoned for sin (Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35). The word “atonement” means *covering* and teaches that God provided these sin-offering sacrifices as a provisionary covering for the people’s sins until Christ would come and take all of their sins away forever (Rom. 3:25-26). God provided atoning sacrifices and forgiveness for sin (Lev. 4:20, 26, 35 – “it shall be forgiven them”) on the basis of a sacrificial system of animals. This was a ceremonial and temporary forgiveness that needed to be repeated again and again. The animals could not actually take away the sins of the people (Heb. 10:4) but they could provide a temporary *covering* of their sins before a holy God until Christ would come, die on the cross as the true sin offering, and then take away the sins of all believers prior to the cross (Heb. 9:15).

Today our sins are not covered. They are actually judicially forgiven in God’s sight based upon the finished work of Christ. New Testament forgiveness is not based on atonement and animal sacrifices but on the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7. Col. 1:4). The Old Testament saints were ceremonially forgiven through many atoning sacrifices, which temporarily covered their sins, until Christ could come and take all of these sins away (John 1:29). They were also saved on God’s credit system but would not be judicially pardoned in God’s sight until the true sin offering (Jesus Christ) died on the cross and paid the penalty for their sin. Today we can sing knowing that all of our sins are gone forever in God’s sight. There is no more need for atoning sacrifices for the one and only sacrifice of God’s Son has taken our sins away providing us with pardon and judicial forgiveness in God’s sight forever.

The sin offering was used in the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood (Lev. 8:2, 14-15), the ceremony of purification after childbirth (Lev. 12:6-8), the cleansing of a leper (Lev. 14:12, 14, 19), the ordinance of the red heifer (Numb. 19), and on the Day of atonement (Lev. 16). *Since everyone in Israel sinned, the law stipulated that a sin offering had to be made.* The continual presentation of sin offerings throughout the year became a means for the people to increase their faith in God’s system of atoning sacrifice. They continually reminded the people that they were great sinners and that they needed a great Savior. The sin offering that was

presented on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) served as an *actual* yearly covering for the sins of the people (Heb. 9:25; 10:1-3) while the sin offerings presented throughout the course of the year served as constant *reminders* of what God required and had done for them on the Day of Atonement. Like us, we need to be reminded of God's great substitutionary sacrifice throughout the year (1 Cor. 11:25).

## 2. Its provision for ignorance

The purpose of the Old Testament sin offerings that were repeated throughout the year was to remind the people of the kinds of sins that God had covered. The continuous sin offerings were a reminder that personal sins of ignorance were covered by God (Lev. 4:2, 13, 22, 27). Sins of ignorance are not those sins that we commit intentionally but ignorantly. The obvious parallel to us today is that we are such dreadful sinners outside of Christ that we sin ignorantly and do not even know when we sin.

1 Timothy 1:13

"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

Ephesians 4:18

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

1 Peter 1:14

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance."

When we were without Christ we committed sins out of ignorance and we must remember that Christ died on the cross to take away our ignorant sins. Praise the Lord! Think of how often we sinned ignorantly and without any understanding that we were committing acts of sin against God. Think of the days we sinned without knowing it. We cursed, caroused around, and cared little about God and spiritual things not knowing that all along we were sinning ignorantly and out of sheer spiritual stupidity. How wonderful that Jesus died for ignorant sins as well. Let me shatter your self-esteem today if you are

unsaved. Jesus died for ignorant people! He died for a people who were stooped in ignorance and rebellion. He died for people who thought that they were pretty good while all along they were sinning ignorantly and not knowing it. Jesus Christ died on the cross for ignorant sinners and when we realize this we will rejoice in the wonder of His saving sacrifice.

There was a sin offering for ignorant sins but not for intentional sins (see Numbers 15:23-31). Presumptuous sins (Numb. 15:30) are those sins that are done deliberately. These are sins of commission and point to a person who wants to continue in sin and deliberately go against God's will and purpose for their lives. The message is very clear. There is no forgiveness possible for unrepented sin (Luke 13:5). Presumptuous sinners illustrate unbelievers who do not care about God's Word, God's will, and God's purpose for their lives. This is speaking about the person who is not willing to repent of his sin before God. Instead, he wants to keep sinning openly and freely. The New Testament typifies this type of person as an unregenerate person.

1 John 3:8

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

The teaching of this verse is that when a person continues to sin presumptuously as a pattern of life and has no care in the world about it, or conviction over his sin, then this is a sure sign that he is of the devil and not of God. It tells us that his life is being run by the devil, that he is the devil's child (John 8:44), and that he does not have God's life abiding within. The child of God does not live in the same manner as the unsaved (1 John 3:9). Their lifestyle is not patterned after sin like the unregenerate person who is sold out to the devil. The point seems to be this. God's people will not want to sin presumptuously or highhandedly and go on in sin without repentance and confession (1 John 1:9). This is because the seed of God's new nature abides within them. God's life and nature keeps them from living like the devil. It keeps them from allowing sin to overcome and ruin their lives like the unsaved. It keeps them from living in total rebellion and ignorance of God's will. It keeps them from sinning as a

pattern or way of life without any conviction and desire to change their course of living. Let's state it clearly. God's people will be different than the devil's people!

For the Israelite or proselyte to Judaism that sinned presumptuously there was no provisionary sin offering. This is because these people did not really want to repent of their sin before God. They were not willing to change their attitude and mind about their sin and forsake sin in their lives. Instead, they wanted to live their life independent of God and in open rebellion against God.

### 3. Its provision for judgment

Numbers 15:30-31 records the fate of the sinner outside God's plan of salvation: "But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him."

How sad! His iniquity shall be upon him! These are sad words. They are words of damnation and doom. Instead of the animal taking the judgment for the person's iniquity the individual would have to bear the judgment for his own iniquity. Either you will trust in the provision of Christ, who bore your iniquity, or else you must bear the weight and judgment of your own iniquity. When a person dies without repenting of their sin (Luke 13:3, 5) and receiving of Christ's provisionary sin offering on the cross (John 1:12), then they have no hope. As the sinning Israelite was cut off from the camp of Israel so the unsaved are cut off from salvation and eternal life with God. Let's stop beating around the bush. If you don't want to repent of your sin before a holy God and receive Jesus Christ as your only sin offering and Saviour, then you are going to die and go to hell. There is absolutely no hope for you. You will burn in hell throughout the eternal ages of time. You shall be "utterly cut off" as the Bible says.

"Careless soul, O heed the warning,  
For your life will soon be gone;

O how sad to face the judgment  
Unprepared to meet thy God."

On a crowded street of one of our large cities, a young man was snatched from the path of a speeding truck, his life saved by a venerable-looking man. Still breathless from fright, the youth thanked the one who saved his life and then was lost in the crowd. Two weeks later in a crowded courtroom, an anxious young man stood in the prisoner's box to be sentenced for murder. "Young man, have you anything to say before the sentence of death is passed upon you?" "Why! Yes! Yes, Judge," the youth responded, "you know me." A silence moved like a shock wave over the courtroom. "I'm sorry. I cannot place you." "Yes. Surely you remember. Two weeks ago. At Main and Seventh Streets, you saved my life. Surely, Judge, you can do something to save me now." A silence pervaded the courtroom. "Young man, now I do remember you. But that day I was your savior. Today I am your judge." Dear friend, today the Lord Jesus Christ wants to be your Savior. He died as your sin offering on the cross to save you. But if you refuse to repent of your sin and only trust in Christ to save you, then there is no hope for you. If you refuse Him and His grace, one day He will be your Judge.

#### 4. Its provision in sacrifices

Different animals were offered for the sin offering, depending on a persons rank in Israel. The priests had to offer for their own lives and they offered a bull (Lev. 4:3). A ruler would offer a male goat (Lev. 4:22-23), and the common people (vs. 27) would offer either a female goat (vs. 28) or lamb (vs. 32). Of course, they were all to be "without blemish" which once again prefigures how Jesus Christ offered Himself upon the cross as a spotless sacrifice (Heb. 9:14). Jesus Christ was a sinless offering that was offered up to God upon the cross. There was no stain of sin in His holy being. There was no other offering that was "without blemish" that God would accept as a sin offering. Jesus Christ, God's Son, was the perfect offering for sin.

"Guilty vile and helpless we;  
Spotless Lamb of God was He;  
"Full atonement!" can it be?  
Hallelujah! what a Savior!"



Then too, like the peace offerings, only the inward fat and kidneys were burnt on the altar (Lev. 4:8-10). The inward fat indicated the best part of the sacrifice. God gave His very best when He left Jesus die on the cross of Calvary. The Father said, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). The Father could not have given a greater sacrifice than He did. He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). What a tremendous act of love.

"Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
Were the whole earth of parchment made,  
Were every single stick a quill,  
Were every man a scribe by trade:  
To write the love of God alone,  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor would the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretch'd from sky to sky!"

#### 5. Its provision through blood

The blood of the sacrifice was once again an important ritual in this offering. Why? It's because God's holiness demands a blood sacrifice so that man can have communion with Him. The blood had to be applied in three ways for the priest and the congregation. First, when the priests offered the sin offering for themselves and congregation the blood was sprinkled seven times (the number of perfection and completeness) before the veil of the holy place or in front of the curtain that gave access into the holy of holies (Lev. 4:6, 17). For the sins of the high priest (4:5-7) and the entire congregation or nation (4:16-18) the priest would carry the blood into the "tabernacle of the congregation" (tent structure composed of the holy place and the most holy place – the holy of holies – vv. 5, 16). The procedure went like this. He would dip his finger into the bowl of blood and sprinkle (a technical sacrificial term meaning "to sprinkle or splash") it seven times before the LORD, in front of the curtain of the sanctuary (the veil separating the most holy place from the holy place). Since the veil would lead into the room (the holy of holies), where God manifested the Shekinah glory of His presence, this would typically illustrate how Jesus Christ opened the way of access into God's presence for us.

Hebrews 10:19-20

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”

Dear friend, we could never be accepted in God’s presence or go to Heaven and enter God’s presence if Christ had not become our sin offering on the cross, whereby He took the penalty for our sin upon Himself, and cleared our sinful record before God. None of us would have any hope of God’s acceptance without the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf which cleared our record of guilt and justified us in God’s presence (Rom. 5:9).

Second, the high priest would then smear some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the entrance into the Holy of Holies.

Leviticus 4:7

“And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation: and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

Leviticus 4:18 says the same thing. Since horns in the Bible repeatedly are used as a consistent symbol of power (1 Sam. 2:10; 2 Sam. 22:3; Dan. 7:8, 20, 24; 8:3, 6, 7, 20; Rev. 17:12, 16) it would be appropriate to conclude that the sprinkled blood on the altar indicates how through Christ’s saving power alone brings a person into a right relationship before God.

Romans 1:16

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

There is power in the Gospel message and power in the precious blood of the Lamb! This is because it’s only through Christ’s offering upon the cross that a person can have their sin record erased before God (Heb. 10:17; 1 John 1:7) and become accepted in the presence

of God's matchless purity and holiness. There is power in the blood of the cross. The blood applied to the horns of the altar speaks of Christ's power to save.

“Would you be free from the burden of sin?  
There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood;  
Would you o'er evil a victory win?  
There's wonderful pow'r in the blood.

There is pow'r, pow'r,  
Wonder working pow'r  
In the blood of the Lamb;  
There is pow'r, pow'r,  
Wonder working pow'r  
In the precious blood of the Lamb.”

Dear friend, there needed to be an altar where the blood could be applied in order for a person to be made right before God. For the priests and congregation the blood was applied to the horns on the Altar of Incense. However, for the rulers and common people the blood was sprinkled upon the horns of the Brazen Altar where the burnt offering was sacrificed (Lev. 4:25, 30). Once again this typifies the necessity for shed blood to grant forgiveness and pardon before God.

1 Peter 3:18

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

If you are ever going to be accepted before a holy God and be brought into His presence (“that he might bring us to God”) then you will have to trust in the saving merits of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31) so that His blood will allow God to accept you and give you an eternal home in Heaven. The blood being smeared on the horns of the altar conveys to us of God's wondrous saving power through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the sinner's behalf. When there are no horns on the altar there is no power (Amos 3:14). And let me say today you don't have power to save yourself without Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:6

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

We have no strength or ability to save ourselves. We are in sin up to our eyeballs! We are nothing but ungodly, low-down, rotten sinners that need to place their faith in the only perfect sin-offering and sacrifice that could ever bring us to God. That sacrifice is Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, the remainder of the blood was poured out underneath the altar in a brass pan (Lev. 4:7, 25, 30, 34). After offering the blood on the Altar of Incense, the priest would return to the outer court of the Tabernacle where he poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. The blood of the sin offering that was poured out round the base of the altar, foreshadowed the Lord Jesus, whose precious blood flowed out when His side was pierced on the cross by a Roman spear.

John 19:34 says:

“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”

My friend, as the blood was poured out underneath the altar, so Christ’s blood was poured out upon the cross for you and me. The Biblical imagery of blood speaks of cleansing from the guilt of sin (Lev. 4:20; Heb. 9:22) whereas water typifies cleansing from the defilement of sin (Ezek. 36:25). This is expressed in the verse:

“Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy riven side which flowed  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Save me from its *guilt* and *power*.”

The piercing of Jesus’ side following His death and the final discharge of blood was a reminder that His sacrifice was finished and that God had accepted the sacrificial death of His Son. The blood of Christ flowed freely from the cross even after His sacrifice to indicate the importance of the infinite saving value of His sacrificial death. It was a reminder and memorial of what Jesus Christ had done on the cross of

Calvary. The very one (John) who saw the blood flowing from Jesus saw saving significance in the sign of His flowing blood.

John 19:35

“And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.”

During World War I the Prince of Wales visited 36 severely wounded men in a hospital in the outskirts of London. The Prince and his escorts went through the main ward and shook hands with most of them. As preparations were made to leave, the Prince indicated that he had only seen 30 men. "Where are the other six?" Although he was informed that the six others were extremely severe cases and in a different section of the ward, the special visitor demanded to see the others. Five other maimed and bruised men were viewed. "But where's the last one?" again the Prince inquired. Although the Prince was told that the grotesqueness of the man's appearance would be unbearable, the Prince insisted on seeing him. The Prince stood silent for a moment, and then moved toward the man and stooping down, kissed him! With a breaking voice the Prince of Wales was heard to say, "Wounded for me. Wounded for me." Isaiah 53:5 says, "But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

We now come to the heart of the teaching concerning the sin offering. In order to grasp the overall teaching of this sin offering we will break it down in a simple outline.

#### b. The type of the sin offering

The emphasis of the offering that we are looking at today is that it was a sin offering (Lev. 4:3, 8, 20, 21, 24, 25, 29, 32, 33, 34). Let us not miss the overall typical teaching of this sacrifice. It presents to us the very heart of the Gospel message about Christ and His substitutional saving work. Jesus Christ was wounded for us on the cross of Calvary. He suffered on the cross, took our punishment, and experienced the wrath of God on our behalf. In doing so, He became a sin offering and died the sinner's death, giving lost hell-doomed

sinner's the opportunity to be made right before God and escape the judgment of hell.

Leviticus 4:3 states:

“If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering.”

As a sin offering the animal *would be offered in the sinner's place and take the place of the sinner. Instead of the sinner being killed for his sin the sin offering took his place.* The sinner's sin would be transferred to the animal and God would allow that animal to atone or cover the sinner's sin and providing expiation and forgiveness. In a similar way, Jesus Christ became our sin offering on the cross of Calvary. Jesus Christ was the antitype of the sin offering of Leviticus chapter four.

#### 1. The typical fulfillment

2 Corinthians 5:21 is the New Testament counterpart:

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

When Jesus died on the cross He became an offering for sin on the sinner's behalf. When the Scripture says that “he hath made him to be sin for us” it does not suggest that Jesus Christ became a sinner when hanging on the cross when He took your sin and my sin upon Himself. *The Bible teaches that our sins were laid on him (Isa. 53:6) but not in Him!* Jesus never became a sinful being! How could He become a sinful being? He was God of very God! Perish the thought that God could ever become a sinful being. Jesus, as God, did not become a sinful being when He hung on the cross of Calvary as our sin offering.

1 John 1:5

“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

Some misguided teachers of the Bible are claiming that Jesus actually became a sinful being when He was our sin offering. Kenneth

Hagin said that Jesus became a sinner and died spiritually while hanging on the cross: “He (Jesus) tasted spiritual death for every man. And His spirit and inner man went to hell in my place. Can’t you see that? Physical death wouldn’t remove your sins. He tasted death for every man. He’s talking about tasting spiritual death.”

This is a terrible error. If Jesus tasted spiritual death it means that he became sinful in His eternal existence as God. It would also mean that Jesus died spiritually and that He would have to save Himself. Some proponents of modern day Pentecostalism such as Hagin (Kenneth) and Hinn (Benny) are telling us that Jesus became an actual sinner when He hung on the cross as our sin offering. They are also making the claim that Jesus died spiritually and went to hell and needed to be reborn (born again) in order to save us all from hell.

Kenneth Copeland made this outlandish claim:

“Since Jesus was made to be sin, He had to pay the penalty for sin. He had to die spiritually, which took him into the regions of the damned, before He could redeem us.”

Kenneth Hagin also implies that Jesus took on the nature of Satan:

“Spiritual death means something much more than separation from God. It means having Satan’s nature....”

Benny Hinn adds his own two cents:

“Ladies and gentlemen, the serpent is a symbol of Satan. Jesus Christ knew the only way He would stop Satan is by becoming one in nature with him.”

He says elsewhere:

“No, you here this! He (Christ) did not take my sin; He became my sin. Sin is the nature of hell. Sin is what made Satan..... He (Christ) became one with the nature of Satan, so all those who had the nature of Satan can partake of the nature of God.”

This is a heretical teaching and really a cultic conclusion concerning Christ’s death. When men are saying that Jesus became a sinner on the cross, who needed to be born again in order to become our Savior, I need to sound the alarm and question their doctrinal integrity and commitment to the Gospel. This is heresy of the worst sort!

Jesus was God and always will be God. God is holy (Lev. 11:44) and can never become sinful and change His moral purity. In Malachi 3:6 God declares, “For I am the Lord, I change not ....”

Dear friend, when Jesus died upon the cross, God in a physical sense died. Jesus was God in humanity (John 1:1, 14). Thus, God died physically; however, God did not die in His eternal being or existence as a spirit. He remained the living and unchanging God as He always was (Malachi 3:6). *Jesus did not become a lost sinner on the cross but a holy Savior!* We must remember that sin was not imputed to Christ’s spirit but to Christ’s account in a legal and judicial sense. The Bible repeatedly states that when Jesus died on the cross He died physically – not spiritually (1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 4:1; Heb. 10:10). Jesus suffered physically at the hands of cruel sinners which brought about His physical death (Acts 2:23). He was willing to suffer *physically* for you and me upon the cross and then suffer *emotionally* when He was separated from the Father. But Jesus was never to suffer spiritually by becoming a sinner like you and me (Eph. 2:1-2). Jesus was “put to death in his flesh” (1 Pet. 3:18) – not in the realm of His spirit. Jesus did not die spiritually and become a sinner, when the sins of the world were credited to His account, as our sin offering. Jesus remained the same pure, holy, and unchanging God as He always was. What happened on the cross was much like a bank transaction. When you transfer money into a savings account the money then becomes part of that account. The nature of the account does not change but the amount of money in the account does change. In a similar way, Jesus did not change in His Godlike eternal being when our sins were transferred to Him. What was changed was the Father’s relationship to His Son. The fellowship between the Father and Son was interrupted because the sins of the world were transferred to His Son’s account in a legal and judicial way.

Think of it this way. *Our sins were all imputed to Him without becoming part of Him. They were reckoned to Him without wrecking His character of holiness and purity. They were transferred to Him without changing Him* in His spiritual make up. Jesus in His eternal being, as God, remained perfectly holy and “the lamb without blemish and without spot” when He hung on the cross (1 Pet. 1:19). The typical teaching of the sin offering substantiates the truth that the animal was seen to be holy and without blemish all throughout the



sacrifice of the sin offering. Never did the animal become unholy and a sinful or wretched sacrifice.

Speaking of the sin offering, Leviticus 6:25-29 reads:

“Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This *is* the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: it *is* most holy (even when its sacrificed and killed - it was holy to its death). The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten (because it’s holy), in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy: and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the holy place. But the earthen vessel wherein it is sodden shall be broken: and if it be sodden in a brasen pot, it shall be both scoured, and rinsed in water. All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy (even after its death).”

Like the sin offering of the Old Testament, Jesus Himself remained unblemished and free from sin, even when He took all of the sins of the world upon Himself. He remained holy and without blemish right up to His very death and when He was finished He could commend His spirit into the Father’s care and keeping (Luke 23:46). Jesus always knew that the Father accepted Him even though He could not look upon the sin that He bore on the cross.

Let me repeat for the sake of conviction and clarity. Jesus remained holy and without blemish right up to His very death upon the cross. Sin never corrupted His eternal being. But how can this be? It’s because Jesus did not import these sins into His eternal spirit and holy being. Rather, He took them upon Himself in a legal sense and bore the weight or judgment for these sins. Jesus did not experience a spiritual death at the hands of the Father when He hung on the cross but the judicial judgment and separation of the Father when the sins of the world were poured upon Him. The separation from the Father occurred when the weight of the world’s sin and judgment was placed upon Christ. This was the true judgment of the cross.

You can be sure of one thing. Jesus offered Himself without spot to God (Heb 9:14) and when the Father saw His only Son, the one “who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21) hanging on the cross, He was pleased with

His Son's sin-offering and sacrifice. Why? It's because His Son was holy, spotless, pure, and blameless. In Ephesians 5:2 it says that Christ gave "himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." This is why even the sin offering in the Old Testament was seen to be a sweet aroma to God. Although some worthy students of the Scripture teach otherwise, I find a different conclusion in the sin offering.

Leviticus 4:31

"And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar **for a sweet savour unto the Lord**; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him."

The sin offering was also a sweet savor and aroma that went up to God. It is significant that the fat burned on the altar was an aroma pleasing to the LORD, highlighting God's acceptance of the sin offering which resulted (when brought in faith) in atonement and forgiveness. Even the sin-offering was a sweet aroma that went up to God for the simple reason that God was satisfied with a spotless blood sacrifice that could provide atonement and forgiveness of sin for the people. One thing is certain. **God was pleased with the sacrifice but He was not pleased with the sin.** To illustrate God's hatred and disgust for sin He did not allow any oil or frankincense to be added to the fine flour that was designated as a sin offering for the poor people (Lev. 5:11-12). The typical significance is this. The actual sin that was placed upon Christ could provide no sweet savor or acceptability before God. However, the Son's offering of His own sinless life was a sweet aroma to the Father (Eph. 5:2). The Old Testament ritual parallels to what happen when Jesus became our sin offering upon the cross. There was a sweet and bitter aspect to Christ's vicarious death for sinners.

Matthew 27:46 says:

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Psalm 22:1 prophetically speaks of this forsaking:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*”

Although the Father was pleased with the sacrifice of His Son upon the cross in every way, even when He placed the sins of the world upon Him (Eph. 5:2), the Father was not pleased with man’s sin. Therefore, when the Son became a sin-offering for the world of lost sinners, the Father had to turn His face from the Son and forsake Him, while He hung upon on the cross. God could not look upon His Son for the simple reason that our sin and shame were legally transferred to His account. The Father did not forsake the Son because the Son became sinful or corrupted in His eternal existence and being as God. The Father forsook the Son because He could not look upon the sin that was judicially placed upon Christ’s account.

The last two offerings in our study (sin and trespass offerings) portray Christ as the Sin-bearer for a guilty world. They anticipate the time the Father had to turn His back upon His Son, when He actually took upon Himself the sins of the world. Jesus cried in that dark hour, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). He was in that hour of darkness the sin offering for a guilty world. Sin was transferred to Jesus and Jesus became our sin offering by taking the penalty and judgment for our sin upon Himself.

Jesus Christ was not a sinful offering but a sin-offering. There is a difference! **Remember this: The Father was pleased with His son but He was not pleased with the sin upon His Son!** Our sin was judicially transferred upon the Son upon the cross and when this happened Jesus became our sin offering. Habakkuk 1:13 tells us this about God: “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity ...” Therefore, the Father had to forsake His Son. As God, He could not look upon sin with any kind of favor and acceptability. As a result, when all the sins of the world were transferred to the account of His Son the Father had to look away. The Father did not look away because there was anything evil *in* His Son but He looked away because of the sin that was *on* His Son.

Dr. Herbert Lockyer said it best:

“The face of the Father then has turned not so much away from Christ as from what He was bearing, namely, the load of the world’s

sin, which load ultimately broke His loving, compassionate heart. He was there on the plane of sinners with mountains upon mountains of guilt encircling Him, thus the Father hid His face from such a horrible load, seeing that He was of purer eyes than to behold evil.”

When the Father forsook the Son Christ Jesus experienced something He had never experienced before. While hanging on that old rugged cross Jesus experienced something dreadful, terrible, and unfathomable. He experienced a temporary loss of fellowship with the Father. He sensed a separation that caused His heart to ache when He became the sin offering upon the cross. The Father could not bear to see the sins of the world placed upon His only beloved Son. He could not bear to see His Son taking the horrible, heinous, and hellish sins of the world upon Himself. Therefore, a separation occurred in the Godhead. *It was not a separation of essence but of fellowship.* The Son was now experiencing what He dreaded most of all. It was not the crown of thorns, it was not the nails in his hands and feet, it was not the beating and physical pain. What the Son dreaded most was the separation and loss of fellowship that He would experience and sense from the Father. This is what He dreaded when He prayed in the Garden (Luke 22:41-44 – “if thou be willing, remove this cup from me”). How would you feel if you father turned his back on you? Jesus sensed a separation from the Father He had never known, for in becoming sin, the Father had to turn judicially from His Son.

Forsaken! What a tragic word! This was a cry of anguish and deep emotion when the Son of God gave “his soul an offering of sin” (Isa. 53:10). When Jesus became our sin offering He experienced deep agony of soul sensing that He was separated from the Father for the first time in eternity. It was the moan of a broken heart within the Son of God. It was a heartfelt cry that shows how the soul of Jesus was sorrowed over this event of separation. Will we ever really understand how Christ actually felt in the time He became the sin offering for the world? Can we fully understand the Son’s feelings while He was offered as the sin offering? Never! Will we ever grasp what the Son went through when the perfect Father forsook the perfect Son because of the transferal of sin to His account? Never! But how awful the torment must have been for the Son to know that the Father had turned away from Him when He became our sin offering! Forsaken!

“The scourge, the thorns, the deep disgrace,  
These Thou couldst bear nor once repine;  
But when Jehovah veiled His face,  
Unutterable pangs were Thine.”

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

When the text says that “he hath made him to be sin for us” it means that God the Father was using the principle of imputation, treating Christ as if He were a sinner, though He was not, and having Him die as a substitute to pay the penalty for the sins of the world (Isa. 53:4–6; Gal. 3:10–13; 1 Pet. 2:24). On the cross, Christ did not become a sinner (as some suggest), but remained as holy as ever. However, Jesus was treated as if He were guilty of all the sins that were committed by every human being in the world. The point is this. Jesus bore our sins in a substitutional way but not in a sinful way that marred His eternal being as God. In other words, Christ did not become an actual sinner when our sins were placed upon Him. He became a substitute. **Not a sinner but a substitute!** Our salvation is linked to the substitutionary *physical* death that Christ experienced – not a sinful spiritual death. When Jesus died on the cross He died physically (“Christ died for our sins” – 1 Cor. 15:3) and shed His sacrificial blood (Eph. 1:7. Col. 1:14, 20) in order to pay for sin’s penalty. Sin demands a penalty (“the wages of sin is death” – Rom. 6:23) and Jesus bore the wages of our sin, or the penalty that our sin demanded, when He died in our place. As our sin offering Jesus died in our place taking the penalty of sin upon Himself – the very penalty that we deserved. Our salvation is linked to Christ’s substitutionary physical death. Our sin was judicially (not metaphysically) transferred upon Christ and He died physically to pay for sin’s penalty – not spiritually.

**The Bible does teach that Jesus became a sin offering for us on the cross. But He did not become a sinful offering.** There is a vast difference! Our sins were transferred to the account of Jesus and He bore the penalty and weight of our sin upon Himself. Christ was

“made... sin for us” in the sense that our sins were *legally* transferred to Him and He would experience the wrath and judgment that were connected with our sins. Jesus became an offering for our sin when hanging upon the cross. This means that the penalty for our sins was transferred upon the beloved Son. He was judged in our place. The curse and wrath of God (Gal. 3:13) fell on the Father’s only Son when He bore the weight of all the sins of mankind. “Being made a curse for us,” Jesus removed the curse of sin (hell and damnation) by paying the penalty Himself.

“On Him almighty vengeance fell  
That would have sunk a world to hell,  
He bore it for a chosen race,  
And thus becomes our hiding place.”

It was the terror of the ages! It was a horrible scene beyond imagination and description. All of our sins were transferred to Jesus Christ when He hung on the cross and Jesus became a perfect offering for our sins upon the cross. Simply stated, the Father’s wrath was poured out on His Son so that we do not have to experience God’s wrath in hell. Jesus Christ was the target of God’s punishment for sinners. The Father demanded a perfect sin offering that could bear the sins of the world in a legal sense, satisfy His holy demands for a perfect sacrifice, appease His wrath, and rescue mankind from the judgment of hell. There was only one sacrifice that could do this. It was the sacrifice of God’s Son. His name is Jesus Christ.

## 2. The tremendous exchange

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

This is the great exchange! Christ became our sin offering so that we could in return “be made the righteousness of God in him.” This is a great exchange. Jesus takes my sin upon Himself legally, judicially, and sacrificially, and in exchange, I get a righteous standing before a holy God. My sin is credited to Christ’s account and God’s righteousness is credited to my account. Jesus takes my sin and judgment upon Himself, canceling out my sin debt and penalty before

God, and God in return gives me a righteous standing in His presence! You may say that's not fair. You are right. It's not fair. Grace does not act on fairness. The Law acts on fairness and demands doom, death, and damnation but grace acts on the principle of kindness and love. Grace is unmerited favor and kindness reaching out to us and *giving us something we don't deserve*. My friend, we don't deserve anything from God. But the Father was willing to transfer our sin upon the sin offering of His Son in exchange for our righteous standing and position before God. What a sweet exchange! The Son takes the sin, wrath, and separation of God upon Himself, as our sin offering, so the every believing sinner can have his sins forgiven and be declared righteous in God's presence. What a great exchange!

It was a dark and stormy night when a lady was on a boat crossing Lake Michigan. The lightning, thunder, and rain made her very nervous. She saw jagged rocks jutting above the surface of the lake. In fear, she asked the captain, "Do you know where all the rocks are out there in the lake?" "No," the captain replied, "I don't, but I do know where it's safe." Dear friend, we can also know where our safety lies. We are safe in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ for we know that He has paid sin's penalty in full and that the Father is satisfied with the death of His Son. Since God is satisfied with His Son's death on our behalf we no longer must fear His wrath and judgment. By placing faith in His Son Jesus Christ (John 6:47) we can be freed from the fear of experiencing judgment for our sins (John 5:24), knowing that Jesus, as our sin offering, was already judged in our place and has suffered the penalty of sin on our behalf.

### 3. The terrible cross

There is a final note of typical teaching concerning the sin offering that needs to be highlighted. It points to the terrible nature of the cross. After the fat and inward portions were offered on the Brazen Altar the remainder of the animal was taken outside the camp and burned.

Leviticus 4:11-12

“And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, Even the whole bullock shall

he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt.”

The remainder of the sin offering was burned “without the camp” or outside the camp of Israel. Some suggest that the reason for taking the remainder of the animal outside the camp was because it was unholy and marred by sin. But this is not the case. Just the opposite is true. It was taken to a “clean place” for the offering was clean and pure. The animal was taken outside the camp because the camp was unclean – not the animal.

Dr. Scofield wisely observed:

“The bodies of the sin-offering beasts were not burned without the camp, as some have fancied, because ‘saturated with sin,’ and unfit for a holy camp. Rather, an unholy camp was an unfit place for a holy sin-offering. The dead body of our Lord was not ‘saturated with sin,’ though in it our sins had been borne 1 Peter 2:24.”

The writer of Hebrews showed that this action of burning the animal outside the camp was a definite type of Christ’s sacrificial work on behalf of mankind. Remarkably, Jesus was sacrificed outside the city gate and dwelling place of the Jews. He was sacrificed on a hill called Mount Calvary outside the city of Jerusalem.

Hebrews 13:10-12

“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”

This verse reminds us that Jesus fulfilled the typical practice of animals being burned outside the camp for it was on the cross of Calvary, outside of Jerusalem’s gate and entranceway, where Jesus became a sin offering for the world of lost sinners. Like the sin offering, Jesus was taken outside the gates of Jerusalem and suffered the fire of crucifixion! The place of the crucifixion was Calvary (Luke 23:33). Calvary was the place where Jesus was crucified, outside what was then the wall of Jerusalem. It was outside



Jerusalem where Christ took the penalty for our sin, which was the wrath and judgment of God. Jesus was separated from the Father when He became our sin offering outside the camp. Let us not forget the clear teaching of the sin offering. The whole message of the sin offering is that “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23) and that Jesus took upon Himself the wages of our sins (Rom. 6:23), which means He took sin’s penalty or judgment (separation from God) upon Himself, so that He might become our substitute and Savior from hell and damnation. And here is the never-ending story. The Father accepted the sin offering of the Son in our place. It all happened outside the camp! It took place there on Calvary outside the walls of Jerusalem. As our sin offering Jesus paid the price for our sin that a holy God demanded which was suffering and separation from God. Jesus experienced all of this on Calvary as our sin offering. He was punished by God the Father (“smitten of God” – Isa. 53:4) and then the Father separated Himself from the Son (Psalm 22:1 – “why hast thou forsaken me?”). *The physically sufferings and also the separation from the Father’s presence were all part of the penalty for sin that Jesus had to bear as our sin offering.* As our sin offering Jesus endured all of it, both the suffering and separation of God the Father, to pay for the penalty of sin that a holy God demands. Jesus experienced suffering and separation from God so that we don’t ever have to suffer for our sins in hell and be eternally separated from God in the Lake of Fire. Glory hallelujah Christ has set me free!

### Galatians 3:13

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law (doom and judgment of hell), being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”

Jesus took the wages (payment) of sin, which was death, upon Himself. As our sin offering Jesus suffered physically on the cross and emotionally when separated from the Father’s presence, as He bore the judgment of our sin! He then died the sinner’s death and paid the penalty for our sin in full. Jesus was God’s perfect (holy) sacrifice for sin that could take our judgment upon Himself and set us free from judgment forever. It was outside the camp, on the cross of Calvary, where Jesus paid it all! It was on the cross where Jesus paid the necessary penalty that the law and a holy God demanded – judgment. Jesus suffered great pain, agony, and separation from the

Father, He suffered “the wages of sin” (Rom. 6:23), which is death, so that we don’t have to endure the wages of sin. Jesus truly did pay for sin’s penalty outside the camp and city of Jerusalem.

In 1865, Elvina Hall was sitting in the church choir with her head bowed as the pastor offered the morning prayer. During his prayer, four little words lingered in her mind: Jesus paid it all! Quickly she scribbled these words on the flyleaf of her hymnal, and one of the great invitational hymns of the church was born. The fourth stanza of her hymn beautifully sums up Christ’s ministry on behalf of believers.

And when, before the throne,  
I stand in Him complete,  
“Jesus died my soul to save,”  
My lips shall still repeat.  
Jesus paid it all,  
All to Him I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson stain,  
He washed it white as snow.”

#### e. The Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5)

At a church where D. L. Moody was invited to preach, he was warned that some of the congregation usually left before the end of the sermon. When Mr. Moody rose to begin his sermon, he announced, “I am going to speak to two classes of people this morning: first to the sinners, and then to the saints.” He proceeded to address the “sinners” for awhile, then said they could leave. For once every member of the congregation stayed to the end of the sermon!

The fifth and final Levitical offering was a trespass offering. The word “trespass” (Hebrew word *asham*) means guilt. It denotes guilt that results from the violation of God’s law or standard. It’s guilt that infringes upon God’s absolute standard and character of holiness. It’s guilt that is derived when God Himself is violated or sinned against.

Leviticus 5:19 states:

“It is a trespass offering: he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord.”

Leviticus 6:2

“If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord ...”

Every hunter has seen a sign on private property which reads, “No hunting: trespassers will be prosecuted.” By climbing over the fence and passing by the sign, a person becomes guilty of violating the property rights of another and could experience the full force of the law. So it is with anyone who trespasses against God’s law. When a person commits a trespass against God’s law or His commandments he becomes guilty of violating the very holiness of God. He infringes on what God deems holy and violates the holiness that God requires for salvation and acceptance in His sight. In short, the trespassing offering was an offering that was needed because of a person’s guiltiness in violating God’s commandments and personal holiness.

Although there are many similarities between the sin and trespass offerings (Lev. 7:7) the main difference between the two offerings would be this. In the sin offering atonement was made in regard to the *root* of sin (man is a sinner by nature – Rom. 5:12, 18) whereas in the trespass offering atonement was made in regard to the *fruit* of sin (man is a sinner by actions – 1 John 2:2; 4:10 – “our sins”). In other words, in the trespass offering the *consequences* of sin are being dealt with. Man is responsible to God for his own sins which he has committed against His holy character. This is what we are going to see in our study of the trespass offering.

Let us never forget that the *root* of all sin stems from Adam’s sin (Rom. 5:12 – “for all have sinned” - in Adam). The Bible teaches that we are sinners in Adam (federal headship). The entire human race is viewed as having sinned in the one act of Adam’s sin. Every sinner is charged with guilt for God sees him sinning with Adam when he sinned back in the Garden of Eden. You may not like this but it’s what God’s Word says. *Man is not a sinner because he sins; he sins because he is already a sinner.* The fact that we receive Adam’s sinful and corrupt nature proves this to be true. There is guilt by association and participation with Adam’s sin. However, there is also guilt for the *fruit* of sins that stem from our original sin with Adam. Since we are already born a sinner (in Adam) we commit many individual acts of sin throughout our span of life on earth which are against God. These are called trespasses against God. *Man*

*trespasses God's commands many times because he is already a sinner.* Think of the many sins a person commits during the course of a lifetime which offend God's holiness and violate His commands. The trespass offering points to these multitudes of sins. It's these sins that Christ died for as well. Let us remember that Christ not only died for the *root* of sin ("put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" – Heb. 9:26) but also the *fruit* of our sins ("Christ died for our sins" – 1 Cor. 15:3) which were against God. We are not only guilty of original sin in Adam, which condemns us to hell, but also guilty of personal sins that we commit throughout our lifetime on earth. We are sinners by birth (Psalm 51:5) and by choice (Eph. 2:1-3). The sins that we commit against God in this lifetime can be viewed as trespasses. In other words, a person acquires and accumulates guilt against God for violating His holy requirements and it's these "sins" (1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18) of guilt that need to be forgiven through Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Colossians 2:13

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

The New Testament word for "trespasses" (*paraptoma*) speaks of a fall, slip, lapse, or deviation from the truth and uprightness. It has the idea of falling away from God's standard. *A person transgresses when they take a false step away from God's commandments.* When a person transgresses they *step over the line* and fall away from God's truth and righteous way. They violate God's standards. My friend, we have repeatedly and consistently throughout our unsaved lives violated God's standards. We have committed violation after violation and are seen to have committed dreadful acts against God's holy law. This is why we are lost and going to hell. In our unsaved state, we are viewed as being outside God, living under the power and domain of sin, without any hope of deliverance from sin, Satan, and the severe judgment of God. We were a sinful wreck. But wait!

Ephesians 2:1

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

God has made us alive or given us a new birth who were once spiritually dead (separated from God). A person who is dead spiritually has no communication with God; he is separated from God. He does not have God's life and nature within him to change his life and guide him. This is why people curse God, live like animals, and want nothing to do with God and spiritual things. People who are dead spiritually (in the realm of their spirit) are lifeless toward God. They possess no vital contact or fellowship with God. They live as though He does not exist. There are a great many folks today who live like this. In fact, the majority of people you meet in the world are really the living dead. They are alive physically but dead spiritually. Scripture paints man as he really is in God's sight.

Isaiah 59:2

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Sin is like a giant canyon, with man on one side and God on the other. A canyon can never be removed; it will always be there. And it is useless to try to fill up a canyon. But when a bridge is put across a canyon, a man can cross it as if no canyon ever existed there. Forgiveness of our sin is like a bridge. A bridge allows us to have eternal life, even though there is sin which otherwise would separate us from God.

Sin is also like a cut or break in an electric wire. There must be a perfect connection from the source to the light bulb before there can be any light in the bulb. In a similar way sin separates our connection with God but forgiveness is like a splice in a wire. There is only one way to get back to God and it's through forgiveness found only in Jesus Christ!

Lost men are *spiritually dead* (Eph. 2:1), not merely weakened, disabled, or sick as the psychologist says. The child molester is not sick – He is sinful. The liar is not sick – he is sinful. The disobedient child does not have any physical disease – he has a spiritual disease called sin. They say today that children have disorder and personality problems. Yes they do, they have a sin disorder problem. Why can't we see this today? The human race is diseased with sin! You can't give a dead man tranquilizer pills or psychotherapy and expect these

things to change his condition. My friend, a dead man needs a new heart, not just a new start! A dead man needs new life, not just turning over a new leaf. A dead man needs regeneration, not just reformation. Let us remember that no one can live a life for God until he first receives life from God. Today the new psychology, the New Age Movement, the new self-help programs, and new image promotions all promise that we can live a better life and improve ourselves. We can make ourselves better and improve our condition. We can do it! The truth of the matter is this. Man can improve his circumstances but he can't change who he is! He is a dreadful sinner no matter what improvements he makes on his life. The Bible paints a different picture of man that modern-day psychology. How can a dead man improve himself before God? How can a dead man make himself into a living man? Nothing can change us but Jesus Christ and His new life from above! This is why Jesus said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

Men today speak of "the better self" and "the good spark" that is in all people. But God does not see this in mankind (Rom. 3:9-10). God's estimation of man is that he is no good, unprofitable, and spiritually sick because he is fully laden with sin. The unsaved man is not sick physically but he is *sick spiritually* because of his trespasses and sins. The fact that the unsaved man is said to be dead "in trespasses and sins" suggest the realm or sphere in which the unregenerate sinner exists. *He exists or lives in a sinful state that separates him from God's life and salvation.* He lives separate from God's life and can only commit acts of rebellion against God. Man outside of God's life is a dreadful sinner who is empowered by the devil and sin (Eph. 2:2). You can't fix man outside of regeneration. You may patch him up and put some makeup on him by you can't change who he is without God's life. In short, you can't change what man is unless He is born again. This is why no doctor of psychology or any other professional remedy can fix a man. It takes God's life to change a man by delivering him from sin's power.

In our unsaved state we commit many "trespasses" (false steps, violations of God's standards) and "sins" (to miss the mark of God's perfection) that keep us separated from God's life (Eph. 2:1). This is the true assessment of man. Outside of God man is lost, empowered by sin, and hopelessly condemned to die the sinner's death (Rom.

6:23). The Old Testament word for “trespasses” means that man has become guilty for violating God’s law. This is the true assessment of man’s condition before God. Man is guilty before God for the simple reason that he has violated God’s holy law and standard time and time again.

### 1. The trespassers’ sins

Although all the sins we commit are ultimately trespasses (sins of guilt) against God they can also be seen in a secondary sense as trespasses against specific things. The Israelite presented a trespass offering for several different sins.

#### a. Court lying

First, there were trespasses regarding lying (Lev. 5:1). In a Jewish court of law, a judge could ask a person to tell the truth regarding something they have seen or heard. The person might deny knowing anything about the crime and swear that they are telling the truth. However, this is called lying under oath. This person would become guilty by lying in the court of law. When a person has knowledge of a crime but refuses to testify, claiming he does not know anything about the crime, he becomes guilty of lying and breaking the law. This is lying in a court of law. My friend, we are all guilty in God’s holy court.

Romans 3:19

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

The law says, “You are guilty as charged!” How often have we tried to tell God that we have not sinned when indeed we have sinned many times and in many ways.

A 51-year-old man in Jackson, Mississippi, was fined \$25 by a district judge for trespassing. He had been arrested when a security guard discovered him under a car in an auto dealer's lot. The man insisted he was tightening all the loose bolts he could find in order to prevent motorists from losing their lives. He said he was "only interested in people's safety." Of course, this is a rather silly illustration, but it

points to the truth how people are not willing to admit when they trespass against God and His commandments. We are all guilty of trying to cover up our sins but God's righteous law reveals our sin and condemns us as sinners every time. We are sinners by choice and we have trespassed against God's law time and time again.

## 2. Contamination

Second, there were trespasses regarding contamination (Lev. 5:2-3). The Israelites became guilty of contamination when they touched dead animals, dead people, unclean lepers, or people with a discharge (oozing sore) from their bodies. Such contamination disqualified them from worship. Unclean people were not able to worship before God because they were an offense to His holiness. Therefore, they needed to bring a trespass offering and receive atonement for these types of sins (Lev. 5:6). God devised a system of ceremonial uncleanness under the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 12-15) in order to teach the people about the need for spiritual cleanliness or purity before His presence. God used physical object lessons regarding unclean animals and leprous people to teach about spiritual uncleanness before God. Ceremonial uncleanness under the law was a reminder of how unclean we are without the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 64:6

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

All of us are an unclean thing! We must come to grips with this before we will ever be saved. God's assessment of our uncleanness is clearly stated in Scripture.

Romans 3:10-12

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."



Yes, we have all gone out of the way! We have turned away from the perfect standard of righteousness and holiness. We have been found guilty of violating God's perfect standard. In God's estimation, this makes all of us unclean and wicked sinners, who have offended His holiness. God only sees us as one thing – a sinner who has no acquired goodness in our lives. There is no beating around the bush. We have all committed terrible trespasses in the sight of a holy God and are now deemed as unrighteous, unprofitable, and unproductive sinners. We are guilty of violating God's holy standard by committing many sinful acts. We are all bad sinners by choice and action. There is no such thing as a good sinner!

In preparation for beginning a meeting in a large city the famed evangelist, Billy Sunday, wrote a letter to the mayor. In the letter he asked for the names of individuals he knew who had spiritual problems and needed help and prayer. How surprised the evangelist was when he received from the mayor a city directory which contained the names of every person who lived in the city. The point is this. We are all unclean sinners who are guilty of violating God's holy standard. We have all committed trespasses against God many times and are deemed as unclean. We are all spiritual lepers before God who have been infected with the disease of sin.

### 3. Careless talk

Third, there were trespasses regarding careless talk (Lev. 5:4). When a person would make an oath but fail to act on it then they would commit a trespass in the area of breaking oaths. The Israelite had to keep their oaths. This was God's requirement. All of these trespass sins could be committed in ignorance ("be hidden from him" – vv. 2-4) but when the sinner knew that he had sinned in this way ("when he knoweth it" – vv. 3-4) he was to bring a trespass offering for his sin so atonement could be made.

#### Leviticus 5:5-6

"And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin."

The offender would confess his sin. The sinner would admit to God he was a sinner that was found guilty of offending God's law, and that he was in need of cleansing. His confession demonstrated the awareness of his guilt and the need for the removal of his sin. The "trespass offering" was then given to provide atonement (covering for sin) and grant forgiveness of his sin ("atonement for him concerning his sin" – vs. 6). The mention of the sin offering (vv. 6, 7, 9, 11) along with the trespass offering indicates that they were closely related and many times offered together. It may be that certain sins required both types of offerings. The burnt offering could also be offered at the same time as the other offerings (vs. 7). It may be that all the sacrifices were often offered together (Lev. 3:5) while retaining their specific regulations and typical significance as distinct offerings.

#### 4. Consecrated things

Fourth, there were trespasses against consecrated or sacred things (Lev. 5:14-19). The phrase "holy things" (vs. 15) evidently refers to anything that is dedicated to God by the Israelites including the tabernacle, its furnishings, the offerings, houses, lands, and tithes (Leviticus 27). Violating these things could involve eating holy food (22:14), taking dedicated things, or perhaps failing to fulfill a dedicatory vow by refusing to pay a tithe. The "holy things" that belong to God should not be violated in any way. This was the teaching given to the people by God (Lev. 27:28). Holy things were consecrated or dedicated to the Lord and were expected to be used for God's purposes. When a person would commit a trespass against "the holy things of the LORD" (Lev. 5:15) they would evidently misuse them or refuse to fulfill an obligation or commitment they had made with some holy item. Perhaps it pertained to the first fruits of harvest (Ex. 34:26) or the firstborn of cattle and sheep (Deut. 15:19). A person might commit a trespass against a holy item out of ignorance ("through ignorance" - Lev. 5:15), either by mistake, or forgetfulness, or unknowingly. When this occurred they were commanded to bring a "trespass offering" which was to be "a ram without blemish" (defect). By now we know the significance of the sacrifices but what is different about the sin offering and trespass offering is that when a "holy thing" was violated proper restitution had to be made. The mention of "shekels of silver" (vs. 15) specifies that the ram had to be of the

proper value in silver money according to Jewish tradition. God would not accept a ram of lesser value. In addition, a total restitution or compensation was made for the violated property (“shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing” – vs. 16). Also, a 20 percent fine (a double tithe) was added to the sacrifice of the ram for violating the sacredness of the holy thing (“add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest” – vs. 16). The restitution was made to the Lord’s representative, the priest.

It’s interesting that the Israelite could not be freed from their sins until they offered the proper animal sacrifices, paid the silver restitution, and the double tithe to the priest.

Leviticus 5:16

“And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.”

There are two notes of application from this restitution process. One note of application of the sinner paying restitution for his sin is this. A sinner needs to have a repentant heart before he can ever be saved. The lost sinner needs to be willing to break from his sin and change his life if he is ever going to be saved. The restitution process proves that the sinner had a change of mind about his sin and when bringing a sacrifice he was ready and willing to change his manner of conduct. The simple lesson is this. A person cannot come to faith in Christ without first coming to the place of repentance (Luke 24:47). Repentance consists of a differently attitude toward sin and a willingness to abandon sin. Jesus said in Luke 13:3: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

Charles Spurgeon wrote:

“If the man does not live differently from what he did before, both at home and abroad, his repentance needs to repented of, and his conversion is a fiction.”

A person does not give up his sins in order to be saved but he is willing to forsake his sins in exchange for new life when he is ready to place faith in Christ. A heart that is in rebellion against God cannot be

saved! When you want to rebel against God and go on living in your sin then you have not yet come to repentance. Therefore, when a person repents they will change their mind and heart about whatever is keeping them from coming to faith in Christ and possess a newfound desire to forsake sin in their lives. The restitution process would certainly speak of this truth.

Another note of application of the sinner paying restitution for his sins is this. The restitution process becomes a graphic picture how every sinner needs to pay for the penalty or judgment for his own sins unless he has the proper sacrifice to pay for the penalty.

Wenham says:

“The reparation offering presents a commercial picture of sin. Sin is a debt which man incurs against God. The debt is paid through the offered animal.”

In other words, every lost unbeliever in this world has incurred a debt of sin before God, and they must now pay the penalty for this debt of sin, which is judgment in hell for eternity. However, if they place their faith in the final sacrifice of Christ they can know that restitution has been made for their sin debt before God. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ died to cancel out the certificate of debt that was against us (Col. 2:13 – “the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way”). The believing sinner can know that he is forgiven and right before God. Glory hallelujah, Christ has set me free!

“All my iniquities on him were laid.  
He nailed them all to the tree.  
Jesus the debt of my sin fully paid.  
He paid the ransom for me.”

Of course, today people do not need to try and compensate God for their offenses against Him, as they did under the Mosaic Law, since the Father has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as full payment for their debts (2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13). What a glorious truth this is! Christ died to set us free from the debt of our sins before God. This means Christ bore the penalty for our sins and can release us from sin’s penalty – the penalty that we deserved.

Something else is seen when examining Leviticus 5:17. In those cases where it was not possible to know whether something or someone had been wronged or violated (“though he knew it not”), the careful devout Israelite would still offer a guilt offering by itself, knowing that he was a sinner who had transgressed God’s law in some way. Ignorance is not bliss! Ignorance did not make an offense harmless (“yet is he guilty” – vs. 17). You can sin in ignorance and still go to hell. The offender was still guilty before God and bore responsibility for his iniquity (“and shall bear his iniquity” – vs. 17 and vs. 1). These are the saddest words in the Bible. If the offering is not made then the sinner must bear the wrongs for his own iniquity. In a similar way, if the sinner does not trust in Jesus Christ to pay for the penalty of his sins and take away His iniquities, then he must bear the weight and judgment for his iniquities (John 3:36).

In this case the offerer might be troubled in his conscience, thinking that he has done something contrary to God’s holy law. Although he might never learn the exact nature of his offense or trespass the offerer might experience an inward dread realizing that he has unwittingly (unintentionally) offended God, His sanctuary, or some other holy thing. Therefore, he could offer a trespass offering without restitution since he did not know how he offended the Lord.

Leviticus 5:18

“And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not (knew it not), and it shall be forgiven him.”

You will notice that the offering of this ram was without restitution or fine, since the value of what had been taken or harmed could not be determined. Therefore, atonement was made for the *unknown offense* (“concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and knew it not”). This was not an open sin of rebellion but one for which the offender earnestly desired atonement and forgiveness, even though he did not know how he had erred. This offerer had a tender heart toward sin. Trespass offerings were accepted for those who brought offerings to cover for ignorant sins.

Dear friend, I'm so glad that Jesus died for ignorant sins. We have already studied about this in the sin offering (Lev. 4:13, 22, 27). Jesus died for ignorant sinners. When we were lost and without Christ we committed multitudes of ignorant sins. We lived in ignorance and sinned in ignorance.

1 Peter 1:14

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.”

I'm not going to stroke your self-esteem today. Jesus died for ignorant sinners who committed multitudes of ignorant sins for which they were guilty. When we came to Christ for salvation our life was filled with ignorant trespasses that we didn't know we ever committed. But God forgave us of all these trespasses when we placed our faith in His beloved Son for salvation (Col. 2:13 – “having forgiven you of all trespasses”). God reached down and saved ignorant sinners. What a display of grace, mercy, and love. There is no greater love!

“Tell me the old, old Story,  
Tell me the old, old Story,  
Tell me the old, old Story  
Of Jesus and His love.”

## 5. Contemptible sins

Fifth, there were contemptible sins committed against their fellowman (Leviticus 6:1-7). The sins listed in verses 2-3 seem to relate to types of embezzlement, theft, extortion, and failure to return lost property (Num 5:6-10). In these days there were no banks so people entrusted valuable things to their neighbors (“that which was delivered him to keep” – vv. 2, 4) when they went away hoping they would not steal away what they had given into their care. If they turned out to be dishonest they would lie to the courts (“lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely” – vs. 3) about the whole ordeal in court and keep that which was not rightfully theirs. When a person did this they were “sinning” (vs. 3) and found “guilty” (vs. 4). There is no beating around the bush with God. When a man lies, steals, and cheats people he is a sinner. Likewise, when a man thinks evil thoughts, when he is full of anger and unforgiveness, when he speaks profanity and covets

material things, when he commits adultery in his heart, when he is a drunkard, drug addict, and desires lustful things, he is a guilty good-for-nothing, low-down sinner. Today we don't want to call sin by its name any longer. Many want to call it a disease, disorder, sickness, mistake, or problem. But God calls it sin!

Please note once again that every trespass (guilty violation) that was committed against "the holy things" or one's neighbor involved a trespass against God. The key verses are important to repeat.

Leviticus 5:19

"It is a trespass offering: he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord."

Leviticus 6:2

"If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour."

Friend, when we sin and commit trespasses, we are really sinning against God. This is the most important detail of this study. Sinners sin against God whenever they sin for they break His commandments ("sin is the transgression of the law" – 1 John 3:4) and offend His holiness (Hab. 1:13 – "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity"). When we sin, we sin against God's holy commands and character. Sin offends God. It makes Him angry and violates His holiness. When you sin as a lost sinner, who has never come to faith in Jesus Christ, you actually break God's law, offend God, and God separates Himself from you, demanding that you pay the penalty for your own sin. Dear lost friend, when you sin, you sin against God Almighty!

Psalms 41:4

"I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee."

Psalms 51:4

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight ..."

Luke 15:18

“I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.”

When we transgress we transgress against God. No matter what kind of sin it is, no matter what person we commit sin with or against on this earth, we ultimately and always sin against God. God is the one who is always offended at every sin we commit. His holiness is offended and He is angered and outraged with our sin.

What can a lost sinner do when he finds himself without God’s life, favor, and salvation? There is only one thing that he can do. He must repent of his sin before God as illustrated in **Leviticus 6:5**:

“Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal (total amount), and shall add the fifth part more (payment or fine) thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering.”

The person who committed the crime against his fellowman was to pay a restitution payment or fine (Lev. 5:16). So actually the person who was taken advantage of made out better in the end. He received more than he previously had. *The willingness to pay the fine was the true sign of a repentant heart.* As we stated before, a person needs to be willing to break from their sin, if they are ever going to be saved.

Jesus said in Luke 24:47:

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Nobody wants to talk about repentance anymore. Perhaps this is why there are so many false decisions for Christ today. *You can’t come to Christ and ask Him to be your Savior if you are in rebellion against Him!* You must repent of your sin. You must see the utter wickedness and folly of your sin and be willing to forsake sin before you can be saved. Repentance deals with changing your mind and attitude about sin. You must hate your sin because it has offended God, and possess a broken and willing heart that is ready to turn from sin and wrongdoing. Repentance is illustrated in the way the sinner was willing to offer additional payment for his wrongdoing (Lev. 6:5). In a



similar manner Zacchaeus proved that he had a repentant heart that was right with God when he restored fourfold to those he had stolen from.

Luke 19:8

“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.”

Let me say this. When a man gets saved God changes that man. He doesn't live like he used to live without any kind of change in his manner of living and conduct. *God does change a man when His life is in that man.* If you are truly repentant you can't go on living the way you used to without any signs of God's life and nature. You can't fool God! When you want to live like the devil, sin away your life, do as you please, and possess no conviction about sin, then you are not saved! You have never repented of you sin and seen your sin as a horrible stench in God's nostrils. You were never willing to break from your sin.

Please note that not until restitution was made could the trespass offering be presented and atonement provided for the sinner (Lev. 6:6-7).

This paints the picture that there can be no forgiveness or salvation for any sinner unless they are first willing to repent over their sins. They must be willing to turn to God for pardon and release from their sins (“turn to God from idols” – 1 Thess. 1:9). The real issue in repentance is not the outward giving up of sins (reformation) but true repentance of your sins, which involves an *inward* desire to abandon sin and forsake sin. Are you willing to turn from your sins? If you are not, then you are not ready to be saved. If you are not, then Christ's sacrifice on the cross cannot save you. There must first be repentance. When you are ready to be saved then you will be willing to see the terrible wretch that you are and turn away from your sin. Only then can the trespass offering of Christ save you. This brings us to our next and final point.

## 2. The Trespassers' Sacrifice

Leviticus 6:6-7

“And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein.”

When a person committed trespasses (guilty violations) before God they needed to bring a trespass offering (guilt offering). The typical teaching of the trespass offering can be seen in that Christ died as our trespass offering (guilt offering) on the cross. Isaiah in a very clear fashion teaches this.

Isaiah 53:10

“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.”

The expression “an offering for sin” in Isaiah 53:10 uses the same verb (Hebrew – “asham”) that is translated “trespass” (guilty violations) in our study of Leviticus chapters five and six. This suggests that when Jesus died on the cross He became the sinner’s trespass offering. In other words, Jesus took all of the guilty violations that every sinner would ever commit and paid the full penalty for them which was judgment and separation from God. Jesus became our trespass offering on the cross for it’s on the cross that Jesus physically suffered, was separated from the Father, and where He satisfied God’s demand for death (Rom. 6:23).

The New Testament also confirms that Christ died as our trespass offering in 2 Corinthians 5:19:

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”

When Jesus died on the cross God provided a provisional sacrifice that could potentially save every lost sinner in the world (“reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them”). This means that when Christ died on the cross He was punished for the sins of all people so that they no longer must have the judgment for their trespasses imputed to them. Instead, through faith in Christ, they can know that their trespasses have been placed on Christ’s account and that He has paid for the judgment of these sins in full.

In the trespass offering of the Old Testament God accepted the slaughter of the animal as a ransom payment for the particular trespass which occasioned it, thus diverting His wrath from the sinner to the animal. In a similar way, when Jesus died on the cross, as the final trespass offering, God’s wrath was diverted to Christ and we no longer must pay the penalty for our trespasses. Jesus paid the penalty for them when He suffered on the cross and was judged by God the Father in our behalf. The *typology* of the trespass offering emphasizes the death of Christ as a satisfactory substitutionary sacrifice to provide the forgiveness of our trespasses (2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:7).

Two men who had been friends and companions in their youth met in the police court, the one on the magistrate's bench, the other in the prisoner's dock. The case was tried and the prisoner was found guilty. Would the judge, in consideration of their friendship years before, forbear to pass judgment? No, he must fulfill his duty, justice must be done, the law of the land obeyed. He gave out the sentence—fourteen days' hard labor or a fine of \$500. The condemned man had nothing to pay, so the prison cell was before him. But as soon as he had pronounced the sentence the judge rose from the bench, threw aside his magistrate's robes, and stepping down to the dock, stood beside the prisoner, paid his fine for him, and then said, "Now, John, you are coming home with me to supper." In a similar manner, God cannot overlook sin. Justice must be done, and the sentence pronounced, but Christ Himself pays the debt and the sinner is free. How wonderful!

## ***The Tabernacle's Brass Laver***

Jacob Chamberlain, an early missionary to India, tells of a man who had crawled many agonizing miles on his knees and elbows to bathe in the "sacred stream" called the Ganges in order to receive cleansing from his sin. The poor exhausted soul made his prayer to Gunga, and then slipped into the water, but emerged with the same conviction of sin as before. The need for cleansing and the fear of death still tugged at his heart. Chamberlain then told him the wonderful story of grace and how Christ died on Calvary's cross to cleanse and forgive needy sinners from all their sins and rescue them from hell. With new hope the man staggered to his feet, clasped his hands together, and cried, "Oh, that's what I need! Cleansing and Forgiveness!" The missionary then led the man to accept Jesus as his personal Savior.

In our continuing study of the Tabernacle we are going to talk about the need for cleansing through Jesus Christ. This is the message of the brass laver which is another important item in the Tabernacle furniture.

Exodus 30:17-21

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.”

### 1. The location of the laver

Between the altar (at the entranceway) and the outer veil that leads into the Tabernacle proper (tent structure composed of the Holy Place and Holy of Holies) there was a large wash bowl used by the priests. The expression “between the tabernacle (tent structure) of the congregation and the altar” (altar of burnt offering at the gate – vs.

18) gives us the location of the brass laver. It rested in between the Brazen Altar which was by the gate and the entranceway into the holy place or tent structure of the Tabernacle. The laver had a central location in the Tabernacle structure to remind the priests that cleansing was central to God's plan of salvation and worship. Let me just say that no person can ever enter the presence of God without being cleansed of his sins. Central to God's salvation program is the need for spiritual cleansing. This is true for the unsaved who need to be judicially forgiven of all their sins and saved. But it's also true for God's people who are called upon to confess their sins before God, fellowship with Him, and never seek to worship God without first being cleansed in their daily walk. These are the truths that we are going to see in this portion of our study.

## 2. The construction of the laver

The washing basin was called "a laver of brass" (Exodus 30:18). The term "laver" is the same word from which we get our word "lavatory." It simply means "a place of washing." It was where the priests would wash themselves. The laver was actually a large washbowl or basin used for cleansing purposes. We know nothing about the size or shape of the laver since no dimensions are given for making it. This reminds us that the work of Christ and His cleansing from sin is immeasurable. No mind, however brilliant, can fathom the depths of God's grace and love which spawned man's forgiveness and cleansing. All we know is that the laver was a simple washbasin that had a base or stand attached to it ("his foot also of brass" – Ex. 30:18). The base construction for the laver was made out of brass. By now we have seen the typical significance of brass as a reference to judgment (the brass altar - Ex. 27:2-6 and the brass serpent - Numb. 21:9). When connected with cleansing we must remember that Jesus Christ was judged on the cross, paying the penalty for our sins, so that we could receive cleansing from sin or forgiveness. Every person can receive a spiritual cleansing or washing before God (the forgiveness of sins) through the judgment that Jesus Christ bore on Calvary's cross.

Ephesians 1:7 states:

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Colossians 1:14 adds:

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

When the value of Christ’s death is applied to my sins, it’s then and only then, that my sins are taken away, washed away, canceled out before God, or forgiven. This means I am no longer obligated to pay the penalty for my own sin. How wonderful and glorious! It’s through the riches of God’s grace and in Christ that we are able to be washed free of all our sins and given acquittal or forgiveness in God’s sight. We can receive cleansing or the forgiveness of sins through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. God accepts the sacrifice of His Son as a mandatory payment for sin and this results in our washing, pardon, or acquittal before God. *The brass stand under the laver of cleansing is a typical reminder that cleansing can only come through the judgment of Christ on our behalf.* There is no cleansing from sin outside Jesus Christ. This has always been true. The message of the Old Testament clearly portrays this. People today look for cleansing from sin through eating holy wafers, drinking wine, and baptism. They look for cleansing through Roman Catholic priests and Mary. They try and find cleansing through catechisms, false Christ’s, and the cults. But one thing will never change. Cleansing can only come through the merits of Jesus Christ.

One interesting note about the laver is that it was made from the mirrors of the women assembling before the Tabernacle.

Exodus 38:8

“And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

The mirrors or looking glasses were normally round and inserted into a handle of wood, stone, or metal. They were made out of highly polished brass or bronze. This allowed the women to view themselves as most women like to do. Men, maybe this is why our women like to stand in front of the mirrors in the morning before coming to church. God knows all about women and this is why the women were using mirrors in the earliest days of antiquity. By the

way, how many of you women are willing to stand in the courts of God's House today and become excited over the work of the Lord? How many of you woman are willing to donate something to God and become interested in God's Work? These evidently were very godly women who wanted to be involved in God's work in any way they could. They surrendered themselves to God's plan and purpose for their lives and were available for God to use. Ladies, you heart should be expressed in the works below:

“Available for God to choose me!  
Available for God use me!”

Apparently Moses was instructed to use these mirrors in the construction of the laver so that the priests could see themselves as they washed. In this way they could make sure they were clean and prepared for worship. Now remember that the priests represented the people and this practice of viewing themselves is a reminder of what ever lost person must do before they can be saved. Every lost or unsaved person must see themselves as a dirty rotten sinner. They must allow God's mirror to reveal the deepest depths of their sin, to expose them before God, and to condemn them as dirty people. God's mirror that He uses today is the Word of God. It's the convicting and cutting truth of God's Word that reveals man as a sinner and brings Him to faith.

James 1:18

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”

Dear friend, every man must see that he is a sinner that has offended God's holiness before he will ever get saved. The mirrors that were used in the laver remind us of this most important truth. When you witness to people today they often talk about the good things that they do and how they are not as bad as the rapist, murderer, or terrorist. This kind of reasoning is a way for them to jettison their own guilt and sin. It's a way for them to bypass their own guilt, sin, and need for cleansing. Today man must look into the mirror of God's truth and the commandments of God will condemn him as a dirty rotten sinner in need of cleansing.

Ephesians 5:26

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”

Christ gave Himself on the cross for the Church in order to provide salvation’s cleansing or washing which speaks of our forgiveness and acquittal before God. This is accomplished through the agency of “the word” which is likened to a washing. In other words, it’s the truth of God’s Word that reveals man as a sinner and in need of cleansing. It’s the truth of God’s Word that reveals Christ’s sacrifice as the only way of cleansing. Therefore, it’s only through the Word of God that we can receive this washing or cleansing from our sins. *It’s only through the Word of God that this cleansing can be introduced and received into our lives.* This reminds us of the necessity to share the truth of God’s Word with sinners who are in need of the Savior. Only the truth of God’s precious Word will strike conviction in their hearts and save them (Rom. 10:17).

There is one other note under this point. Some suggest that the Bible indicates the laver was made with an upper bowl and a lower bowl, one for the hands and one for the feet, since the priest were to wash both their hands and feet. This is possible but we simply don’t know. Others suggest that there were actually different bowls that were used to dip the water out of the large washbasin. This is possible since it seems that on one occasion the priests would wash in the holy place (Lev. 16:24). This would require separate bowls for washing. The water could be dipped out of the laver and used elsewhere by “an earthen vessel” (Numb. 5:17). The laver was also used to wash the animals that were sacrificed (Lev. 1:9). In any event, this large basin was filled with water so that the priests could be ceremonially cleansed. This brings us to our next point.

### 3. The teaching of the laver

Every item in the Tabernacle points to Christ in some way. They are shadows of the Messiah. The brass laver is no exception. The water and washing of the priests at the laver provides us with a clear picture of the need for *ceremonial cleansing* under the Mosaic Law. The typical teaching of the washbasin or laver is that of cleansing. Water



speaks of cleansing as we will see in our study of the related Biblical texts. The laver tells a two-fold story about cleansing.

a. The cleansing that precedes salvation

This cleansing relates to the *unbeliever* who needs forgiveness. It's a washing that results in *regeneration*. At the brazen altar the animal became a sacrifice and substitution for the people's sins providing the actual atonement and forgiveness for the offerer. However, at the brass laver the cleansing from these sins is brought into the typical teaching of the Tabernacle. The most obvious picture of the laver is this. Cleansing can only come through Jesus Christ. You will note that if the proper cleansing procedure was not followed then the priests, who represented the people, would die ("that they die not" – vv. 20, 21). My friend, let me be very blunt today. We need the cleansing that can only come through Jesus Christ or we will die in our sins and go straight to hell! This to me seems to be an important understanding of the laver that is missed by many writers in their books about the Tabernacle. In representing the people the priests portrayed the need for cleansing from sin as they washed from the laver. We need the spiritual washing or cleansing that provides us with complete forgiveness and acquittal in God's sight.

The Bible says, "and thou shalt put water therein" (Ex. 30:18). The Biblical imagery of water can speak of cleansing from sins so as to receive eternal forgiveness and pardon in God's sight.

Ezekiel 36:25

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

This is the bath of water that leads to salvations' cleansing ("ye shall be clean"). Dear friend, you can't be clean or cleansed of all your sins unless you allow Jesus Christ to give you a spiritual bath. Through His death on the cross you can have all your sins forgiven forever and receive acquittal in God's sight. You are dirty and in need of a bath. God needs to clean you up if you are ever going to enter heaven someday. The laver certainly pictures the need for spiritual cleansing before God lest you die ("that they die not" – vv. 20, 21). and receive the judgment of God for your sins.

John 8:24

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”

The laver speaks of cleansing. When we understand that every piece of furniture in the Tabernacle in some way points to the salvation we receive through Christ then we won't miss this important point.

Titus 3:5 says:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

The cleansing that precedes salvation is called the “washing of regeneration” and refers to the spiritual bath that we receive in order to receive forgiveness of our sins and salvation from hell. The word “washing” is a *metaphor for spiritual cleansing*. It conveys the thought of receiving complete forgiveness before God for all the sins that we have ever committed or ever will commit in our lives. The Greek word for “washing” (“loutron”) speaks primarily of a vessel for bathing. This answers to the laver of the Old Testament. My friend, if I'm every going to be saved, I'm going to need my sins washed away! In God's sight we are so vile that we need a complete washing! A complete bath is required! We need to be cleansed of our sins and find forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Of course, this is not the washing of baptism. This is not the washing away of sins by physical water. A thousand times no! God does not wash us with physical water to save us! God washes us with the blood of Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:7 says that “the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” Dear friend, being cleansed of all our sins is the only way to receive regeneration or new life (“by the washing of regeneration” – Titus 3:5). Washing precedes regeneration. The washing speaks of the cleansing of the believer from sin which *makes regeneration possible*. The way or road to regeneration is the way of cleansing! Our washing paves the way for regeneration to occur in our lives. Regeneration is actually the *result* of this cleansing from sin and it becomes a *preparatory step* to regeneration and paves the way for regeneration to occur in our lives.

For regeneration to occur God first gets rid of the sin in our human spirit, so He can regenerate (make alive) our human spirit. Out with the bad and in with the good!! This is the saving story of our lives! My friend, have you been to the laver for cleansing? Have you been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ and received His cleansing or forgiveness?

“Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing pow’r?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?  
Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Are you washed in the blood,  
In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb?  
Are your garments spotless?  
Are they white as snow?  
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

b. The cleansing that follows salvation.

This cleansing relates to the *Christian life*. It’s the washing that results in *restored fellowship* before God. It’s a cleansing that comes through confession of sin so that we can have restored communion with God. The laver would also speak of this cleansing as well.

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

This is a forgiveness that is needed for the believer’s restored fellowship with God – not their salvation before God. There is a difference! We might view this as family forgiveness – forgiveness that occurs in the family of God. This family forgiveness is not a forgiveness that repeatedly restores our judicial standing before God since the believer’s judicial standing never changes (Hebrew 10:10-14; Rom. 8:33-34). This is a forgiveness that restores a believer’s *fellowship* with God based upon the continuing efficacy or value of Christ’s sacrifice (1 John 2:1-2). *It’s a forgiveness that relates to only those who are in the family of God*. God wants our fellowship (1 John 1:6-7) and in order to have fellowship there is a need to confess our

sins in the Christian life so we can be cleansed and restored to the place of fellowship with God. Instead of denying that we have sinned (1 John 1:8) we should admit we have sinned and confess them to God (1 John 1:9).

Ray Stedman said:

“The blood of Jesus cannot cleanse us from excuses!”

In other words, if you try to excuse yourself from sin and cover up your sins, and claim that you do not sin when you do, then there can be no cleansing. We must face our sins and confess them as such in order to receive cleansing and forgiveness. *The brass stand on the laver may also speak of self judgment.* Every believer must stop to judge himself in life and admit that he has sinned. He must face his sins and admit to God that he has crossed the line and sinned in God's sight (Ps. 41:4; 51:4). Every believer must learn to frequently stop at the laver for cleansing! God wants us to be clean people today. Think of this. If you have not stopped at the laver for cleansing this week then you are out of fellowship with God. You can't go an entire week without sinning. If you think that you can then you are a fool and are deceiving yourself (1 John 1:8). You need to stop at the laver for daily cleansing so that you can walk with God. Have you prayed to God this week to forgive you of every thought, word, or deed that was contrary to Him? Have you admitted to God that you sinned in specific ways and are in need of forgiveness? We need to be cleansed from our sins daily. The priest's daily washing at the laver reminds us of this. Many times we think we are alright when in reality we have sinned against God and have just not admitted it to God.

In order to be cleaned we must confess our sins to God (1 John 1:9). The Greek word for “confess” means to say the same thing or be in agreement with God. *When you confess you sin to God it means that you are saying the same thing about your sin that God says.* It means that you are agreeing with God about your sin. Our problem today is that we don't agree with God about our sins. When we do agree with God we will confess them before God and receive forgiveness and restored fellowship with God. You cannot put perfume a skunk and expect the skunk to smell better! You must call sin as sin before a

holy God and see it for what it really is. Confession is not needed for salvation but for the believer's restored fellowship with God.

One day Charles Spurgeon was walking across the street and stopped when he was right in the middle of the busy thoroughfare. When asked by a friend why he stopped Spurgeon replied, "As I was walking across the street I sensed I was out of fellowship with God and I wanted to make things right before I got to the other side." Dear friend, this reminds us that we need to keep short accounts with God. God wants our fellowship and we should be ready to confess our sins to God on a daily basis and whenever sin interrupts our fellowship with God so that we can be cleansed and have our fellowship restored to God. We must come to the laver and receive God's cleansing. And what is that laver or cleansing that we all need?

1 John 1:7

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

*The water in the laver reminds us of how we are cleansed and restored to fellowship through Christ's blood.* This verse reminds us that the blood of Jesus Christ continually cleanses us from all our sins and *maintains our standing* before God so that we can fellowship with God. This promise of family forgiveness is based upon the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ. The tense of the verb speaks of the blood as having a continual cleansing effect upon our life as a believer. The word "cleanse" is in the present tense and denotes continuous action. The blood of Jesus "keeps on cleansing" from all sin. The translation "all sin" is better understood "sin of every kind" or "sin in its every form."

In the context of 1 John 1:7 we now see how the blood of Jesus continually maintains our judicial standing before God due to Christ's advocacy work (1 John 2:1). Because of Christ's unending ministry (Heb. 7:25) the blood of Christ grants us with the privilege of *forgiveness within our own Christian life*, so that we can have fellowship and communion with God on a daily basis. This forgiveness is speaking about the necessity to restore our fellowship before God - not our salvation and acceptance before God. And this

forgiveness is applied to our lives when we confess our sin (vs. 9). God forgives us of our sins, based upon the continuing work of Christ's blood, so that we can have restored fellowship with God.

There is also another note of application about the laver. *The mirrors built into the laver remind us how we need the Word of God to reveal our sins to us, so that we can be cleansed of our sins.* The actual washing or cleansing that occurs in the Christian life is based upon the cleansing that comes through Christ's blood. However, in another sense, the cleansing that is for the Christian life is seen when we view ourselves in the laver of God's Word. The laver had a system of mirrors so that the priests could view themselves and see where they were dirty and in need of cleansing. In a similar way, the Word of God is like a mirror that shows us where we are dirty and in need of cleansing.

Jesus said in John 15:3

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

The Word of God keeps us clean and sanctified (holy) in our manner of conduct and living.

Jesus said in John 17:17:

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

Cleansing and sanctification are spawned from the believer's application of God's Word to his life. The commands and unchanging principles of God's Word will show us where we are dirty and in need of cleansing. It will also allow us to avoid those things that make us dirty. Our constant contact with the world demands daily washing by the Word. We need to read it, study it and meditate on it, so it will reveal our defilement and need for cleansing. It's then that we can confess our sins and receive the cleansing that is needed in our Christian lives.

Psalm 119:9

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."

The mirrors on the laver remind us of our need for cleansing. Have you seen yourself lately? Have you taken a close look at yourself? Have you allowed the Word of God to expose you for what you really are? We need the mirror of God's Word revealing who we are so that we can live clean before the Lord. Can you say today, "Clean before my Lord I stand."

A woman in a pagan area of the world had become a believer. Soon she began attending Bible classes taught by the missionary who had led her to Christ. The teacher became discouraged, however, because the new convert seemed to forget everything she was taught. One day the missionary remarked impatiently to the young Christian, "Sometimes I wonder what's the use trying to teach you anything. You forget it all anyway. You remind me of a strainer. Everything I pour into your mind runs right through." The student quickly responded, "I may not recall everything, but just as water passes through a strainer and makes it clean, what you have taught me from the Bible helps make me clean. I need that. That's why I keep coming back." The forgetful Christian may not have retained much of the missionary's instruction, but as the truths of the Bible "poured through" her mind, she responded in faith and felt its cleansing effect.

In John 13 Jesus gave a perfect illustration of the two types of forgiveness that the Old Testament laver represented. This illustration will help us understand the importance of the cleansing which precedes and is necessary for salvation and acquittal in God's presence. It also portrays the forgiveness that follows salvation and which is necessary for restored fellowship with God. The laver of the Old Testament seemed to stress both types of cleansing which can only come through the death and shed blood of Jesus Christ. In the context of John 13 Jesus was contemplating "that his hour was come" (John 13:1) when He would die on the cross in order to provide forgiveness for both the unsaved (Judas) and the saved (Peter). His death would be necessary for both salvation and the sociable relationship He wants to possess with His own children.

Let's look at the verses in John 13:2-11:

"And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the

Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.”

Two entirely different experiences are spoken about in this passage. In this symbolic teaching of washing or cleansing, which speaks of forgiveness, the Lord Jesus points to the two types of forgiveness that we need. One type of forgiveness is related to a person's salvation. This is the type of forgiveness that Judas needed and it likened to being “clean every whit” (vs. 10) or washed completely (thoroughly bathed) of all sins (past, present, and future). When Jesus says “He that is washed” (vs. 10) he was referring to Peter and any person who has already received salvation's washing, which is related to the complete forgiveness of sins forever. This of course refers to the cleansing needed for judicial pardon and forgiveness in God's sight where He clears us of all our sinful charges in His presence forever (Col. 2:13). Peter did not need this type of washing or forgiveness since He already possessed it. What Peter would need is the forgiveness that is related to His Christian life (family forgiveness) that is likened to feet washing (“needed not save to wash his feet” – vs. 10). *The feet in daily living become contaminated. Therefore, feet become an illustration of how Christians can become spiritually defiled and dirty in their Christian walk.* The priests were told to “wash their hands and feet” (Ex. 30:19, 21). You see, this was a picture of the daily defilement from sin that we can experience in our Christian lives. So Jesus was teaching an important lesson about forgiveness when he washed the disciple's feet. He was teaching them that there will be many times when a Christian needs to be



cleansed from defilement that comes from walking in this world (James 1:27).

There are many times a follower of His will need to be washed from the defilement of their sins so that they can be restored to fellowship within the family. This is likened to washing a person's feet. It's not like taking an entire bath ("he that is washed" – vs. 10) for this type of washing refers to the complete judicial pardon and cleansing that unbelievers like Judas need before God. Peter had the complete bath of salvation and eternal forgiveness in God's sight but Judas did not ("and ye are clean, but not all" – vs. 10). The complete bath refers to the forgiveness that is related to the new birth and initial entrance into God's family. However, the washing or cleansing of the feet points to the cleansing needed in the Christian life. It is a cleansing needed for restored fellowship and partnership with Christ (John 15:7).

The cleansing procedure for the priests was repeated daily before the laver in the Tabernacle. In a similar way we also need to come regularly and daily, confessing our sins, so we may have cleansing from sin's defilement. We need to come to the laver daily and confess our sins before God and receive forgiveness through the shed blood of Jesus Christ which continually forgives our sins in our Christian life and restores our fellowship with God. Too often we bypass the brass laver. We don't want to judge ourselves (1 Cor. 11:31) by allowing God's Word to reveal and convict us of our sins. Therefore, we don't confess our sins before God, receive forgiveness through His shed blood, and fellowship with God as we should. Dear friend, we must come to the laver every day of our lives in order to stay spiritually clean.

There is a final note of application that we need to make from the priests actions of cleansing themselves before during the work of the Tabernacle. Let's reemphasize once again how the priests did ceremonially cleanse themselves before providing serving in the Tabernacle and worshipping God. The laver was never used by the congregation. It was provided for the priest's purification or ceremonial cleansing as they represented the people.

During their consecration to the office of priesthood, the priests were washed thoroughly at the laver, according to the command of Moses.

Exodus 29:4

“And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.”

Each year the high priest also washed on the Day of Atonement before making atonement for himself and the children of Israel.

Leviticus 16:24

“And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself and for the people.”

On every other day of the year the priests would wash the defilement from their hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle to serve.

Exodus 30:19-20

“For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord.”

This daily washing of the priests at the laver also typifies the need for cleansing from defilement in the Christian life. Our hands and feet (representative of our daily Christian walk) become soiled and contaminated by the world and we need cleansing. This cleansing also comes through Christ's sacrifice. Believers are able to receive forgiveness in their Christian lives when they sin because of

Old Testament priests were types of the New Testament believers who are called priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10). Priests are people who have direct access to God. As we consider parallels to the Old Testament priests, it is evident that we as New Testament believer priests must deal with sin in our daily walk before we come into God's presence to worship and fellowship with Him. The acting priests in the Old Testament, who represented the nation, were telling the story that God's people need cleansing before they can worship God.

Exodus 30:20

“When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord.”

The lesson is clear. In order to serve God and worship Him we need to be clean. We can't be dirty and defiled from sin. As New Testament priests we need to be cleansed before we can worship and do the work of God.

2 Corinthians 7:1

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

This is the message and lesson of the Old Testament laver! We must say no to sin and come to the place of cleansing. A life that is not spiritually clean prevents true worship before God and fellowship with God. Sin keeps us from experiencing the joy of walking with Christ and receiving great spiritual blessings in our Christian life. The great need of this present hour is for Christians to clean up their lives and walk with God. Psalm 24:3 asks, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?” The next verse answers the question: “He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart ...” Dear friend, we need to be clean or we will miss out on true fellowship and genuine worship before God. Only when we cleanse our life from sin can we be prepared to worship and serve God effectively. We must stop doing those things that defile our lives and keep our hearts and lives in tune with God. In short, we must stay close to God in these days.

“Thou, my everlasting portion,  
More than friend or life to me;  
All along my pilgrim journey,  
Savior, let me walk with Thee.  
Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
Close to Thee, close to Thee!  
All along my pilgrim journey,  
Savior, let me walk with Thee.”

## ***The Tabernacle's Tent Structure***

At the close of a battle a young man was found dying on the battlefield. A soldier stopped to render him assistance, and as his comrade moistened his lips and made his head rest easier the dying man said, "My father is a man of large wealth in Detroit, and if I have strength I will write him a note and he will repay you for this kindness." And this is the letter he wrote: "Dear Father, the bearer of this note made my last moments easier, and helped me to die. Receive him and help him for Charlie's sake."

The war ended, and the soldier, in tattered garments, sought out the father in Detroit. He refused to see him at first because of his wretched appearance. "But," said the stranger, "I have a note for you in which you will be interested." He handed him the little soiled piece of paper, and when the great man's eyes fell upon the name of his son, all was instantly changed. He threw his arms about the soldier, and drew him close to his heart, and put at his disposal everything that wealth could make possible for him to possess. It was the name that made the difference. In a similar way there is a name that makes the difference for us. That name is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the crucified and risen Lord who died and rose again to save us from the penalty of our sins. It's His name that means all the difference to us.

"That beautiful Name,  
That beautiful Name,  
From, sin has pow'r to free us!  
That beautiful Name,  
That wonderful Name,  
That matchless Name is Jesus!"

### 1. Its type

In this portion of our study we want to once again see Jesus! Jesus, what a wonder You are! "But we see Jesus" (Heb. 2:9). We want to see Him in all of His beauty and glory once again. We want His name to ring in our minds and hearts once again as we study the "patterns" (Heb. 9:23) of the Old Testament Tabernacle which were designed to point to Christ and the "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2). Jesus Christ with His death and priestly ministry

in God's presence becomes the true tabernacle that was foreshadowed in the Old Testament and which was built by man. The study of the elaborate Tabernacle system with its structured sacrifices is said to be "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). The "good things to come" refer to Christ's sacrifice on the cross, His resurrection, and high priestly ministry in God's presence.

Hebrews 10:12 gives us the ultimate typical fulfillment:  
"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

This is what the Old Testament Tabernacle was ultimately pointing to with all of its types, shadows, pictures, priests, portraits, and intricate details. Hebrews 10:12 is a New Testament summary in capsule form of what Moses was presenting in the Tabernacle structure of the Old Testament. All the sacrifices and priests were pointing to a final sacrifice and priest that would one day come and provide eternal salvation and acceptance in God's presence for sinners. There is a good statement about the Old and New Testaments is worth repeating: "The new is in the old concealed and the old is in the new revealed."

Although Bible teachers on the Tabernacle see many types of the Church in the Old Testament Tabernacle I must be honest and conclude that the New Testament does not verify this finding. The New Testament Scriptures and mainly the book of Hebrews clearly says that the Tabernacle was a type of Christ - not the Church. Although we are viewed as New Testament priests (1 Pet. 2:9) in answer to the Old Testament priests, we must be careful that we do not create types that the Bible does not verify and become obsessed with trying to treat every minute detail of the Tabernacle as some kind of picture of the Church. The Tabernacle primarily speaks of Christ and teaches how God's people can approach Him through Christ and clean worship. This is what the Old Testament priests portrayed. The Old Testament Tabernacle with its priests typologically portrays how Christ would come and bring people into God's presence and how those same people should be clean in their worship and approach to God. If we see the *main things* that the Bible verifies are true types of the Tabernacle then we won't be caught up in the *imaginary things* that are not being portrayed in the Old Testament Tabernacle.

Luke 24:44

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”

The Tabernacle is all about Christ!

## 2. Its Location

It's interesting that the Tabernacle always faced the east or the place of the sunrise. This is the same direction that Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons pitched their tents.

Numbers 3:38

“But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses, and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.”

This verse reminds us of how the Tabernacle was always erected to face the east (“toward the east” and “eastward”). The Tabernacle was always set with the door facing the east. Aaron and Moses with their families camped before the door of the tabernacle on the east side so they could easily enter the Tabernacle to perform their sacred duties and watch for intruders. In any event, the Tabernacle looked toward the east. *The east and eastern sunrise pointed to the hope of the dawning day of Christ, His final sacrifice, and the finished Gospel plan.* The Tabernacle was always pitched toward the east and the place of the sunrise because it pointed forward to the dawning day when Christ would come into the world and give His life for the sins of mankind.

Matthew 2:1-2

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.”

The east gave the promise of the coming King and Redeemer (“there shall come a Star out of Jacob” – Numb. 24:17). It gave the promise of the coming Messiah, a finished sacrifice, and the plan of the Gospel. So the positioning of the Tabernacle was very important to God. It pointed to a brighter day and future time when Jesus would become the final sacrifice.

The promise was made that when Christ finally came He would suffer and die upon the cross and then rise from the dead. He would also bring light to the Gentiles masses of lost humanity regarding His saving mission or salvation plan.

Acts 26:22-23

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.”

Jesus’ entrance into the world was like an eastern sunrise. When Christ came into the world a new day dawned.

Matthew 4:16 applies to Jesus’ earth ministry:

“The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.”

The Tabernacle pointing to the east, the place of the sunrising, reminds us of how the Coming One, Jesus Christ, to whom all the sacrifices pointed, would bring hope and light to a world that needed salvation. Jesus Himself said that He was “the light of the world” (John 8:12). 2 Timothy 1:10 speaks how God’s saving purpose and plan is “now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” When Jesus came into the world it was sunrise! And when Jesus comes into your heart it will be sunrise.

### 3. Its Construction

In this portion of our study we now come to the Tabernacle proper or to the actual tent structure. It's important to understand how the tent structure was built and then see how the construction with all of its curtains and colors was a clear type of Christ.

#### a. The Dimensions

While the outer court measured 150 feet in length and 75 feet in width (Ex. 27:9-15), the Tabernacle building with its two rooms measured only 45 feet in length, 15 feet in width, and 15 feet in height (Exodus 26:15-28). These measurements are derived from the wooden framework of the Tabernacle structure. The height of the boards ("standing up" – vs. 15) was "ten cubits" (15 feet high – vs. 16). Each board was "a cubit and a half" wide (2 feet three inches – vs. 16) and when placed together the width was the same as the height (15 feet – vv. 22-23). Furthermore, when 20 boards were placed together they came to 45 feet in length (vv. 18 – 25). So what we have is a rectangular shape dimension of smaller proportion. Over the top and back of the wooden structure were placed layers of curtains which served as a large tent with an inside ceiling and outside roof (Ex. 26:1). Exact dimensions are given for the curtains as well which covered the wooden frame and served to beautify the inside of the Tabernacle structure and provide an overhead roof of protection from the outside elements. We will study each of these construction items separately to gain a better understanding of the Tabernacle's typology of Christ. One might think that the tent structure was some kind of gigantic circus tent but this was not the case. It was not large in size. Size is never an issue with God. Do you know why? It's because little is much when God is in it! God can use little things in a great way. Let us never forget this. God has not despised "the day of small things" (Zech 4:10). You may think this church is too small and your part in God's work is too small. However, the smaller Tabernacle dimensions teach us an important lesson. Little is much when God is in it! God is not necessarily impressed with bigness. He likes to accomplish His purpose and plan with small things. This is a great blessing to us today and many others who part of the smaller local church ministry. God uses smaller church ministries in a great way to fulfill His purposes within this world.



## b. The rooms

The Tabernacle itself was divided into two sections or rooms. The first room was called the Holy Place (Ex. 29:30 and the “first tabernacle” – Heb. 9:6) and the second room was called the Most Holy Place (“Holiest of all” – Heb. 9:3, 8 and “the second” – Heb. 9:7). Exodus 26:33 reminds us that the veil which led into the second room was actually the divider between the two rooms: “And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.”

So there were actually two rooms in the tent structure of the Tabernacle – the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. Within the Holy place (first room) there was the Golden Lampstand, the Table of Showbread, and the Altar of Incense. Within the Holy of Holies (the second room) there was the Ark of the Covenant. The first and second rooms were entered through a curtain or veil. It was the second veil that actually separated the two rooms as the above verse indicates. We will study the specific items in these rooms later in our study of the Tabernacle.

## c. The framework

Much detail is given to the framework of this tent. Let’s seek to glean some important truths from the structured framework of the Tabernacle. There was no floor to the tabernacle. It rested upon the ground (“the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle” - Numb. 5:17). The upright boards (“standing up” – vs. 15) were made out of wood covered with gold (vs. 29) which formed three sides of the tabernacle are described in verses 15-25. Each board was fifteen feet long and two-and-one-quarter feet wide (“a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board” – vs. 16). Each board had two “tenons” (notches or slots or tapered pegs - vs. 17) at the bottom designed to fit into “sockets” (silver basis or pedestals – vs. 19). There were twenty boards on each side and six boards on the rear (vv. 18-22). Two special boards were made for the back corners which totaled eight boards in all (vv. 23-25). The upright boards were kept in place by wooden crossbars which passed through gold rings on the boards.

Each side and the back had five bars (vv. 26-27). The “middle bar” was one continuous piece (vs. 28). Two shorter bars of varying lengths may have been joined together to form one bar at the top, and two others joined to form one bar at the bottom. The entire wood structure probably resembled somewhat of a trellised frame. It was a unique design but sturdy structure capable of being quickly and easily assembled or disassembled.

There were also two sets of pillars or upright wooden structures that were formed for the veil entrances. The first set was the doorway entrance that came into the holy place. It was the main entrance into the Tabernacle proper (“the door of the tent” - Ex. 26:36-37). This pillar construction had “brass” sockets or pedestals (vs. 37) instead of silver ones along with gold clasps or hooks for the outer veil to hang on. The *brass* pedestals typically point to *Christ’s judgment* for sinners. This has been the consistent meaning of brass throughout the Tabernacle. No more comment is needed on the typical meaning of brass since we have already spoken about the meaning of brass in detail. The second pillar construction was made for the veil of the holy of holies to hang upon (Ex. 26:31-33). It had silver pedestals like the rest of the pedestals of the Tabernacle structure. It also had gold clasps or hooks to suspend the curtain that led into the Holy of Holies.

What do we learn from this framework? Upon studying the framework we can conclude several things about Christ. First, the ground floor and wood construction of “Shittim wood” (vs. 15, 32, 37) or acacia wood reminds us of the humanity of Jesus Christ. Man came from the dust or ground (Gen. 2:7). Wood is also something that comes directly from the earth. The desert growth of this acacia wood becomes a fitting symbol of Christ’s incarnation for the Bible says that He was “a root out of dry ground” (Isa. 53:2). Jesus came from an arid region physically but this verse is designed to teach a spiritual lesson about Christ’s arrival into the world. He came from a place that no one would expect a large plant or tree to grow. This means that when Jesus was born into this world He came from the most unlikely soil of Israel’s line. Like a root growing out of the ground Jesus came from a family that was commonplace and ordinary. Nobody would ever expect a King and savior to come from the region that Christ did.

However, God had a different plan and story for the entrance of His son into the world.

The wood construction of the Tabernacle reminds us of something that is from the earth and this reflects the humanity of Christ. He came into the world as a man. Christ came into this world in order to be a man that could die upon Calvary's cross.

Philippians 2:7-8

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

This is the incarnation. Jesus was willing to become that “root out of dry ground” and make himself of “no reputation.” He came into this world as an obscure man out of an obscure region of the earth (Micah 5:2) who was born of poor people. Jesus had to become man so that He could die as a man upon the cross of Calvary. His entrance into the world as a man was part of the condescending wonder of His grace.

“He left the splendor of Heaven,  
Knowing His destiny.  
Twas the lonely hill of Golgotha.  
Where He laid down his life for me.”

But Jesus was not just a man! The liberals and modernists of our day will confess that Jesus was a man but they don't want to confess that He was the God-man or God in the flesh. The wood boards and crossbars were overlaid with gold.

Exodus 26:29

“And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold.”

The typological teaching of gold represents Christ's kingliness and deity. Gold was used extensively by kings. Esther 8:15 says that “Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of

blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple ...” Gold was the kingly metal and color.

Speaking of Christ Revelation 14:14 declares:

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.”

When Jesus was born in this world the Magi, who were seeking the “King” (Matt. 2:2), they brought gold to him as one of their gifts. This gold represented Christ’s kingliness and deity. Matthew 2:11 reads:

“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

My friend, Jesus was not just a man. He was the God-man. There is a difference! The boards were overlaid with gold to represent that Jesus Christ was actually the “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16). The gold reminds us of Christ’s kingliness and deity. Jesus is coequal with the Father and is Lord of all!

1 Timothy 3:16

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

All true Christians and believers in Christ give their consent and have the absolute assurance (“without controversy”) that Jesus was God in the flesh. He is the King of Glory and the eternal God. The gold in the Tabernacle furnishings remind us of Christ in this way.

Psalm 24:8

“Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.”

Christ’s incarnation was a manifestation of God Himself to this world of mankind. Liberals may have a controversy with who Jesus was and is today but true believers have no controversy with Him. The modernists of our own day are still trying to find out who the historical

Jesus was. A recent book (“The Da Vinci Code”) concludes that “Jesus was a mortal prophet ... a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless” (Page 233). The “Jesus Seminar” people are still trying to take away the divinity of Christ. The liberals, modernists, humanists, and cults of our day are still claiming that Jesus was someone other than God, the long-awaited Christ, and Savior of lost mankind. Listen. If you don’t believe that Jesus is God then you are going to hell. You may not like to hear that but it’s true. A man cannot save you but the God-man, Jesus Christ, who was God incarnate in the flesh, can and will save you. When Jesus hung on the cross to pay for the penalty of sin it was God hanging on the cross. This is because only God can save poor wretched sinners and forgive their sins. Even the Lord’s enemies recognized this (Luke 5:21).

Hebrews 1:3 records:

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Jesus is both King and Lord of all! If He is anything less then we are all lost and going to hell! The boards that were overlaid with gold in the Tabernacle tent structure remind us that Jesus was both God and man. Along with the gold boards were the gold clasps or hooks that were used to hang the veils (Ex. 26:32, 37). These too answer to Christ’s kingliness and deity. Jesus was and always will be the God-man.

#### d. The foundation

The boards and crossbars that made up the skeleton structure of the Tabernacle or tent rested in sockets of silver. The entire wood structure sat on silver sockets or pedestals except for the brass pedestals that were used for the main pillar in the entranceway (Ex. 26:37).

Exodus 26:19 reads:

“And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons.”

The two sockets were actually bases or pedestals that each upright board rested in. Every board was notched or pegged in such a way (“tenons”) to fit into the base. The bases or pedestals provided support and a necessary foundation for the portable wood structure. The foundation of the Tabernacle structure reminds us that Christ is the foundation of the Gospel message and the believer’s life.

1 Corinthians 3:11

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

The Tabernacle building had to be placed upon a solid foundation. Let me say today that Christ is the foundation of every believer’s salvation and eternal life (Acts 4:12). There are many today who are trying to build without the right foundation. They are building on sinking sand and they will someday sink into hell for not being on the right foundation. My friend, are you resting on the right foundation?

“My faith has found a resting place,  
Not in device nor creed;  
I trust the Ever-living One,  
His wounds for me shall plead.

Enough for me that Jesus saves,  
This ends my fear and doubt;  
A sinful soul I come to Him,  
He never cast me out.

My heart is leaning on the Word,  
The living Word of God,  
Salvation by my Savior’s name,  
Salvation thro’ His blood.

I need no other argument,  
I need no other plea,  
It is enough that Jesus died,  
And that He died for me.”

The fact that the pedestals were made out of silver and the entire tent structure rested on silver bases is significant. Silver typifies redemption.

Exodus 30:11-16

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.”

The silver was received from the men 20 years and older. It was said to be ransom money paid at the time of the numbering. The numbering of the men was done for the purpose of war, ministry, and inheritance. The money was used for the Tabernacle (“And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation” – Ex. 30:16). The money that was taken during the census (the time Israel was numbered) was considered ransom money (“a ransom for his soul” – vs. 12) or redemption money. *The fact that it was silver money is significant.* Silver portrays a ransom or redemption price that needed to be paid in order to keep God’s plague of judgment from falling upon them (“that there be no plague” – vs. 12). Today if a man is not redeemed he must face the judgment of God. There is no hope for a man outside of redemption. A person’s sins will plague him in this life and then an eternal plague of the righteous judgment of God will fall upon the lost for all eternity (Rev. 20:11-15).

But why was silver used to redeem the people? The Bible repeatedly tells us that redemption is by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ – not silver.

1 Peter 1:18-19 says:

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

The death and shed blood of Christ is the basis and price paid for our redemption (freedom from the penalty of sin). Silver money cannot redeem a man. Peter verifies this. Then why were the men instructed to give their silver money to be released or freed from the plague? The answer lies in the *typology* or *picture* that the silver was portraying. We must remember that the silver money that was used by the men to obtain their redemption did not save them from the plague. What saved them was the actual message that the silver was portraying – a message of ransom or redemption by blood. The money was also called “atonement money” (Ex. 30:16). We know from previous studies that money could not actually atone for the sins of the people any more than it could redeem the people. This is because atonement and redemption was centered upon blood sacrifice (Leviticus 17:11 - “... for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul”). The point is this. Neither redemption nor atonement, which was linked to the silver money, was actually based upon money.

What God was teaching by this silver donation is that a man’s redemption and salvation can only come through a proper price or payment. *God demands redemption and what better way to portray this then by offering silver money as a ransom. The silver does not save but the picture that silver money portrays does save.* In the Old Testament man could not be delivered from sin’s penalty and have his sins covered and forgiven without the proper price being paid. Then too, we must remember that all of the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed to Christ’s redemption price that He paid for you and me. So the silver payment was pointing to another payment that needed to be made someday – the ransom payment of Jesus Christ on the cross. Dear friend, sin was costly. Sin demands a price or



wage (“for the wages of sin is death” - Rom. 6:23). It was a costly price (“But with the precious blood of Christ” – 1 Pet. 1:19) for it cost Christ His own life. He paid the ransom price to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin forever. What a tremendous price it was! The silver ransom or redemptive price reminds us of this.

When A. J. Gordon was pastor of a church in Boston, he met a young boy in front of the sanctuary carrying a rusty cage in which several birds fluttered nervously. Gordon inquired, "Son, where did you get those birds?" The boy replied, "I trapped them out in the field." "What are you going to do with them?" "I'm going to play with them, and then I guess I'll just feed them to an old cat we have at home." When Gordon offered to buy them, the lad exclaimed, "Mister, you don't want them, they're just little old wild birds and can't sing very well." Gordon replied, "I'll give you \$2 for the cage and the birds." "Okay, it's a deal, but you're making a bad bargain." The exchange was made and the boy went away whistling, happy with his shiny coins. Gordon walked around to the back of the church property, opened the door of the small wire coop, and let the struggling creatures soar into the blue. The next Sunday he took the empty cage into the pulpit and used it to illustrate his sermon about Christ's coming to seek and to save the lost paying the redemption price for them with His own death and precious blood. "That boy told me the birds were not songsters," said Gordon, "but when I released them and they winged their way heavenward, it seemed to me they were singing, 'Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed!'"

Silver is then a picture (not an actual payment) for a man's deliverance and freedom from sin's judgment. *The silver sockets (pedestals) that the boards rested in remind us how Christ becomes the foundation of our redemption.* Now my friend, if you lose the foundation, then you lose everything.

#### e. The curtains

There were actually three curtains or veils in the entire Tabernacle structure and all of them had the same color code. There was a curtain or veil that was used for an entrance into the court of the Tabernacle (Ex. 27:16; 38:18). There was also an outer veil that was used as a door which led into the tabernacle's tent structure and first

room called the holy place (Ex. 26:36; 36:37). Then too, there was an inner veil that separated the “holy place” from the “the most holy place” (Holy of Holies) where the ark was placed (Ex. 26:31-33; 36:35-36). It’s interesting that all of these veils were made out of the same colors. They were created with the colors of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined white linen. This was true concerning outer veil which was the door that led into the Tabernacle’s courtyard (Ex. 27:16), the veil that led into the holy place of the Tabernacle or tent structure (Ex. 26:36-37), and the inner veil that led into the Holy of Holies (Ex. 26:29). In addition, there were also curtains that made up the inner walls and ceiling of the Tabernacle structure. These curtains were also designed with the same colors (Ex. 26:1).

### 1. Their colors

All these curtains with their various colors portrayed an important message. Let’s consider the messages being portrayed in the colors of the veils as they relate and point to Christ.

The blue color was produced from a species of shellfish. The blue undoubtedly speaks of Christ’s heavenly origin and character. Blue reminds us of the color of the sky. It is the heavenly color. It points us to the heavens.

Jesus said in John 3:13:

“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”

Our blessed Lord came down from heaven to dwell among men so that He might become man’s Savior. Blue reminds of Christ’s heavenly origin and His deity. Matthew 1:23 says, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” Jesus Christ came down from Heaven as God. Jesus is the heavenly God who alone can be our Savior. If you want to be saved then you must look to the heavens.

Psalm 121:1

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.”

Scarlet was a bright red color produced from worms of grubs. The color scarlet one again speaks of the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. It is the blood color. The suffering and death of Jesus Christ was divinely predetermined (“the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world” - Acts 2:23; Rev. 13:8). Christ’s death and blood sacrifice was foreshadowed in types and figures (Gen. 3:21; 4:1-5; Exodus 12; Lev. 23; 1 Cor. 5:7). My friend, it’s the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on the cross which takes away our sins forever and gives us a justified standing before God (Rom. 5:9 – “justified by his blood”). We are forgiven “through the blood” (Eph. 1:6; Col. 1:14). Jesus has “washed us from our sins” (Rev. 1:5) through His blood. The blood will never lose its power! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain (Rev. 4:12).

“Worthy, worthy is the Lamb,  
Worthy, worthy is the Lamb,  
Worthy, worthy is the Lamb,  
That was slain.

Glory, hallelujah!  
Praise Him, hallelujah!  
Glory, hallelujah!  
To the Lamb!”

The color purple was produced from a secretion of a snail (murex). Purple reminds us of the color of royalty (Judges 8:26). Purple was the color of the garments of kings. It was a very expensive dye that when worn displayed the dignity of a king and gave expression of his official standing (Esther 8:15). Purple was then a badge of honor and a sign of royalty. Purple in the veils of the Tabernacle undoubtedly represents Christ’s kingliness. Jesus was from the kingly line of David (Lk. 1:32). He was born a King (Matt. 2:2), mocked as a King (Matt. 27:29), declared to be King as His crucifixion (Matt. 27:37), and is someday coming back as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16) to rule as King forever (Luke 1:33).

“King of Kings,  
Lord of Lords  
Jesus is Lord of all!”

I don't care what the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons say. I don't care what the weird cults and wacky Eastern religions say. Jesus is Lord of all! He is the King! The purple then represents Christ as the King and points to the dignity and power of His glorious exalted person (Phil. 2:9 – "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name"). Jesus Christ is the King (1 Tim. 6:15 – "the King of kings, and Lord of lords"). Our Lord already possesses the power and dignity of a King but will not wield this power until He returns to earth again someday (Rev. 11:15; 19:11-20:5).

The "fine twined linen" was a white material that had no flaws in it. It was not coarse but very smooth. It was a material of the highest quality and grade. It was superior to all other material. The white fine twined linen in the veils reminds of Christ's holy and sinless life. White speaks of purity and righteousness (Rev. 19:8). Hebrews 7:26 speaks of Christ and says, "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." The Bible teaches that Christ offered Himself "without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14). Let me repeat something I said earlier in this study. Jesus did not sin, would not sin, and could not sin. Do you know why? It's because He is God incarnate in the flesh. God cannot sin! Pilate found "no fault" in him (John 19:4) and neither can you. He was the sinless Son of God on whom the wrath of God fell. God demanded a perfect or flawless sacrifice to take away sin and Christ was the only sacrifice that God would accept as a sin offering which could actually remove sin and bring a person into the presence of God ("as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" – 1 Pet. 1:19). You see, it would take a perfect sinless sacrifice to appease God and satisfy His justice and holiness (1 John 2:2). Jesus was the perfect and flawless sacrifice, as indicated by the "fine twined linen," that died to meet the demands of the Law and vindicate God's holiness, righteousness, and justice for those sinners who express faith in Him.

## 2. Their construction

Since we are presently studying about the tabernacle or tent structure we must give some thought and consideration to the way the curtains were constructed to form the tent over the boards and crossbars.

When I was a little boy we used to love playing house. What we used to do was put sheets over top of chairs and other furniture so that we could erect a tent type of structure which we called a house. This is the way the Tabernacle tent was constructed. A series of different curtains were draped over the wooden trellis construction in order to form an enclosed tent structure. It's these curtains that completed the construction of the tent. There were actually four layers of curtains that formed the tent structure.

a. Layer one – fine twined linen

Exodus 26:1

“Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.”

The fine twined linen were the curtains that formed the ceiling. The ceiling is what the priests would see when they walk within the tent structure. The ceiling was made from ten different curtains of “fine twined linen” consisting of the colors of blue, purple and scarlet. In other words, these various different colors were woven into it. We have already studied about the symbolic meanings connected with these curtains. *It is significant to understand how Christ is represented in each of the coverings.* The blue, purple, and scarlet all pointed to Christ – His heavenly origin, His kingliness and deity, and His sacrifice. When the tent structure of the Tabernacle was erected this was the first covering placed over the wood structure of the building and then the other coverings of curtains were placed over top of this one. This covering was the only one seen from within the Tabernacle structure. It was its ceiling. This is significant.

The first covering (the ceiling) was made from ten different curtains of fine woven linen that was joined together. These curtains were embroidered with the various colors of blue, purple, and scarlet as we have already mentioned. But they also had the artistic designs of cherubim woven into the fabric (Ex. 26:1). This too is significant. The construction of the ceiling consisted of two sets of five curtains coupled together (vs. 3). The two curtain sections joined together made the ceiling easier to transport. These two sets were joined together by clasps or hooks of gold that were apparently attached to

fifty loops of blue (vv. 4-5). We have already verified that gold was the color of a king and represented Christ's kingliness and deity. Blue was the picture of the heavenly Christ. The total covering measured forty-two by sixty feet. It formed the ceiling and covered the sides to within eighteen inches from the ground (Exodus 26:1-6).

The mention of the designs of cherubim in the ceiling of the Tabernacle is very interesting (Ex. 26:1). The Cherubim were also woven into the curtain or veil between the holy place and the most holy place (Ex. 26:31-33). These cherubim were designed to resemble the winged angels that live in God's presence.

Psalm 99:1

"The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved."

Isaiah 37:16

"O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth."

In the Bible cherubim are seen as angelic guardians of the holiness of God. This is why God is seated between the cherubim in Heaven. Their presence represents that nothing shall enter Heaven and God's presence that is unholy and impure. Ezekiel records how these Cherubim, who have a special access to God's presence, "sparkled like the colour of burnished brass" (Ezek. 1:7). They were seen to be as a brilliant light to represent their own purity and protective mission to guard God's purity.

Ezekiel 1:14 adds:

"And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."

The cherubim were seen to have wheels that were designed to move about and guard God's heaven and holiness from impurity.

Ezekiel 1:15-20 records the awesome heavenly scene: "Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels

and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. As for their rings (rims), they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

Ezekiel 1:24 adds this:

“And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings.”

My friend, we can't contemplate just how holy God is nor can we fully grasp His greatness and glory as He sits upon the throne in Heaven surrounded by creatures beyond our wildest description. Ezekiel says that the beauty, power, and character of these cherubim surpass all human description. They were angelic beings of highest order and rank. *Their eyes, their wheels, and their movements all suggest that these winged creatures were created or designed to both represent and guard God's holiness.* Their presence around the throne conveys the message that nothing unclean and impure will ever enter God's presence. My friend, if you think you can get into heaven without having your sins washed away in the blood of the Lamb and made pure before God, then you will have to deal with these creatures. I've got news for you. You won't win! You won't get into Heaven. The cherubim will see to it.

Revelation 21:27

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

The winged creatures of the cherubim that were woven into the ceiling curtains of the Tabernacle reminded the high priests that these creatures were watching them perform their duties. The images of

cherubim gazing on the movements of the ministering priest made him aware of the holiness of God and his office. The serving priests knew that they had to perform their rituals and services in a holy manner or else they would die. Nothing unholy can ever be done that would please the Lord. Nothing! As the priests ministered in the Tabernacle they looked around and were reminded by the presence of the Cherubim on the ceiling that surrounded them that God was holy and that no person could ever come into His presence without being cleansed. The presence of the cherubim send the message to all of our hearts today that God is great, marvelous, and holy beyond all description. They give us a sense of how important it is to guard and vindicate the holiness of God.

“Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,  
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;  
Only Thou art holy! there is none beside Thee,  
Perfect in pow’r, in love, and purity.

“Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!  
God in Three persons blessed Trinity.”

It’s interesting that the outside layer of the Tabernacle structure contained no beauty as we will see. It was made out of porpoise skins (Ex. 26:14). But the inside layer was beautiful and breathtaking. This reminds us that not until a person is born again and saved can they come inside, enter God’s presence, understand His person, and behold His beauty.

Zechariah 9:17

“For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!”  
God is beautiful in every way imaginable. He is beautiful in perfection, holiness, grace, mercy, and love. His beauty is hidden from the lost but it is precious to the redeemed.

“Beautiful Savior, King of creation  
Son of God and Son of Man  
Truly I love Thee, truly I’d serve Thee  
Light of my soul, my joy my crown.”



“Fairest Lord Jesus!  
Ruler of all nature!  
O thou of God and man the Son!  
Thee will I cherish,  
Thee will I honor,  
Thou, my soul’s glory, joy, and crown.”

Psalm 27:4

“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.”

Dear friend, not until a person is saved can they see the beauties and glories of Jesus Christ. The beautiful colors on the ceiling of the Tabernacle represented the person and work of Jesus Christ. However, no person can really begin to appreciate the beauty of Christ and experience God’s wonderful person and presence until they are saved and come inside the veil (1 Cor. 2:14). When they do finally become a Christian and come in they will be able to sing:

“Isn't He ..... Beautiful?  
Beautiful ..... Isn't He?  
Prince of Peace, Son of God  
Isn't He? Isn't He?

Isn't He ..... Wonderful?  
Wonderful ..... Isn't He?  
Counsellor, Almighty God  
Isn't He? Isn't He? Isn't He?  
Isn't He?”

“And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us...” (Ps. 90:17).

b. Layer two – goat hair

Draped over the colorful curtains that hung within the tabernacle was another set of curtains. This series of curtains (“eleven curtains” – Ex. 26:7) were made of goat hair. The goat hair was actually a black weather-resistant material that is still used today by bedouins in tent-

making. They were longer than the inner curtains used for the ceiling so that they would touch the ground on the tabernacle sides (“It shall hang over the back side of the Tabernacle” – vs. 12 and “it shall hang over the sides of the Tabernacle” - 13). These curtains were also joined together in pairs consisting of five and six with the sixth curtain being doubled in the front of the Tabernacle (vs. 9). It may be that it was folded back under the other coverings. Like the first set of curtains they were joined together by clasps or hooks that were apparently attached to loops (vv. 10-11). This one again made the two sections easier for transport. In this case the hooks were made out of “brass” (vs. 11 – a symbol of Christ’s judgment on our behalf) while the loops were presumably made out of blue like the loops for the ceiling (vs. 6 - “loops of blue” - a symbol of the heavenly Christ). Some have suggested that since the second layers of curtains only covered one cubit on the sides (vs. 13), and since they were also said to cover the ceiling curtains, this might suggest the Tabernacle actually had a peaked roof instead of a flat roof. *However, since no height measurements are given for the pillar constructions (Ex. 26:32, 37) on the Tabernacle it is more likely that the Tabernacle was a tents structure with a flat roof.* The one cubit extension mentioned in Exodus 26:13 could simply mean that there was extra coverage for the goat hair curtain on each side that reached down to the ground level “to cover it” (vs. 13). This set of curtains hid from view the brilliant colors of the inner curtains which were actually the ceiling of the tabernacle.

How is Christ represented in this covering? The symbolism of the goat hair curtain or the second covering on the Tabernacle represents Christ as our sin offering. A goat was slain on the Day of Atonement as a sin offering for the entire nation. We will study this later when looking at some of the priesthood functions within the Tabernacle.

Leviticus 16:15 says:

“Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat.”

The goat that was offered on the Day of Atonement was a sin offering. As a sin offering the animal *would be offered in the sinner's place and take the place of the sinner. Instead of the sinner being killed for his sin the sin offering took his place.* The sinner's sin would be transferred to the animal and God would allow that animal to atone or cover the sinner's sin and providing forgiveness. In a similar way, Jesus Christ became our sin offering on the cross of Calvary.

We have already studied that Christ is pictured as our sin offering upon the cross. Sin demands a price ("The wages of sin is death" - Rom. 6:23) and Jesus paid that price when He died on the cross as our sin offering. He took our sins upon Himself and bore the judgment that we deserved so that we could go free. Jesus took our sins and judgment upon Himself so that we could be freed from judgment and hell.

2 Corinthians 5:21 explains it this way:

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

As our sin offering, Jesus paid the penalty for our sins upon the cross, providing us with a righteous standing before God, so that we could forever and finally be delivered from the condemnation of hell and everlasting judgment.

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

No condemnation! This is the testimony of every Christian. Christ became a sin offering on the cross to deliver us from eternal judgment. This means that Jesus Christ was wounded for us on the cross of Calvary. He suffered on the cross, took our punishment, and experienced the wrath of God on our behalf. In doing so, He became a sin offering and died the sinner's death, giving lost hell-doomed sinners the opportunity to be forgiven (Eph. 1:7), made right before God (2 Cor. 5:21), and escape the eternal judgment of hell (John 3:16). The goat skin that was draped over the Tabernacle reminds us of Christ's sin offering on our behalf.

“Wounded for me,  
Wounded for me.  
There on the cross  
He was wounded for me.  
Gone my transgressions,  
And now I am free.  
All because Jesus was wounded for me.”

A dissipated Russian officer having become hopelessly involved in debt sat down in desperation and wrote out a list of his indebtedness. Summing up the whole, he wrote in despair at the bottom, "Who can pay such a debt as this?" That night the emperor passed through the barracks in disguise and seeing the paper beside the sleeping man, read it, and wrote at the end of the question the one word Nicholas! In the morning the officer wondered who had done it, but all doubts vanished when at ten o'clock the emperor sent the cash necessary for the heavy payment. In a similar way, when we were unsaved all of us were in spiritual debt to God. Think of all our sins and the debt of judgment that we had to face for our sins. We knew that we would eventually have to pay for the penalty of our own sins. We wondered if there was any way out of the predicament. Then one day someone came to us and whispered the name of Jesus in our ears and said, "He has paid the debt for us." And indeed He has. Jesus paid our debt in full when He died in our place upon the cross. He died paying for the judgment that we deserved. He incurred our debt that we acquired and paid for the penalty of our sin in full when He died upon the cross. This is what the goat skin placed upon the Old Testament Tabernacle was pointing to. It was pointing to the coming One (Jesus Christ) who would eventually free sinners from their spiritual debt before God. The goat skin was pointing to a better sacrifice and better day!

c. Layer three – rams' skin.

Exodus 26:14

“And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers' skins.”

When beginning with the ceiling (the first covering) and moving to the goat's hair (second covering) we have two coverings left. The last two

coverings are mentioned in one verse with little detail given. The third covering was said to be made out of rams' skins which was "dyed red." This layer was obviously needed for protective purposes. Of course, the ram was a common animal used for regular substitutionary sacrifices (Lev. 5:15-18; 6:6; 8:18, 20-22). Such sacrifices took the place of a people destined to die because of their sin. The "dyed red" skins of the ram (Ex. 26:14) spoke of sacrifice and pointed to Jesus Christ, who would be sacrificed for sin. Red was the color of blood and spoke of blood sacrifice. The ram would shed its blood for the offerer and the blood would be sprinkled upon the brazen altar of sacrifice (Ex. 29:16; Lev. 9:18). The dyed red ram skin then presents Christ as shedding His own blood to provide a substitutionary (replacement) sacrifice for lost sinners who are doomed to die the sinner's death. The dyed red skin of the ram reminds us once again of the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19) that was shed to provide redemption and salvation for you and me.

The first mention in the Bible of skins for a covering is found in Genesis 3:21 where it says, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." *In order for a covering of skin to be made for Adam and Eve there had to be a substitute.* An animal had to die so that the covering could be made. This became the standard for all substitutionary sacrifices that followed. **God's way of substitution is by blood sacrifice!** There is no other way of substitution. There is no other way of salvation! It has to be by blood! God was gracious in that He provided a covering and way of salvation from His righteous judgment for sin. So the red dyed ram's skin that covered the Tabernacle structure reminds us of a sacrificial blood sacrifice that is given to provide a substitution or replacement for sinners. God has always demanded a blood sacrifice to take the place of those who are sinful and provide forgiveness (Lev. 17:11). The ram with its dyed red skin certainly reminds us of this and points to the final sacrifice of Christ who would someday shed His blood on the cross ("the blood of his cross" – Col. 1:20) and become the only sacrifice that could take the place of sinners and free them from judgment.

A key incident in Abraham's life revealed the significance of the ram as a substitutionary sacrifice. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac and when Abraham was about to kill his son God intervened

and said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me (Gen. 22:12). Then notice the significant statement that follows. "And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." What a beautiful picture of substitution! The ram died in the place of Isaac. Abraham was full of praise and called the place "Jehovah-jireh" (Gen. 22:14) meaning that "the Lord will provide." In this case, the Lord provided a substitute for Isaac.

This incident took place on Mount Moriah where the temple was later located. It's the same general area where Christ was crucified. Therefore, the ram was a significant picture of Jesus Christ, who would become the ultimate substitute for sinners when He died on the cross. How marvelous. God would provide a substitute and sacrifice for lost hell-doomed sinners. It was God's own Son (John 3:16-17). As the substitute Christ would die, shed His blood, and experience the wrath of God in the sinner's place. As the substitute Jesus would provide release and forgiveness for sinners from the consequences of their sins. The covering of the skin of or ram's which was dyed the color of red certainly pointed to Christ's blood sacrifice that would become a replacement for the sinner and free them from their sins.

"Dying for me,  
Dying for me.  
There on the cross  
He was dying for me.  
Now in His death my redemption I see,  
All because Jesus was dying for me."

On one occasion, President Harry Truman was asked to speak at a fund-raising project to help the children of a White House guard who was slain in the line of duty. With great feeling he said, "You can't imagine just how a man feels when someone else dies for him."

Well, every lost sinner can know that Jesus died for him. The Bible says that Christ "tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2:9) and wants to

save you today. Does this mean anything to you? Does it strike your heart? Jesus died as your substitute so that you don't have to die and go to hell. God has provided the sacrifice of the ages and it's the sacrifice of His own Son. Why don't you place all of your faith in His Son to grant you eternal forgiveness before God and save you from hell? The priests ministered inside the Tabernacle under the protection of the ram skin that was dyed red. In a similar fashion you can rest under the protection of the blood stained cross when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone to be your Savior.

d. Layer four – badger skin.

When working from the inside to the outside we discover that the final layer of the Tabernacle consisted of badger skin. This would be the outside layer that weathered the most severe storms and sun.

Exodus 26:14 again states:

“And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers' skins.”

Badgers as we know them in the western world are not found in the Middle East. The animal being referred to here is probably a porpoise which was a marine animal plentiful in the Nile region. This porpoise skin was very durable and was used for such things as shoes. Thus, it provided perfect protection against the elements of the desert. Now remember that only the outer covering of badger or porpoise skin was visible to the public. It was on top of all the other coverings. There was nothing beautiful about the badger skin. It was bleached by the sun and wind of the desert.

The outer layer of skin, with its unattractiveness, becomes a perfect picture of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. As viewed by unbelieving Jews in Christ's day and unbelievers today there is found nothing attractive about Him.

Isaiah 53:2-3

“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:

and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

How sad when the Scripture says that “there is no beauty that we should desire him.” Those who saw Christ while He was living on earth could see no beauty in him, much like there was no beauty in the badger skin that rested on the outside of the Tabernacle, a skin that was in full view of all the people. As it was in Christ’s own day, so it is today. Unsaved people miss the true beauty of Christ. Remember that a person had to come inside the Tabernacle to witness its true beauty and appreciate its magnificence. In a similar way a person must receive Christ as Savior (John 1:12) and come into fellowship with Jesus Christ through salvation in order to witness the true beauty of his grace, love, mercy, and holiness.

The Psalmist prophesied about the rejection that Jesus would experience from the world while He was here and when He would hang upon the cross.

Psalm 22:6-7

“But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head ...”

Isaiah 52:14 records:

“As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.”

People were astonished that Jesus could be the Christ when they saw Him hanging on a tree, beaten beyond description, and no longer retaining the physical recognition of a man. There was no beauty in Him. This is what the unsaved say. This is what the badger skin represented as it hung on the outside of the Tabernacle in view of all the people. In other words, it’s the world’s assessment of Christ’s humanity, a world that does not see the beauties of our blessed Lord. Like the badger skin, the world of Christ’s day and our day does not see any beauty in Christ. He is blasphemed and His name is used in vain. His name is a curse word for the drunkards and foul mouthed people of our day. His death is not seen as the only necessary requirement for salvation according to the humanists, modernists,



and cultists. One man said to me, "How can a man's death 2,000 years ago have anything to do with me today?" My friend, the world does not see His beauty for they have not come inside the Tabernacle to witness His true beauty. But praise God there are those who recognize their sinful condition before God and realize that their only hope is to trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior (Acts 16:31). It's those who come inside the veil of the Tabernacle that will behold the true beauty of Jesus Christ. Oh how lovely He is!

"Fair are the meadows,  
Fairer still the woodlands,  
Robed in the blooming garb of spring;  
Jesus is fairer,  
Jesus is purer,  
Who makes the woeful heart to sing."

### 3. Its Holy Place

The Tabernacle structure was divided into two rooms which consisted of the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. In these two rooms there were seven total pieces of furniture. Seven is the number of perfection in the Bible (Gen. 7:10; 8:10, 12, 14; 41:53-54; Ex. 12:15; 29:37; Rev. 1:4, 13, 16; 4:5; 5:1; 15:6). Many times in the Bible we see that God completes things in a series of sevens. So the seven pieces of furniture in both rooms speak to us of God's perfect salvation provision through Jesus Christ. When God does something He does it right. Let me just say that salvation through Jesus Christ is a perfect plan created by a perfect God. God's plan and way of salvation is perfect. The blood of God, the Son of God, the grace of God, and the salvation of God are all a perfection of God's work and wisdom - "the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10).

Romans 11:33

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

The Holy Place was the first room that the priest entered when doing the work and service of the Lord. In this room there were three items of furniture. These different pieces of furniture point to Christ. I agree

with Roy Lee DeWitt who said that “only the most obvious meaning for each item should be emphasized, and that only as it augments the gospel...” Later he says, “We must stress what God has ordained as significant.” This should be our goal as we study these furniture items inside the Tabernacle. We don’t want to become like an extremist over-spiritualizing the Word of God by creating types that simply are not being conveyed in the Tabernacle. When we do this we distort the true meaning of the Bible and what God is intending to convey.

#### a. The Table of Showbread

Exodus 25:23-30

“Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway.”

When entering the Holy Place the priest would see an item of furniture on his right commonly known as the table of showbread. The light cast on the table by the golden lampstand allowed the priest to see the beauty of this table. When people cannot see the beauty of our Lord it’s because they are unregenerate (1 Cor. 2:14 – “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God”) and are incapable of being illuminated to the glories of our blessed Lord. They can’t see nor experience how wonderful His salvation and fellowship is since they are not one of God’s children. In order to see Christ we need the light. How wonderful it is to behold the beauty of Jesus Christ today and be continually grateful for the salvation and fellowship we can have with God through His Son. This is what we want to discover in our study of the showbread. The showbread

represents the salvation and fellowship we can have with God through Jesus Christ.

### 1. The proportions of the table

The table that the bread rested upon was three feet long, one and one half feet wide, and a little higher than two feet (Ex. 25:23). This was not a large table upon which the bread rested. Ladies, imagine trying to work with a table that was only two feet high! You wouldn't put up with this size table for very long. You would want a larger and higher table. But God planned this size for a reason. When serving in the Tabernacle the priest would have to bend or kneel to partake of the bread and replace the bread every Sabbath. Apparently God wanted the priests to bend and kneel in their service and work to indicate their humility before God as they serve Him. Friend, in serving and living for God we should remember who we are and who God is. We are but dust and are "as grasshoppers" (Isa. 40:22) in His sight but God is the eternal, unchanging, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God of the ages. There are times we should humble ourselves before Him and kneel before His presence. There are times we should outwardly express our humility before Him.

Psalm 95:6

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker."

Dad and mom, do you ever kneel with your children beside their bed and pray with them? Are we teaching your children how we are to act in the presence of God? Humility is an important lesson that we must learn if we want to become servants of the most high God!

Then too, we need to serve God with humility and lowliness of mind and heart as we go throughout our daily lives (Matt. 11:29 – "I am meek and lowly I heart"). There needs to be a spirit of humbleness before God as we do His work and service. God does not use big shots! We are nothing before God. We are nothing without God! We are actually nothing even when we think we are something! When were we ever something? Let us come and kneel before the table of showbread today and serve the Lord in meekness and lowliness. Let

us kiss the dust and realize just how small we are in comparison to the greatness of the eternal and unchanging God.

James 4:6

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

1 Peter 5:6

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”

While a mother was driving her boys to music lessons, Michael, age eight, saw a book that the wife’s husband had left in the car. He picked it up and read the title. "What's this book about?" he asked. "It's a book to help us become authentic Christians," the mother replied. The little boy said, "Oh yea, that's what we are, right, Mom! Pathetic Christians!" My friend, we are pathetic Christians when we live like God owes us something and that we are gifted by our own power and abilities. We are pathetic when we live like we did something or have something that God did not first bless us with us. We need to humble ourselves before God and admit that we are but dust and ashes. We need to live before Him with the spirit of humility and not the spirit of self-love, self-concept, self-worth, self-image, self-esteem, self-acceptance, self-potential, self-confidence, and self-help! I’m tired of all the humanism that is in the church today. And so is God! Life is not about ourselves. It’s about God! When we humble ourselves before God we will have all that we will ever need in life.

## 2. The particulars of the table

When studying about the particular construction of this table we are once again reminded of Christ. The table was a gold-layered construction (“thou shalt overlay it with pure gold” – vs. 24). There were also a decorative ornamental “crown of gold” (vs. 24) placed around the table and a “border of an hand breadth round about” (vs. 25) which was a 3 inch raised frame or rim that was used to keep the bread and objects on the table. Others suggest that the decorative crown was used to actually hole the bread in place while the smaller border was used to hold the sacred vessels that were part of the showbread table.

The table also had gold rings and gold poles to transport the table (vv. 26-28). Also on the table were golden “dishes” (vs. 29 – bread pans or plates) that were used for carrying the loaves of bread. There were also golden “spoons” or ladles which were long handled utensils with cup-shaped ends used for carrying incense (Numb. 7:14). The priest would stop here and get incense before going to the altar of incense and also use this incense for burning a memorial portion dedicated to the showbread. The golden “covers” were pitchers or containers used for holding liquids such as the oil for the lampstand. The “bowls” (cups) were used to assist in the drink offerings (Lev. 23:18; Numb. 6:15; 15:1-12). We have not studied about these drink offerings but they were offerings of wine that accompanied the various daily offerings (Ex. 29:40-41), Sabbath offering (Numb. 28:9), and the offerings on the Feast of Pentecost (Lev. 23:18). The point is this. All the utensils that were used by the priests were made of gold (“of pure gold shalt thou make them” – Ex. 25:29).

As we have already seen on several occasions “gold” presents Christ as both King and God. *The typological teaching of gold represents Christ’s kingliness and deity.* Gold was used extensively by kings (Esther 8:15). Gold was the kingly metal that always pointed to Christ (Matt. 2:11; Rev. 14:14). The table was built out of “shittim wood” (acacia wood) and this points to the humanity of Christ (vv. 23, 28). Wood is also something that comes directly from the earth. As we have seen, the desert growth of this acacia wood becomes a fitting symbol of Christ’s incarnation since the Bible says that He was “a root out of dry ground” (Isa. 53:2). The wood construction of the table reminds us of something that is from the earth and this *reflects the humanity of Christ.* He came into the world as a man. Christ came into this world in order to be a man that could die upon Calvary’s cross. But He was not just a man. He was the God-man! The combined gold and wood in the table represents Christ’s humanity and deity.

Another portion of Scripture in Leviticus 24:5-9 supplements this account in Exodus 25:23-30 which says little about the bread itself. On the table, which was to be positioned on the north side of the holy place (Ex. 26:35; 40:22) – the direction of heaven and God’s presence (Ps. 75:6), 12 loaves were to be placed in two piles or rows

of 6 each (Lev. 24:5-6). These loaves probably represented the twelve tribes of Israel (like the twelve stones on the priest's garments – Ex. 28:9-12) and they were replaced on the table each Sabbath day as fresh bread (Lev. 24:8). Since the bread was taken from the twelve tribes it became a fitting symbol of these tribes and God's "everlasting covenant" (Lev. 24:8) with them which may reference the Abrahamic Covenant that was given to the nation and the promise of God's continued blessing (Gen. 12:1-3; 1 Chron. 16:16-17). God would never forsake His people.

Romans 11:1-2

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. .."

Frankincense (Lev. 24:7) was placed in the ladles on the table so incense could be taken to the altar of incense to be burned as a memorial portion dedicated to the showbread. This special incense was burned on the altar while the priests ate the showbread within the Holy Place on the Sabbath (Lev. 24:9). It was here that the incense was offered as "fire unto the LORD" (Lev. 24:7). The frankincense would provide a sweet scent in a smoky vapor and typically portray how Christ's life and sacrifice was a sweet fragrance to the Father ("and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" - Eph. 5:2). The wise men (magi) presented Christ with frankincense at His birth (Matt. 2:2) which spoke of the fragrance of Christ's life and death as God the Father looked upon His beloved Son. From the cradle to the cross the Father was pleased with His Son (Matt. 3:17) and the sweet aroma of the frankincense presented this glorious truth. The frankincense was offered to Jehovah when the old bread was removed and given to the priests for food. This incense became a memorial for the bread ("bread for a memorial" – vs. 7) commemorating how God was watching over the nation of Israel and supplying their daily needs of food as they wandered throughout the wilderness. God supplied manna for them on a daily basis and provided for His people in a miraculous way (Ex. 16:14-15). Therefore, a memorial was in order.

When the Bible says that the frankincense was placed "upon each row" (Lev. 24:7) it probably means that along each row or between

the rows the priests would store some pure incense in small golden cups. The incense was not eaten. It was not edible. Therefore, it was not poured directly on the bread as some suggest since the bread was to be eaten by the priest. The incense was actually burned as a memorial portion *in the place* of the bread (“bread for a memorial” – vs. 7). The bread itself served as food for the priests as they ministered and did the work of God (Lev. 24:9). Presumably the loaves that were removed from the table were given to the priests for consumption and this is when the incense was burned.

The “fine flour” (Lev. 24:5) that was used was very soft and smooth. It had no roughness and unevenness. The fine flour that was used to make this bread reminds us how Christ was perfect in his humanity. Jesus Christ had no flaws in His character and life. Christ was “without sin” (Heb. 7:25) and “In him is no sin” (1 John 3:5). His spotless humanity points to the fact that He was God of very God. Only a spotless Savior can pay the penalty for sin and remove our judgment before God (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Then too, unleavened bread was used for the showbread like the other meal offerings that involved bread (Lev. 2:4-5) since unleavened bread also symbolized the sinless character or impeccability of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21 – “who knew no sin”).

“Guilty, vile and helpless we,  
Spotless Lamb of God was He;  
Full atonement can it be?  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!”

Something else should be noted at this point. To make the grain into fine flour (Lev. 24:5) it must be crushed, ground, and sifted. In a similar way Jesus went through the sifting process of Satan’s temptations (Matt. 4:1-11), the religious leaders testing (Matt. 22:15-40), the scourging of wicked men (Isa. 53:4-4; Matt. 27:26-30), and the crucifixion (Matt. 27:33-50) and yet was without sin! Jesus used a parable to illustrate His coming into the world and the sifting process and ultimate death that He would have to experience. It is a parable likened to grain.

Jesus said in John 12:24:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

The grain falls into the ground and dies, but through its death the life of that single grain is freed from its encasement to regenerate itself into thousands of other grains possessing the same nature. This is what Jesus did when He died upon the cross. He died that He might produce many other people who would be born again and manifest the likeness of Jesus in their lives. The point is this. Jesus had to die as a kernel of wheat to regenerate people and bring new life to them. This is reminiscent of the flour that was beaten and ground to produce the bread.

The refined flour was also baked into loaves which become another picture of Jesus who went through the fire of persecution, suffering, and death for us. Peter reminds us of this.

1 Peter 3:18

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

“Alone, alone, he bore it all alone.  
He suffered bled and died, alone, alone.”

c. The purpose of the showbread

Exodus 25:30

“And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me always.”

The term showbread comes from a Hebrew word that means “bread of the face” or “bread of presence.” In other words, this table of bread was designed to be visibly shown and seen before the presence of God. It was bread that was baked and created so God could look upon it with His favor and approval. Hence, the term showbread was an appropriate term. The bread was literally called the bread of the presence (“showbread”) because it was placed in God’s presence (“before me”). Leviticus 24:6 says that the bread was placed “upon the pure table before the LORD.” Leviticus 24:8 says that the bread



was set “before the LORD continually.” God wanted to send the clear picture that He was watching this bread. These loaves were set before the presence of Jehovah who dwelt in the Holy of Holies and it was bread that God was pleased with in every way.

The twelve loaves sitting before the presence of God symbolize how the twelve tribes of Israel (Lev. 24:8) were constantly under the scrutiny, care, and preservation of God. God was watching over the nation. This was the “bread of presence” which means that twelve tribes were constantly in the eye of the Divine presence. They were under the supervision, care, and examination of God.

“The eyes of God are upon me,  
He sees everything I do!”

What was true of the nation is also true of us today. We cannot hide from God (Psalm 139:7-10). God is watching us today and He knows all about us. He knows what we are doing for Him and what we should be doing for Him. He knows if we are running from Him or serving Him. We cannot escape the Divine presence! We cannot hide from God. Nothing passes His all-seeing eye.

Hebrews 4:13

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

In our next point we want to study the type that was being portrayed by the bread. In a typical sense, the bread spoke of Jesus Christ, and how the Father was pleased with His Son. Jehovah looked upon the showbread of His Son and was satisfied with His Son, of whom the loaves typically spoke.

Matthew 17:5

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

#### d. The primary teaching of the showbread

We now must look at the primary teaching of the table of showbread and not miss the main teachings of this important piece of furniture in the Tabernacle. We will consider what the bread represents typically and then how the bread applies to our lives today.

##### 1. Typical significance of Christ

Although the twelve loaves of bread represented the care and provision that God gave to Israel in their own day we know by examining the New Testament that there was also a specific type connected to this bread and the provision that people of all ages would receive. The bread on the table was a beautiful type of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament Jesus identifies Himself as the “bread of life” and confirms that He was a typical fulfillment of the manna which God had given to the nation of Israel in their wilderness wanderings. Of course, we have seen that the bread on the table of showbread was a memorial of God’s provision for them in providing manna throughout their wilderness journeys.

John 6:47-58

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”

The showbread was a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, who was the true bread that God the Father sent down from Heaven. *Jesus Christ is the true bread from Heaven that gives life and sustenance to all that partake of Him.* In fact, Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem which means “the city of bread.” It is here that Jesus was born and where the “bread of life” first appeared. Jesus was of course using a metaphor when He spoke of himself as the “bread of life” (vs. 48). Jesus was not literal bread but He compares Himself to bread for the simple reason that He alone can supply the spiritual needs of a lost human race providing them with the gift of eternal life when they partake of Him through simple faith or belief. The following verses explain what Jesus was teaching when He spoke about people partaking of Him.

John 6:47

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

John 6:50

“This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.”

John 6:54

“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 6:57

“As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.”

John 6:58

“This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”

As people partake of bread and receive physical nourishment and life so those people who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior receive spiritual and eternal life. This is what Jesus is teaching. When a person receives Jesus Christ as His Savior he will *never die in the sense that he experiences eternal separation from God and judgment*

*in hell for his sins.* The point Jesus was making was that when a person believes in His person and work as the Savior they receive the gift of eternal life (“hath everlasting life” – vs. 47). When a person believes in Jesus Christ they partake of something that is far better than physical food. They partake of the spiritual food of eternal life that promises them an eternity with God in Heaven.

Roman Catholics believe and teach that Jesus was referring to how we should eat of his literal body and drink his literal blood when the symbols are magically turned into His body and blood during the Roman Catholic mass. This is called transubstantiation. Of course, Jesus was not teaching cannibalism nor could He be referring to the communion service for this was not instituted until a year later. Furthermore, one cannot eat something and receive salvation on some kind of eating plan that installs salvation to their lives in a piecemeal fashion. People cannot eat something and trust in physical elements in order to be saved. This is works (Eph. 2:8-9). *Jesus was using a simple metaphor to teach that He was similar to bread that men eat for physical sustenance and life.*

Believing in Christ is like eating bread (“he that eateth of this bread” – vs. 58). When a person eats bread they must take it and appropriate it to their lives so that they can receive of its benefits. Bread sitting on the table will not help me unless I cut it, partake of it, and allow it to nourish me and sustain my life. In a similar way, unsaved people going to hell need to believe in Christ which involves appropriating Christ to their lives through simple faith (John 1:12). Belief or faith is not merely believing in a proposition but it involves a person’s choice or will to freely *take* what Christ offers (eternal life) by committing their faith only to Him for salvation and eternal life. When a person “eateth of the bread” (vs. 58), which is Jesus Christ, it means they reach out in faith and take (Rev. 22:17) the spiritual food that Christ has to offer them – eternal life! *Believing in Christ means that we will commit our trust to Him alone and take what He has to offer – eternal life.* When one believes in Christ they receive the spiritual bread or food which comes through Christ (the Bread of Life) and this food is likened to eternal life. What a glorious truth this is! *Believing is like eating bread.* A person must partake of the bread, eat the bread, and allow the bread to sustain his life. In a similar way every person must commit their belief or faith only to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,

so that they can receive or partake of the gift of eternal life through the Bread of Life (Jesus Christ), who gave His life for “the world” (John 6:51), to grant them everlasting life (John 6:47).

The showbread reminds us of Christ who was the true bread from heaven and the provision of spiritual food which He grants to every believer – the provision of everlasting life. The typical teaching of the showbread beautifully portrays Christ as the Bread of Life and our Savior who provides us with spiritual life. May I say today that the world is starving! People are trying to eat of the husks of this world that never satisfy (Luke 15:16).

“Feeding on the husks around me  
Till my strength was almost gone.  
Longed my soul for something better,  
Only still to hunger on.”

Now here is the wonderful thing. If a man will just come to Christ (the Bread of Life) and commit his faith only to Christ for his salvation and take the gift of eternal life, it’s then that He will be satisfied and never hunger again.

“Hallelujah! I have found Him  
Whom my soul so long has craved!  
Jesus satisfies my longings;  
Thro’ His blood I now am saved.”

What a promise! What an invitation! It still stands to everyone today for Jesus said “that he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever” (vs. 58) when a person by faith reaches out and takes Jesus Christ as his Savior and the gift that He offers will live forever in Heaven.

Revelation 22:17

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Have you reached out and taken what Jesus Christ is offering you? He is offering you free bread and water so that you can be eternally saved and satisfied in life. The bread, wine, and water are speaking

of the refreshing gift of eternal life that is granted to every believer through faith.

Isaiah 55:1

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

When your faith is willing to reach out and freely take what Jesus Christ is offering to you then you can be saved from hell and receive the gift of eternal life. How about you? Have you reached out and received the bread and water that Jesus is offering to you? What are you waiting for dear friend?

## 2. Practical significance to Christians

The message and typical teaching of the showbread has at least two areas of practical significance for the Christian life. These are all very important and precious to the blood-bought believer.

### a. God supplies our foremost needs.

You will remember that the showbread was a constant memorial and reminder to the children of Israel that God would provide for them throughout their wilderness journey (Lev. 24:7). He would meet all of their physical needs by supplying them with manna and everything that they need for sustenance and life. God is a great provider and the bread, which was the symbol and staff of life, was provided by God.

Exodus 16:35

“And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.”

The New Testament equivalent is Matthew 6:33:

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

However, God does not only supply our physical needs in life but also our spiritual needs for peace, love, joy, strength, satisfaction, and contentment in life. God has promised to supply all of our needs through Jesus Christ. *Jesus supplies all of our spiritual food since He is the Bread of Life.*

We must also remember that the priests were given the bread to eat within the Holy Place (Lev. 24:9). Today we who are believer priests (1 Pet. 2:9) should feed on Christ, the Bread of Life, receiving in return sustenance and strength for service and life in general. Jesus Christ promises to meet all of our needs in life. How wonderful! A favorite promise and verse claimed by many is given in the New Testament.

Philippians 4:19

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

God has always promised to meet our truest needs in life. Sometimes that need is for physical food or healing and other times the truer need is for added strength and victory where we are at in life. One thing is certain. God always supplies our needs. He always provides us with the manna that we need. The showbread was reminder of this to the people of God in the Old Testament.

A little boy was stuck in a closet and crying hysterically. Unable to open the door from the outside, his mom slid her fingers through the one-inch space underneath the door and told him to bend down and find them. Groping in the darkness, he touched her fingers and held on for dear life. She wanted to call the fire department or something, but she also knew that her touch was critical to her son's survival. “Open the door now,” she repeated softly. He stopped crying, and in between her verbal nudges, he mustered up the courage every so often to reach up and jiggle the knob. Then suddenly, after what seemed like forever, the door swung open.

Sometimes we can feel like that two-year-old boy in the dark and God is on the outside wanting to embrace us. God could break down the door if He thought that would be the best way directly and at once.

However, many times God lets me hold His fingers underneath the door and says, "This is what you really need."

b. God supplies our fellowship needs.

It is said that John Fletcher of Madely never met a Christian without saying, "Friend, do I meet you praying?" Though often startled by his salutation, they were reminded in an unusual way that life for the believer should actually be an unbroken fellowship with God.

As mentioned above, the priests had the privilege of eating the bread in the holy place. Eating bread together in the Holy Place was a joyous time of fellowship and blessing. In a similar way, each believer today can fellowship with Jesus Christ of whom the bread spoke and typically represented.

Leviticus 24:9

"And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire by a perpetual statute."

Since the showbread speaks of Christ as the Bread of Life we are reminded how we can fellowship with Christ on a daily basis and enjoy His blessing and presence in our own lives. Have you been fellowshiping with Him? Have you been occupied with Him? Have you been enjoying His presence? Sometimes we try to defend our petty doctrines instead of having a greater passion to fellowship with Him inside the Holy Place. We are to feed on Christ to also experience His glorious fellowship in our lives. Jesus alone is the source of our spiritual vitality (Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20). Nothing else or no one else can ever take the place of Jesus Christ. He is truly all we need. He is our bread! He is everything! Jesus Christ should be everything from A-Z in our lives. Today many Christians are starving for they have lost sight of the true Bread of Life who has promised to fulfill their lives (John 10:10) and provide them with constant companionship and fellowship for their journey. Christians are starving today for they are trying to find help and satisfaction through psychology, humanism, self-esteem, wealth, and the philosophical opinions of the world. My friend, Jesus Christ is all we need! He is our power, victory, strength, guide, helper, healer, sustainer, peace and



joy-giver. He truly is all that we need in life. I have Christ what want I more!

“Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but Thou art might;  
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;  
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more,  
Feed me till I want no more.”

Now friend, in the Holy Place the priest was shut out from the world and its distractions. Inside was the place of perfect peace where he could eat the showbread and fellowship with the Lord. No doubt this food was eaten in the Holy Place in deep contemplation of the Lord and His presence in the Tabernacle. Dear friend, we too must spend time in the Holy Place enjoying the Bread of Heaven and the beauties of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you really in fellowship with God today within the retreat of the holy place? What a fellowship and what a joy divine to walk with the Lord!

“I come to the garden alone  
While the dew is still on the roses.  
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear;  
The Son of God discloses.

And He walks with me,  
And He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own,  
And the joy we share as we tarry there;  
None other has ever known.”

The Jews partook of the bread as they journeyed in the wilderness. In a similar way every believer today in the midst of this godless world must learn the secret of drawing upon the Bread of Life. We must rely upon Christ for our strength and stay close to Him these days and experience the peace and stillness that He provides. This is what the priests experienced when they ate the bread in the quietness and seclusion of the Holy Place. Dear friend, there is a quiet place for us as well today. Have you been there recently?

“There is a quiet place, Far from the rapid pace  
Where God can sooth my troubled mind.  
Sheltered by tree and flower,  
There in my quiet with Him  
My cares are left behind.  
Whether a garden small or on a mountain tall,  
Your strength and courage there I find.  
Then from this quiet place, I go prepared to face,  
A new day with love for all mankind.”

The showbread on the table in the Tabernacle within the wilderness speaks of fellowship with the Lord and reminds us of another table that God has given to us today whereby we can fellowship with Him. It's another table of "memorial" (Lev. 24:7) like the table of showbread in the wilderness.

1 Corinthians 11:24-26

“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.”

The Lord has prepared for us today a table in memory of His sacrificial body and shed blood. It's the Lord's Table and not ours! We are His invited guests! We are to sit at this table to hold sweet fellowship and communion with Him. It's to be a pure table (1 Cor. 11:28) and the bread and wine (fresh juice) are holy for they remind us of how Jesus gave Himself for us on the cross of Calvary. We too have our special table through which we can fellowship with the Lord.

Then too, in a practically day to day manner, God also provides for us a table in the wilderness of our own lives. David knew this when he said “Thou preparest a table before me?” (Ps. 23:5). God's provision is always there for us and today we find that provision through our fellowship and communion with Jesus Christ.

Jesus asks in Revelation 3:20:

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

This really is not the knock for salvation but the knock for fellowship. Jesus as the Bread of Life bids His own children to sup with Him. He is pictured as wanting to enter their residency or home and fellowship with them. This is simply and *illustration* that Jesus gave to impress upon His followers His desire to fellowship with them. The details should not be pressed. Jesus as the Bread of Life wants our communion and companionship. He wants to walk with us. Do you hear Him knocking today? Do you hear His voice calling to you in the midst of our fast pace and the noise of the world? Jesus Christ is calling out to you. He wants your fellowship. He wants to sit down with you and commune with you. Why don't you slow down and enjoy His fellowship and sup with Him?

“Lord, I love You, I love you Lord,  
For all the things You've done,  
For the victories that You've won.  
But I love you most of all  
Because of Who you are.”

The Song of Solomon reminds us of our blessed Lord who has invited us to the banquet room for fellowship and joyous communion. As the Bread of Life Jesus Christ sustains us and provides us with the wondrous fellowship and joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Song of Solomon 2:4 says:

“He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”

The man brings the woman into the banquet house of sexual love. But the typology of Solomon moves from the honeymoon to the fellowship room with Jesus Christ who is our Shepherd today. When it comes to Jesus Christ, He has brought us into His own banqueting room much like the priests ate the bread inside the Holy Place. Jesus Christ brings us into His banqueting room and our hearts are full because He has spread a table before us in the wilderness in order to meet all of our spiritual needs and satisfy our

hungry souls. And it's there at the banquet table that we meet with Him and enjoy His presence and fellowship. My friend, are you enjoying your blessed Lord in the banquet room of fellowship. Can you really say that Christ means more to you than anything else this world has to offer? It's supper time!

“If I could find the right words to say,  
To tell you just what Christ means to me.  
I'd say He's more than I could show.  
And more than you'll ever know.  
Christ means more to me than you'll every know.  
Christ means more to me than I could possibly show.  
More, more, so much more.  
He's more than you'll ever know.”

### ***The Tabernacle's Altar of Incense***

The following humorous story appears in the autobiography of Clarence E. Macartney: As two men were walking through a field one day, they spotted an enraged bull. Instantly they darted toward the nearest fence. The storming bull followed in hot pursuit, and it was soon apparent they wouldn't make it. Terrified, the one shouted to the other, "Put up a prayer, John. We're in for it!" John answered, "I can't. I've never made a public prayer in my life." "But you must!" begged his companion. "The bull is catching up to us." "All right," panted John, I'll say the only prayer I know, the one my father used to repeat at the table: 'O Lord, for what we are about to receive, make us truly thankful.'"

The next piece of furniture that we want to study in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle structure is the altar of incense. Like the other pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle the altar of incense is rich in typology and contains spiritual truth that we can profit from today. One of these truths is learning to worship God daily through prayer. My friend, we need to send up the sweet perfume of prayer to God these days so that our Christian lives will be filled with joyous worship and fellowship with God. The golden altar of incense provides rich teaching for us regarding our worship of God.

## Exodus 30:1-10

“And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord.”

### 1. The placement of the altar

The altar of incense stood before the second veil (“before the veil” - Ex. 30:6) that provided entrance into the Holy of Holies where God manifested His presence above the mercy seat which was a lid or cover over “the ark of the testimony” (vs. 6) - the box that contained the commandments of God. This was called God’s testimony. Inside the veil was the place where God would meet with His people (“where I will meet with thee” – vs. 6). It was the place where God manifested His presence and reminded the people that He was with them. So it was an important and integral place of worship. What took place in this area was an act of worship being rendered up to God. Some have suggested that Hebrews 9:4 confirms that the golden altar of incense was inside the Holy of Holies (the second room) but this is a misconception since the Old Testament repeatedly says it was in the

Holy Place (the first room) with the lampstand and table of showbread (Ex. 30:6; 40:3–5, 21–27).

The altar of incense was the centerpiece of furniture when entering the Holy Place. The priest would take a censer full of burning coals from the brazen altar in one hand and specially prepared sweet incense in the other hand and ignite the incense by sprinkling it over the burning coals that he would place upon the altar of incense. This can be seen by his practice of carrying incense into the Holy of Holies (Lev. 16:12-13) which was the golden censer mentioned in Hebrews 9:4. However, a similar procedure was done for the altar of incense. Hot coals were taken off the brazen altar and placed on the altar of incense to keep the incense continually burning and sending up a fragrance into the heavens (“perpetual incense” – Ex. 30:8). When those hot coals were placed on the altar and incense added to them a thick cloud of smoke curled upward and filled the Tabernacle with a sweet fragrance of cloudy incense.

The placement of the altar was very important for it stood in front of the Most Holy Place where God manifested His divine presence. It was close to the presence of God. The nearest one could be to the Holy of Holies (God’s presence) without being in it was when they stood at the altar of incense. Dear friend, if we want to get closer to God in our Christian lives we must worship Him at the golden of altar of incense. We can’t get close to God and experience His presence without worshipping Him.

“Thou, my everlasting portion,  
More than friend or life to me;  
All along my pilgrim’s journey,  
Saviour, let me walk with Thee.  
Close to Thee, close to Thee,  
Close to Thee, Close Thee.  
All along my pilgrim’s journey,  
Saviour, let me walk with Thee.”

God is first looking for worshippers, then workers. Following this order is very important. We must remember that our lives must be filled with worship and the wonder of God if we are ever going to experience joy, satisfaction, and contentment in this world. Without worship,

without the altar of incense, we have a meaningless existence. Our lives will grow empty, barren, purposeless, and cold.

Someone said:

“It’s amazing how much easier the wheels of mortal life spin when we take time to worship God.”

Psalms 96:9

“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.”

We need to spend more time at the altar of incense. We need to give more time to worship and devotion before God or else we will experience spiritual laxness and leanness of soul.

William Wilberforce, Christian statesman of Great Britain in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, once said, "I must secure more time for private devotions. I have been living far too public for me. The shortening of private devotions starves the soul. It grows lean and faint."

## 2. The preparation of the perfume

Special incense was to be prepared by mixing equal amounts of three sweet spices and then adding frankincense to them (a clear resin from the frankincense tree). The Scripture is clear about the incense mixture. It was God’s special recipe that could not be duplicated by anyone else (Ex. 30:37 – “not make to yourselves”). The incense was made from three specific sweet perfumes (Ex. 30:34). Stacte was a sweet gum from the storax tree, onycha (Heb. Shell) came from a shell of a mollusk and galbanum was a gum resin that emits a milky sap with a balsamic odor. It came from the Syrian fennel. Frankincense was a fragrant white gum that comes from a tree (salai) found in Arabia. The spices were weighed out equally (Ex. 30:34), mixed into one substance by the perfumers (“apothecary” - Ex. 30:35). Salt was added (“tempered together” – seasoned with salt) to the mixture to give forth a white smoke and to add to the fragrance. Salt, in fact, was to be added to all the offerings (Lev. 2:13). The mixture was then beaten to enable to emit their fragrances (Ex. 30:36).

The incense was said to be placed in front of the Testimony (the ark – Ex. 30:36), which probably means that it was to be burned on the altar of incense (Ex. 30:1-10) which was directly in front of the curtain or veil that led into the Most Holy Place. This incense (vv. 37-38), like the anointing oil (vv. 32-33), was exclusively for tabernacle use. This was God’s holy and personal mixture that could not be duplicated by anyone else for their own personal use. This was God’s perfume. It was for God and the worship of Him as their Creator and Savior. In a similar way, we must remember that God has given us prayer, meditation, Bible reading, and the local church ministry as important ways to worship Him. God has set the pattern and way He wants us to worship Him and we ought to take it to heart if we want to become true worshippers of Him. When we neglect the ingredients that God demands for worship and the way He has established for worship, then we will lose our communion with God and begin to be sucked into the vortex of a world system (1 John 2:15-17) that has nothing to offer us but false hopes, emptiness, and dissatisfaction. Have you been following God’s program and pattern for worship? God is looking for true worshippers (John 4:23) today who are willing to worship in the ways He has prescribed through prayer, Bible reading, meditation, and church attendance.

Erwin W. Lutzer wrote:

“If we haven’t learned to be worshipers, it doesn’t really matter how well we do anything else.”

“And now the wants are told, that brought  
Thy children to thy knee;  
Here, lingering still, we ask for naught  
But simply worship thee.”

### 3. The primary teachings

As we come to this point in our study we want to focus on the typical teaching of Christ or how the altar of incense points to Jesus Christ. Everything in the Tabernacle in some way points to Christ. We also want to underscore the practical teaching or significance this altar has for our Christian lives today. In order to arrive at the typical and



practical teaching that the altar of incense has for our lives today we must understand what incense represents or pictures in Scripture.

Psalm 141:1-2

“Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”

Revelation 5:8

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials (censers – a container in which incense is burned) full of odours (incense), which are the prayers of saints.”

Revelation 8:3-4

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.”

We cannot miss the clear teaching in the Bible. Incense is linked to prayer. Incense and prayer are repeatedly connected in the Scripture. Prayer is like incense in that it ascends up into the heavens and is a pleasing aroma to God. All these verses convey how incense and prayer should be linked together. With this truth established we now come to our first primary teaching concerning the altar of incense. We can see how the incense of prayer is linked to the prayers of Christ on the believer's behalf. This is what we want to emphasize in one of our main points in this study.

#### A. Typical Teaching of Christ.

This tabernacle piece of furniture casts many shadows of truth that point us directly to Christ.

##### 1. The typical lessons about Christ's work (Ex. 30:1-8).

###### a. Who He is (Exodus 30:1-5)

Our first point has been well established in previous studies. The “shittim wood” (acacia wood – vs. 1) with all the golden coverings, ornaments, rings, and poles speak of the same truth of Christ’s deity (vv. 2-4). The wood is of the earth and speaks of Christ’s humanness or humanity (Isa. 53:2) while the gold represents His kingliness (Rev. 14:14) and deity as God (Matt. 1:23). Jesus was and always will be God incarnate. He is Immanuel (Isa. 7:14). Without this perfect combination of humanity and divinity the human race would have no hope of ever being saved.

Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravians, was converted in an art gallery in Dusseldorf while contemplating a painting of Christ on the cross which had the inscription, "I did this for thee. What hast thou done for me?" This picture had been painted by an artist three hundred years before. When he had finished his first sketch of the face of the Redeemer, this artist called in his landlady's little daughter and asked her who she thought it was. The girl looked at it and said, "It is a good man." The painter knew that he had failed. He destroyed the first sketch and, after praying for greater skill, finished a second. Again he called the little girl in and asked her to tell him whom she thought the face represented. This time the girl said that she thought it looked like a great sufferer. Again the painter knew that he had failed, and again he destroyed the sketch he had made. After meditation and prayer, he made a third sketch. When it was finished, he called the girl in a third time and asked her who it was. Looking at the portrait, the girl exclaimed, "It is the Lord!" That alone makes the coming of Christ meaningful to the world—not that a good man came, not that a wise teacher came, not that a great sufferer came, but that God came—Immanuel, God with us.

b. What He is doing (Exodus 30:6-8)

The golden altar of incense, located in the Holy Place near the veil, speaks to us of the resurrected Christ, who lives in heaven to prayerfully intercede for us. Since we have already seen how prayer is linked to incense we cannot help but see how Christ lives in Heaven for us today interceding on our behalf before the throne of God. Christ is present in Heaven today to pray for us and help us in some way. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is in Heaven today before the Father’s presence and throne to make *continual*

*intercessory prayer* for us. This is a precious truth and reminds us how the incense of Christ's own intercession and prayer for His own people is typically portrayed in the altar of incense that stood before the presence of God in the Holy of Holies.

Exodus 30:6

"And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee."

Dear friend, as the altar of incense stood before the presence of God in the Holy of Holies so Jesus Christ today stands in the presence of God for us to make continual intercessory prayers on our behalf. This is the clear teaching of the Bible.

Hebrews 9:24

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Christ appears before the Holy of Holies in Heaven (the presence of God the Father) to do something "for us." What is He doing there? The Bible says He is making daily and continual intercession for us reminding the Father that He paid for the penalty of our sin in full and that we are safe and secure in His perfect sacrifice. The fact that Christ represents us in Heaven in this way speaks of His intercession and prayers on our behalf.

Hebrews 7:25

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Intercession is prayer. My friend, Christ is seen in Heaven today prayerfully pleading our case at God's right hand. What is he pleading and praying about? He is saying to God the Father that His sacrifice has sufficiently paid the penalty of sin for ever believer. He is saying that His children are safe and secure in His sacrificial death. What a prayer of intercession this is! It is like sweet incense rising up to the

Father's presence in Heaven. And let me say today it's also sweet incense to me!

Exodus 30:7 records:

“And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.”

The intercessory prayers of Christ being made in Heaven for His own children are like sweet incense before the Father and each one of us today. To think that Christ is interceding in Heaven for me gives me the assurance of my forgiveness of sins before God and my eternal security and acceptance before God's presence. This is a marvel of grace. It is the wonder of the ages! Jesus Christ is praying for me. Oh what sweet incense! Jesus Christ appears before the presence of God (the Holy of Holies of Heaven) in order to pray and intercede on my behalf. He is there for you today if you have trusted in Him to be your Savior. He is there as your heavenly lawyer and advocate. This is what the Bible teaches.

Exodus 30:7-8

“And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations.”

Just as the incense was to be a “perpetual incense before the Lord” so the prayerful intercession of Jesus Christ before the Father's presence is never-ending. It is perpetual. It is forever and eternal. This is what Hebrews 7:25 says about Christ's intercessory prayer ministry on our behalf. He “ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Dear friend, since Jesus is before the Father prayerfully interceding on my behalf I can know that I am saved to the uttermost (“to save them to the uttermost”). I can know that the Father accepts the prayer of intercession of His Son and that I will never be lost from God's presence. I can know that I'm free from the fear of God's wrath and judgment forever because of the prayerful intercessory work of God's Son on my behalf. I am saved to the “uttermost” (completely, entirely, full-ended). This means I am saved forever for the simple reason that Jesus is prayerfully interceding on my behalf in Heaven. Since He is sending up the incense of prayer on my behalf I can know that I am

eternally accepted in the Father's presence. I can know that I'm saved to the "uttermost."

"Saved to the uttermost; Jesus is near,  
Keeping me safely, He casteth out fear;  
Trusting His promises, how I am blest;  
Leaning upon Him, how sweet is my rest.

"Saved, saved, saved to the uttermost;  
Saved, saved, by power divine;  
Saved, saved, saved to the uttermost;  
Jesus, the Savior is mine."

Romans 8:34 asks:

"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

What sweet incense this is! Christ appears before the presence of God much like the altar of incense stood before God's presence in the earthly Tabernacle. He appears there before God's presence to prayerfully intercede for us "at the right hand of God." Dear friend, Jesus is making "intercession for us." He is praying and pleading our case before the Father's presence and He is saying, "I have paid for the penalty of their sins and because of this they are free forever, released from any obligation to pay the penalty for their own sins." This my friend is sweet incense going up to the Father but it's also sweet incense for every believer today. Since Jesus appears in Heaven for us to pray and plead our case before the Father we can be sure that God always accepts us! No person can condemn us! There is no condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Why? Because Someone is praying for us! And that Someone is Jesus Christ. Jesus is saying today:

"For you I am praying,  
For you I am praying,  
For you I am praying,  
I'm praying for you."

What sweet smelling incense this is! The Father hears the prayers of His beloved Son and understands that His Son has paid a great redemption price for His people. Therefore, they are safe and secure in God's presence forever. Who are you to deny Christ's work of grace on our behalf? Who are you to condemn someone who Jesus Christ does not condemn! Who would dare challenge any Christian regarding his eternal salvation and standing before God? In doing so you challenge the very work of Jesus Christ. Is there one here today that will stand up and challenge Jesus Christ and say, "What you are doing for me in Heaven is not good enough. I must also get involved in this procedure and do something to make sure the Father accepts me. I too must do something to maintain my acceptance before God. What you are doing is simply not enough for me." To make these remarks would cause someone to blaspheme Christ and His work. And yet many are admitting this when they fail to trust in Christ's saving work and intercession on their behalf.

Oh dear friend, the Father eternally accepts us in His presence as His children simply because of this wonderful prayer of intercession (the incense of prayer) that Jesus Christ makes on our behalf. Jesus is there in Heaven today as our resurrected Savior and He is praying for us. We can rest assured that Christ's work in Heaven is all we will ever need to grant us "eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12) in God's presence. Jesus shed His blood on the cross and has now gone to Heaven into the "the holy place" (God's presence) to intercede for us so that we might be forever redeemed (set free from sin's penalty) and acquitted (pardoned) in God's sight. My only hope is in the Lord. What He has done for me on the cross and is doing for me today in Heaven is my only hope of every being accepted in the presence of God. We can confidently sing today:

"My hope is in the Lord,  
Who gave Himself for me,  
And paid the price of all my sin at Cavalry.  
And now for me He stands,  
Before the Father's throne,  
He shows His wounded hands and names me as His own.  
For me, He died,  
For me, He lives,  
And everlasting life and light He freely gives."

This is the golden altar of incense! It typically speaks of Christ's intercessory prayer on our behalf to maintain our salvation and acceptance before God. The golden altar of incense which stood before the veil of God's presence speaks of how Christ is before the presence of God today prayerfully interceding on our behalf. My friend, this is why I believe in eternal security. *My security rests in what Christ has done for me on the cross and is doing for me today in Heaven.* I have no merit to claim. I cannot *do* something, *be* something, *become* something, or *maintain* something that will give me acceptance before God. Anything that I do is a form of legalism or works. Legalism cancels out grace and grace cancels out legalism (Eph. 2:8-9). Christ has done it all and He continues to do it all before the Father's presence! It's not what I do or how I live that gives me acceptance before God, it's what Christ has done and continues to do for me in the Father's presence that grants me eternal pardon and salvation. Why can't you just rest in Christ today? If you will just trust in Christ and rest in His work on your behalf (Heb. 4:9-10) you can find assurance of salvation and know that you are going to Heaven someday.

1 John 2:1 says:

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

An "advocate" is actually a lawyer who works on a person's behalf. So what is this verse teaching? Every time a believer sins Jesus (the lawyer, our friend in court, our defense attorney) He identifies that believer as His own child and says, "I paid for that sin on the cross." The Father then answers, "That's right, we will mark it paid in full." As a result, the Christian who sins is still judicially forgiven and cleared of all His sinful charges in God's sight and positionally perfect in the presence of God. *Jesus the lawyer intercedes with the sweet incense of prayer before the Father declaring to Him that the sacrificial death He died on the cross has provided eternal forgiveness for the sins of His children.* The intercessory work of Christ is not a repeat of His sacrifice on the cross (Heb. 9:25-26; 10:12) or repeated judicial forgiveness before God since this occurs once and for all and forever when a believer is saved (Eph. 1:7, Col 1:14; 1 John 2:12). This prayer of intercession of Christ is a repeated declaration that Christ

has already paid for sin's penalty once and that every believer now has the privilege of eternal acquittal in God's presence. Since this is true every sinning Christian can also confess his sins (1 John 1:9) and know that their fellowship can be restored with God. This is because God is not at enmity with His children due to the advocacy work of Christ. *The advocacy work of Jesus Christ is like an insurance policy that every believer has before God.* Jesus Christ is pictured as the risen and ascended Lord actively interceding on our behalf in Heaven to maintain our judicial standing before God. The sweet fragrance of Christ's intercessory prayer provides us with this accepted standing. There's an old hymn that speaks of this prayer intercession of Christ on our behalf.

"I have a Saviour, He's pleading in glory,  
A dear, loving Saviour,  
Though earth-friends be few;  
He is watching in tenderness o'er me,  
But oh, that my Saviour were your Saviour too!"

Now here is the wonderful thing. Our accepted standing in God's presence assures us that we can have forgiveness and fellowship with God throughout our Christian lives (1 John 1:9). It's a fellowship based upon the never-ending intercessory work of Jesus Christ on our behalf in Heaven. *When a Christian sins he can be assured that he does not lose his salvation based upon what Christ is doing for him in Heaven.* He is pleading the eternal efficacy of His sacrifice on the cross as sufficient ground to grant eternal acquittal and acceptance in God's presence. Christ is prayerfully interceding on the Christian's behalf maintaining his position or standing of acceptance before the Father. Therefore, every Christian can be assured that he can have his sins forgiven in his Christian life and fellowship restored with God, since God continually looks favorably upon him due to Christ's intercessory work on his behalf. Our forgiveness in the Christian life is based upon the intercessory prayer ministry of Christ, which is a ministry that maintains our standing of acceptance before God. Without this we could not be accepted before God and experience forgiveness and fellowship with God in our Christian lives. Jesus Christ is our praying advocate or lawyer working for us continually before the Father's presence.



We need a heavenly lawyer today who is pleading our case and praying for us in Heaven. Do you know why? It's because someone else is trying to destroy our standing and salvation before the throne of God. This person has many names such as the serpent, the devil, and Satan (Rev. 12:9). However, there is another name given to him which is "the accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10). This name suggests an activity that Satan performs before God's presence. In some way unbeknown to us Satan comes before God and says, "Look at all those sins your children are committing against You and your holy character. If you are just and righteous you must damn their souls to hell." Christ then responds, "You are right Satan but you have forgotten one thing. I have paid the penalty for all their sins and given them acquittal and pardon in the Father's presence forever." How marvelous and how wonderful this is! Jesus is our advocate in Heaven. He is our acting lawyer.

In a poem entitled "My Advocate," Martha Snell Nicholson dramatically portrays the adequacy of Christ's saving work on the cross. She wrote:

"I sinned. And straightway, posthaste, Satan flew  
Before the presence of the most High God,  
And made a railing accusation there.  
He said, "This soul, this thing of clay and sod,  
Has sinned. 'Tis true that he has named Thy Name,  
But I demand his death, for Thou hast said,  
'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' Shall not  
Thy sentence be fulfilled? Is justice dead?

Send now this wretched sinner to his doom.  
What other thing can a righteous ruler do?"  
And thus he did accuse me day and night,  
And every word he spoke, O God, was true!  
Then quickly One rose up from God's right hand,  
Before whose glory angels veiled their eyes.  
He spoke, "Each jot and tittle of the law  
Must be fulfilled; the guilty sinner dies!

But wait--suppose his guilt were all transferred  
To Me, and that I paid his penalty!

Behold My hands, My side, My feet! One day  
I was made sin for him, and died that he  
Might be presented faultless at Thy throne!"  
And Satan fled away. Full well he knew  
That he could not prevail against such love,  
For every word my dear Lord spoke was true!"

Let us never forget that because of Christ's prayers of intercession before the Father "the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:7) can continually cleanse us from every sin that we commit in our Christian lives ("cleanseth us from all sin") and restore our fellowship with God (1 John 1:9). Jesus' pleading prayer of intercession (1 John 2:1; Heb. 7:25) and the response of the Father to this prayer is a transaction that guarantees our eternal acquittal before God. It's a prayer that *defends* our standing or acceptance before God on the basis of Christ's blood (Rom. 5:9) that was shed on the cross ("the blood of his cross" – Col. 1:20). Since God the Father sees this as being true He is faithful and just to forgive our sins in our Christian life and restore our fellowship with Him (1 John 1:9).

Because Christ's blood has granted us perfect acquittal in God's sight (primary forgiveness for salvation – Eph. 1:7. Col. 1:14) and maintains our standing before God (Rom. 3:25; Rev. 1:5-6) we can be sure that God will allow us to be forgiven and have restored fellowship with Him in our Christian life on the basis of this blood sacrifice (secondary forgiveness for fellowship - 1 John 1:7). Let's state it this way. *The cleansing we receive at Calvary becomes the basis of our cleansing for restored fellowship in the Christian life.* As the Father continually looks through the sacrificial shed blood of His Son He sees the perfect position or standing we have in His sight (Rom. 5:9) and then allows this same blood to continually grant every Christian with forgiveness and restored fellowship with God in their Christian life. In this way "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7) or keeps on allowing Christ's blood to forgive our sins in our Christian experience and restore our fellowship with Him.

I remember looking through a microscope one day and examining little creatures that were naked to the human eye. I could not see those creatures without a microscope. In a similar way, God the

Father must look through the merits of His Son's blood sacrifice to see us acquitted or pardoned in His sight and on the basis of this blood sacrifice He then restores us to fellowship with Him when we confess our sins (1 John 1:9). God continually looks through the sacrificial merits of Christ's blood and then restores us to fellowship on this basis! This is what Christ's intercessory prayers (Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1) do for us. They maintain our salvation and standing before God while at the same time providing the basis for restored fellowship with God (1 John 1:9).

I once was with a man who opened up a giant piece of machinery in some factory. When he opened the door on the piece of machinery there were all kinds of motors, gears, and wires running everywhere. I asked him if he knew how to fix this machine for I had no ideal or understanding how the machine worked. He then began to explain to me how everything works. Now folks, there are some things hard to understand but then again there are some things not hard to understand! Let me explain how the intercessory prayer of Christ works. It's not difficult to figure out. There are no wires, gears, and complicated electric involve. When a Christian sins the sweet incense of Jesus' intercessory prayer goes up before the Father and He pleads the saving efficacy (power) of His *finished* blood sacrifice as the ground for that Christian's eternal pardon and acquittal in God's sight. As a result of the prayer ministry of Christ the Father says, "You are right My beloved Son. Your blood sacrifice has availed for every sin. Your blood sacrifice shall continue to provide eternal pardon for every believer in my sight and on this basis I will restore fellowship to the believer." This is what John is teaching. Jesus' intercessory prayer before the Father guarantees our eternal acquittal before God and for this reason and on this ground God is faithful and just to forgive our sins in our Christian life (1 John 1:9).

Robert Murray McCheyne once remarked:

"If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet the distance makes no difference. He is praying for me!"

The Father looks to the blood sacrifice of His Son and assures Himself that every believer is pardoned and forgiven of all his sins in His sight and on this basis He gladly restores them to fellowship.

Because of the intercessory work of Christ on the believer's behalf his standing before God's presence is maintained and on this basis He can be forgiven of his sins and repeatedly have his fellowship restored before God. The blood of Jesus Christ not only maintains our salvation before God; it also maintains our fellowship with God. The blood will never lose its power!

“He ever lives above,  
For me to intercede,  
His all redeeming love,  
His precious blood to plead.”

The old Scottish lady was right. When she was visited by a very young minister who was short on experience, she held fast to her firm assurance of her safety in Christ. “But just suppose that after all God should let you sink into hell?” said the minister. “He would lose more than I would,” came the firm answer to faith. “All I would lose would be my own soul, but He would lose His good name.”

The point is this. Jesus keeps us saved! This is God's promise to us. Christ's blood sacrifice maintains our standing before God. For this reason every blood bought believer can be assured that he can be restored to fellowship with God when confessing his sins in the Christian life (1 John 1:9). Jesus is in Heaven today prayerfully interceding on our behalf to maintain our standing of acceptance before the Father's presence and throne. Our salvation and acceptance before God is assured because it's based upon the pleading prayers of the Lord Jesus Christ. How glorious! How wonderful! How liberating! Jesus Christ is constantly pleading and praying before the Father's presence reminding Him of *the sacrifice He made* and *the price He paid* to free us from the judgment of hell forever. He is our advocate. His work as intercessor continues on without end to assure us that God accepts us finally and forever in His presence.

“Jesus, hail! enthroned in glory  
There for ever to abide;  
All the heavenly hosts adore Thee,  
Seated at Thy Father's side.

There for sinners thou art pleading,  
There Thou dost our place prepare;  
Ever for us interceding,  
Till in glory we appear.”

This is the golden altar of incense! The Biblical imagery for incense speaks of prayer as we have seen. Therefore, typically it speaks of Christ interceding on our behalf before the Father to assure us that His blood sacrifice has paid the penalty for all of our sins forever.

#### B. The typical applications of Christ’s work (Ex. 30:9-10)

The teaching of the incense altar also explains how Christ’s saving work should apply to our lives as Christians. How should every believer respond to the altar of incense? How should we respond to Christ’s intercessory prayer on our behalf which maintains our standing in God’s presence?

1. We should renounce error (Ex. 30:9).

Exodus 30:9

“Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.”

God prohibited foreign offerings on the altar of incense. Only those offerings that He had prescribed and deemed holy and set apart were permitted and accepted by God. Those offerings which were not prescribed defiled the altar and the people’s worship of God. This is an important truth that should not go unnoticed. We will have much to say about this when studying about our own prayer lives and manner of worship. God does not accept just any kind of prayer and worship. However, when it comes to the Biblical teaching of Christ’s intercessory prayer ministry, we must remember to renounce all those teachings that would speak against Christ and His continuing ministry of grace for every believer. We should never teach anything else but Christ’s gracious intercession for the saints of God. God taught that “strange incense” was never to be placed upon this altar. In a similar way, we should never add strange doctrines to the message of salvation and the security of the believer which we have through Christ’s intercessory work on our behalf. When we begin to

add legalism (man's efforts and works) to the message of Christ's intercession we begin to add strange incense and a foul odor to God's altar of incense or plan of salvation through Christ. Let us keep the message pure, according to God's design of grace, and free from the doctrinal departure of legalism. Legalism is man at work while grace is Christ at work. I can rest in Christ's work.

An aged saint, on being asked to describe salvation, aptly replied, "Something for nothing." Another aged saint, who had weathered the storms for many a long year and was nearing the Heavenly harbor, on hearing this story related, exclaimed, "Yes, it's even better than that. It's everything for nothing."

2. We should respect this teaching (Ex. 30:10).

The altar of incense, which typifies Christ's intercession on our behalf, is a very precious and sacred truth that we should never take lightly and forget about. The altar was a place of sacredness and this is illustrated by the symbolic cleansing ritual that took place on this altar every year.

Exodus 30:10 says:

"And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord."

Although this altar was used as atonement for the sins of the priest and the congregation (Lev. 4:7-8, 18) this verse in Exodus 30:10 is actual referring to a symbolic cleansing of the altar of incense. It was a cleansing which took place once a year when blood was sprinkled seven times upon the horns of the altar by the high priest (Lev. 16:18-19). The horns on the altar of incense were not just for decoration. They served an important teaching purpose. Once a year on the Day of Atonement the high priest took some of the blood that was used to sprinkle the mercy seat and put it on the horns of the altar of incense to "make an atonement upon the horns of it" (Ex. 30:10). However, this was not an atonement *related to sin* but an atonement *related to ritual cleansing*. The blood of the animals was sprinkled seven times (the number of perfection) on the horns (symbols of

power) of the altar. This action was designed to symbolically cleanse the altar making it sacred and separate once again from the uncleanness and defilement of Israel. Think of it this way. God was teaching by this action that the altar was sacred. It was something that was to be cleansed and treated with great respect and reverence. Now dear friend, let me just say that *the teaching about Christ's intercessory prayer* on our behalf is something that is very special. It is a Bible truth and doctrine that should be treated with great respect and dignity. One should not think lightly of what Christ is doing for us in Heaven today! This truth and teaching about Christ's intercessory work should be a sacred truth ("hallow it" – Lev. 16:19) that should never go unnoticed. We would have no hope if Christ were not risen and interceding for us in Heaven.

Romans 5:10

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Yes, we shall be saved by his life! This is not Christ's life on earth as the liberals try to teach but Christ's life in Heaven as He intercedes for us at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3). What a precious truth this is. It's a sacred teaching that demands the attention and respect of every believer. We should never cease to speak about it and cherish this truth in our hearts. Nor should we doubt it in any way by trusting in our own human works and merits to give us acceptance in God's sight. Jesus is praying for me! He is interceding for me declaring my eternal pardon and acquittal before the Father's presence. *As the altar of incense was ceremonially cleansed and hallowed so we should regard Christ's intercession for us in Heaven as a teaching that is sacred and set apart as something very special and precious.* We can't afford to treat this teaching lightly lest we lose the ground of our assurance and hope of Heaven. Because Christ is in Heaven interceding for me, I'll be able to go there someday and be with Him.

Never forget this. *When the blood was applied to the horns (Lev. 16:18) of the altar it gave the altar of incense of prayer its value.* In a similar way Christ's intercessory prayer on our behalf in Heaven only has value because of Christ's sacrificial blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. The blood of animals prefigured Christ's blood (Heb.

10:1; John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:18-19) and *the mention of Christ's shed blood is what gives His prayers their significance in Heaven.* The mention of Christ's blood is the reason why the Father hears and agrees with His Son's intercessory prayers. The Father knows that it's only through Christ's redemptive blood that we can have eternal safety and security in His presence. The blood hallowed the earthly altar and in Heaven the prayers of Christ, going up to the Father as sweet incense, hallows and sanctifies Christ's prayers, or sets them apart from every other prayer that comes into His presence. The prayers of Jesus Christ are special and hallowed. They are prayers that grant every believer with their safety and security in Christ. Now friend, I say again, it's the blood of Christ that saves me and also keeps me saved. It will never lose its power.

Exodus 30:3

"And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about."

The horns on the altar of incense remind us Christ's power to save us forever (Heb. 7:25). Horns in the Bible are a consistent symbol of power (Dan. 7:24; Rev. 17:12). This being the case, we are reminded of how Jesus' intercession at the right hand of God provides us with the assurance that we are continually accepted in the Father's presence. There is power in the blood and the intercessory work of Christ which keeps us saved and safe from condemnation forever.

"The blood that Jesus shed for me  
Way back on Calvary.

The blood that gives me strength from day-  
It will never lose its power.

It reaches to the highest mountain;  
It flows to the lowest valley.

The blood that gives me strength from day to day  
It will never loose its power.

It soothes my doubt and calms my fears,  
And it dries all my tears.

The Blood that gives me strength from day to day



It will never lose its power.  
It reaches to the highest mountain;  
It flows to the lowest valley.  
The blood that gives me strength from day to day  
It will never lose its power.”

## 2. Practical Teaching to Christians

When Billy Sunday was saved and joined the church, a fellow believer said to him, "William, there are three simple rules I wish you'd practice. If you do, no one will ever write 'backslider' after your name." The counselor then gave Mr. Sunday these worthwhile suggestions: "Take 15 minutes each day to let God talk to you; allow 15 minutes to talk to Him; and then spend 15 minutes telling others about the Savior." The young Christian was deeply impressed, and he determined to make these rules the pattern for his life. From that time forward he never failed to set aside the first part of the morning to be alone with God, studying and meditating upon His Word. Billy Sunday became an evangelist and he attributed much of the blessing of his ministry to the fact that his first impressions of the day came directly from Heaven itself.

In this study we want to see the importance of prayer in the Christian life. The burning of incense was an expression of Israel's desire to worship God as He manifested His presence upon the mercy seat on the other side of the veil. The incense sent up a sweet fragrance into the heavens. The offering of incense was a beautiful way to express worship to God. This perpetual burning of incense was a way to express Israel's heart and worship to their God and Creator. Israel wanted God to accept their worship and please Him with this incense offering. *The altar of incense was then an example of Israel's prayers and worship to God. It became the fitting symbol of Israel's approach to God.* Israel was sending sweet perfume up to the God of Heaven and telling Him that He was lovely and beautiful to them. Both the continual burnt offering (Ex. 29:42) on the brazen altar and the incense offering (Ex. 30:8) on the golden altar demonstrated Israel's desire of *uninterrupted worship and devotion* that was pleasing to God. Dear friend, this should be our desire and longing as well. We should desire to have uninterrupted fellowship and worship with God.

This is what the continual burning altars represented. We should want to walk with God and worship Him with uninterrupted fellowship. Our life should be a continued pattern of worship and praise to God our Creator, Savior, and Lover.

As mentioned in the first part of our study, incense was a type of prayer. Prayer is a vital part of our worship with God. This is what we want to see in the second part of our study with the golden altar of incense. In our first part of the study we saw how the altar typically spoke of Christ and His prayers on behalf of his saints. In this second part of our study we want to see how the altar of incense applies to our daily worship as Christians. Dear friend, we must learn to worship God through prayer. This is what we want to see today. As the children of Israel worshiped God through the altar of incense so we too much worship God today through our time of prayer and meditation with Him. Let's reconfirm our findings of how prayer is linked to incense in the Scriptures. We need to build this foundation before we can understand how this section of Scripture applies to our Christian lives.

#### a. The picture of prayer

The Biblical imagery of incense speaks of prayer. As we are about to see the Biblical picture of incense speaks of worshipful prayer ascending up to God. Incense and prayer are linked together in the Bible.

Psalm 141:1-2

“Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”

In this verse we find that the prayer of the Psalmist was likened to incense rising up into the heavens. This is very significant. Prayer is linked to the imagery of incense to remind us of the importance of our prayers to God. Incense and prayer are connected in some way throughout the Bible. By the way, have you sent some incense up to God this week? How often do you spend time in prayer and send of the sweet fragrance to God? Has God received the sweet scent of

your prayers lately? How long has it been since you knelt by your bed and prayed to the God up in Heaven?

The New Testament also uses incense as a picture of prayer.

Revelation 5:8

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials (censers – a container in which incense is burned) full of odours (incense), which are the prayers of saints.”

One again we see how incense is connected to prayer and here the prayers of God’s people. The prayers of God’s saints are pictured as sweet incense before God.

Revelation 8:3-4

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.”

We cannot miss the clear teaching in the Bible. Incense is linked to the prayers of the saints. Incense and prayer are repeatedly connected in the Scripture. The altar of incense teaches us much about prayer. We want to learn the lessons about prayer as we study this altar of incense today. Dear friend, prayer is like incense in that it ascends up into the heavens and is a pleasing aroma to God. God loves the prayers of His people. Prayer is like sweet incense ascending up to the throne of God. All these verses convey how incense and prayer should be linked together.

Now that we have established the foundation by seeing how prayer and incense are linked together in the Bible we can once again examine the passage in Exodus 30:1-10 and discover how the altar of incense applies to our daily prayers as believers. Since the altar of incense was a picture of Israel’s worship and prayers going up to Jehovah so we can learn from this altar the important of our own

worship and prayers before God. Let's see the wonderful teachings about prayer that this altar of incense conveys to us today.

#### b. The Place of Prayer

Exodus 30:6

“And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.”

You will remember that the altar of incense stood in the holy place (the first room) right in front of the veil or curtain that led into the holy of holies where God manifested His presence above the mercy seat (“where I will meet with you”). The altar of incense of prayer was right in front of the place where God would meet with man. It sends the message to all of us that if we are ever going to meet with God we must remember to come before Him with prayer and open our hearts to Him. *As the priest entered the holy place to burn incense to God so we must remember to enter our own holy place of prayer with God.* It may be a special place during the day where we have a scheduled time to talk with God and converse with Him. When we enter this holy place of prayer it's only then that God meets with us. It's only then that we experience His communion and fellowship and where our soul can be restored and revitalized for the day (Ps. 23:3 – “he restoreth my soul”). Only as we pray and look to God can we meet with Him and have fellowship with Him. Oh how important it is stay in contact with God. **The world is drawing us away from the altar of incense.** Our schedules and fast-paced society prevent the sweet incense of prayer from going up to God. We must learn to slow down and pray to God these days so that God can meet with us! We must take time to be holy! We need the quiet corner, a blessing break, a place that is devoted only to the spiritual discipline of communing with the Lord through prayer and meditation. We need to come before the altar of incense once again and let God begin to speak and minister to our souls. All of us are too busy. Our bodies can run ahead of our souls, and we can start to rip apart at the seams! Every person needs a place where he can be still enough to hear God speak and get better acquainted with God. This place is the altar of incense or the place of prayer and communion with God.

When his two daughters were small, the pastor would sometimes seek the quiet and seclusion of his study, which was in the parsonage. It was understood that when he closed the door for Bible study and prayer, no telephone calls or visitors were allowed to interrupt him. But when he would hear little footsteps, a tiny peck on the door, and a small voice whispering "Daddy," what do you think he did? Ignore it? Oh, no! He would spring from his chair, open the door, enfold that little girl in his arms and say, "What do you want, honey?" He loved being called "Daddy." We can be sure that God, like earthly fathers, loves to hear the call of His children. Has He been hearing your call and prayers? Have you been sending up the sweet incense of prayer to Him on a daily basis? We should be ashamed of ourselves when we fail to offer up the incense of prayer to God on a daily basis. He is our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. He deserves our incense. **Some of you have left the fire burn out on the altar.** You don't have any sweet incense ascending up to the Father on a regular basis. Your life has lost the sweet fragrance of prayer. If this is the case you must reignite the fire on the altar and start sending up to God the sweet incense once again.

#### c. The position of prayer

Exodus 30:6 speaks of how the altar of incense rested in front of the veil where the mercy seat was resting. It was "before the mercy seat." The mercy seat was symbolic of God's divine throne and presence for it's here where God dwelt and manifested His presence in the Shekinah Glory cloud. Dear friend, we must realize afresh and anew that we can come into God's presence through prayer only because of the mercy seat. The positioning of the altar speaks of the privilege to enter God's presence through His extended mercy.

1 John 2:2

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

The word "propitiation" speaks of a satisfying sacrifice that appeases God's wrath for Christians permanently and non-Christians potentially. Through Jesus Christ God's anger against sin can be satisfied or appeased. This is because the blood of Jesus Christ

cleanses us from every sin that we will ever commit and gives us acquittal in God's sight forever.

1 John 2:2

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

The concept of God's wrath being appeased was rooted in the mercy seat of the Old Testament. The mercy seat was actually a lid that was used as a cover over the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. This lid was sprinkled with the blood of the sacrificial animal on the annual Day of Atonement. The blood ritual signified that the animal was sacrificed for the people providing satisfaction and the appeasement of God's wrath toward their sin for another year. This is a blessed truth to ponder today. The position of the altar of incense is very important. It rested in front of the veil where the mercy seat was resting. This reminds us today that believer's can only offer up their prayers of incense to God and come into His presence because of the mercy seat (God's satisfying sacrifice) that is before God. The altar of incense, which stood before the mercy seat that was behind the veil, pictures how Jesus Christ became a satisfying sacrifice that has appeased God's wrath allowing us to enter God's presence through prayer and worship. How wonderful to realize that God will hear our prayers today because of the mercy seat! We can come into His presence because of the mercy seat of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and His intercessory work on our behalf which maintains our standing before God. Dear friend, we do not come to God through Mary, the saints, angels, or anyone else, but through Jesus Christ!

If we are ever going to believe that God hears and answers prayers we will have to look to the mercy seat (Christ's satisfying sacrifice) which has opened the way of acceptance and access into God's presence. The mercy seat has provided the means of entrance into God's presence. Our prayers can enter God's presence and God can hear and answer our prayers all because of the mercy seat. We can come into God's presence knowing that God hears us and wants to grant our requests for help.

Hebrews 4:16 says:

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

I am appalled when I hear people praying and demanding God to give them something or demanding God to do something for them. This irreverent attitude is called “name it and claim” theology. People think they can name it, claim it, and have it. I once heard a man praying to God. He was demanding that God take away all his debt and heal every disease in his body. Now listen, a person who understands the position of the altar of incense will not talk to God in this way. They will realize that their prayers can only ascend up to God because of the mercy that has been extended to them through Jesus Christ. They will reverence God and possess an attitude of humility when approaching Him when they remember the mercy seat. The mercy seat humbles us in our times of prayer.

2 Chronicles 7:14

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

When we remember the mercy seat we will never approach God flippantly, arrogantly, and disrespectfully. We will come to Him with humility and deepest respect knowing that our prayers of incense can only ascend up to the Father because of the mercy extended to us through His Son’s blood sacrifice. The fact that our prayers can enter God’s presence is mercy in itself. This is why we are instructed to pray in Jesus’ name when praying.

John 16:23-24

“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

Jesus told His disciples that if they were going to receive anything from Him in the future then they would have to ask in His name. The day (“in that day”) Jesus was speaking about was the time after His ascension or the time He would return to Heaven and start His intercessory ministry before the Father. It would be a new day, new

time, and new order inaugurated when the disciples would pray in Jesus' name. This is because Jesus was no longer in their presence to directly help them. The day would come when it would be impossible for the disciples to personally ask Christ for things. He would be gone. However, if they requested the Father in Christ's name then the Father would answer their prayers. The point is this. Our prayers must be addressed in Jesus' name. Since Jesus has gone back to Heaven His disciples are commanded to pray in Jesus' name recognizing that their only way of access into the Father's presence and getting their prayers answered is through Jesus Christ. *They were instructed to pray on the basis of His merits and finished work.* Jesus told His disciples to do this so that they would forever remember that their prayer access into the Father's presence is through His death, resurrection, and intercession before the Father. What was true of the disciples should also be true of us today. When we approach the Father in prayer we should do so in Jesus' name recognizing that it's only because of the mercy seat that we can enter the Father's presence and receive things from Him.

Our Lord taught His disciples to pray in this way for the simple reason that it was only through Jesus Christ that they could every enter God's presence and have their prayers answered. We can't get our prayers answered through Mary, the saints, or any earthly priests. We need the heavenly high priest, Jesus Christ, who has opened the way into the Father's presence (Heb. 10:20). It's only through the merits of Jesus Christ that we can pray and receive answers to our prayers.

I must be honest with you today. When I hear Christians pray without using Jesus' name as their means of approach to the Father I cringe. I can understand younger Christians needing to learn this but as we grow older in our Christian experience we must remember the mercy seat and approach God in prayer through Jesus Christ. We are to pray in Jesus' name expressing to God that we will never forget His mercy seat and the only way we can approach Him. We should not just say "Amen" but practice saying in "Jesus' name, Amen!" There is a difference. One thing is certain. At one point of our prayer we need to acknowledge the mercy seat and that our prayer of incense can only enter God's throne through the Jesus Christ. It's only through Jesus' name that our prayers can enter the throne room. Thus, the position of the altar of incense before the mercy seat teaches us an



important lesson about prayer. We must address the Father through Jesus Christ who is our mercy seat. We must humbly come to Him expressing reverence and respect to God for **the path He has opened up** and the **tremendous privilege He has given us to come into His presence**. If it were not for God's mercy we would have no opportunity to pray and commune with God.

“Eer you left your room this morning,  
Did you think to pray?  
In the name of Christ, our Savior,  
Did you ask for loving favor,  
As a shield today?”

Oh, how praying rests the weary!  
Pray'r will change the night to day;  
So when life seems dark and dreary,  
Don't forget to pray.”

#### d. The power of prayer

Exodus 30:3

“And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about.”

What do the horns on the altar of incense represent? The Bible suggests that horns represent power. The Biblical imagery of horns suggests that they speak of power (Dan. 7:24; Rev. 17:12).

Daniel 8:6-7

“And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.”

The ram with horns was a symbol of power until his horns were broken. The Bible informs us that horns speak of power. Two articles in the Tabernacle had horns. The brazen altar of sacrifice had horns (Ex. 27:2) which spoke of how there is power in the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ to save a person forever. However, when it comes to our worship and prayer ministry we must remember that there is also power in prayer when it is addressed to the Father in Jesus' name. The horns, representative of power, remind us of the power of prayer, not in the prayer itself, but in the One to whom the prayer is directed and answers prayer. When we approach God in prayer and worship we can do so remembering the horns on the altar of incense. We are to remember that God still answers prayer and that there is power in prayer. There is power in prayers that are directed to God through Jesus Christ. Although all answered prayer is based upon the sovereign will of God (1 John 5:14) we are given the many repeated prayer promises that God does answer prayer (John 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:23). The prayer promises remind us of two things. We must pray in faith, pray in Jesus' name, and then leave the results with God. These promises are given to encourage us to keep on praying believing that God can and does answer prayer. God is still on the throne and He is still in the business of answering prayer.

Matthew 7:7

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

James 5:13

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”

James 5:15

“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”

Although we do not believe in faith healers today we do believe in faith healing. There is a difference. We can pray that God would intervene in the lives of people and God may see fit to heal them and raise them up. The power of prayer is summed up in James 5:16 where it states, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Do we really believe this today? Do we really believe

there is power in prayer? If we really would believe that there is power in prayer then our prayer lives would change and our homes and church ministry would find greater blessing. Too often prayer is the last resort when it should be the first resort and reaction of Christians. People sometime say, "I can't do anything else for you but pray." We sometimes think that prayer is something we try when everything else has failed. This should not be our attitude. Prayer is the most important thing we could ever do. It is also the most powerful and life-changing thing we could ever do. We must remember that behind prayer lies the power that can change the lives of people and circumstances. Prayer moves mountains. Prayer moves the hand the hand the moves the world!

There is a story of a man who tried to weigh a prayer. He owned a little grocery store. It was the week before Christmas, shortly after World War I. A tired-looking woman came into the store and asked for enough food to make a Christmas dinner for the children. The grocer asked her how much she could spend. "My husband did not come back; he was killed in the War. And I have nothing to offer but a little prayer," she answered. The storekeeper was not very sentimental nor religious, so he said, half mockingly, "Write it on paper, and I will weigh it." To his surprise, the woman took a piece of paper from her pocket and handed it to the man, saying, "I wrote it during the night while watching over my sick baby."

The grocer took the piece of paper. Because other customers were watching and had heard his remarks, he placed the unread prayer on the weight side of the old-fashioned scales. Then he began to pile food on the other side; but to his amazement, the scale would not go down. He became angry and flustered and finally said, "Well, that's all the scale will hold. Here's a bag; you will have to put it in yourself, I am busy." With trembling hands the woman filled the bag, and through moist eyes expressed her gratitude and departed. After that the store was empty of customers, the grocer examined the scales. Yes, they were broken and they had become broken just in time for God to answer the prayer of this woman.

God can and does intervene and work on our behalf when we pray. God still does work miracles in answer to prayer! We must learn the

secret of praying by faith and believing in God's power. The horns on the altar of incense remind us of this.

Abraham Lincoln

"I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day."

Dear friend, if you are swept off your feet, it's time to get on your knees. You can receive power for daily living through prayer. Yes, power comes through prayer. It does not come through self-esteem, self-acceptance, and self-help tapes. It does not come through tranquilizers or the tear-jerking stories of preachers. Power for daily living comes through prayer! If your knees are shaking, kneel on them! The battle is won in the time of prayer and not in our time of service. Power for living and victory stems from our prayer lives.

A man dreamed, while traveling, that he came to a little church. On the roof was a devil fast asleep. He went along farther and came to a log cabin which was surrounded by devils all wide awake. He asked one of them what it meant. Said the devil, "I will tell you. The fact is that the whole church is asleep, and one devil can take care of all the people; but here are a man and a woman who commune with God in prayer, and they have more power than the whole church."

"And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees."

e. The provision of prayer

Exodus 30:7-8

"And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations."

In another portion of our study we want to learn about the importance of the lampstand. However, for our present study let us remember that every morning and evening the priest trimmed the wicks of this

piece of furniture and added the necessary oil to keep the fire burning (“he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it”). This lampstand with its oil continued to burn and shed light in the Holy Place so the priests could add incense to the altar and keep it functioning properly. Oil is a consistent symbol of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures (1 Sam. 16:13; Luke 4:18). The lampstand with its oil and assisting light reminds us of how the Holy Spirit helps us to pray. There is real comfort when realizing how the Holy Spirit helps us to pray.

Ephesians 6:18 says, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” and “praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 20). These expressions simply mean that the Holy Spirit gives us power, energy, direction, and assistance when we pray. *The Holy Spirit is the divine provision for our prayer lives even as the lampstand with its oil provided the necessary light for the priests to perform their duties at the altar of incense.* Then too, we must remember that the Holy Spirit helps or assists our prayer lives in that He takes our prayers before the throne of God and does something to them.

Romans 8:26

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

When we don’t know how to pray (“for we know not what we should pray”), when we sincerely pray but are wrong (2 Cor. 12:8-9), and when we are physically exhausted, can’t gather our thoughts, and are too tired to pray, we can be assured that the Holy Spirit takes our prayers before the Father’s throne with groanings or wordless sighs (inarticulate sounds) that only the Father can understand.

An aged saint lie dying before the Lord. He thought to himself, “Lord, I’m too confused to pray, too weak to pray, and I can’t do anything but lie here and trust that You will take care of me.” Dear friend, it’s in these times, and similar times of distress and turmoil, that the Spirit makes intercession for us before the Father’s throne. One thing is

certain. The Holy Spirit “maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:27). He helps our prayers and heightens our prayers before the Father. He does this through His interceding ministry. What does the Holy Spirit do with our prayers? He expresses them before the Father with deep emotion and then conforms these prayers into the will of God. The Holy Spirit ignites our hearts desires and deepest longings in prayer and then moulds these prayers into God’s will before the Father’s throne. What a ministry! Many times we are ignorant of what to pray for and how to voice certain requests. Sometimes we are weak and tired. All of our energy is spent. However, the Spirit comes to our aid and voices our requests before the Father in such a way that the Father hears them with earnest and great moving compassion. The Holy Spirit is our helper in prayer. He is groaning for us! He is crying out to the Father on our behalf with sighs or inarticulate sounds that only the Father can understand. Dear friend, we are peering into the unseen world (spiritual realm) where a great person (the Holy Spirit) is at work on our behalf.

The oil, which provided light and assistance for the priestly duties at the altar of incense, reminds us of how the Holy Spirit helps us in our prayer lives. Multitudes of believers have testified that in times of deep distress, when they neither knew how to pray, nor for what to pray, somehow it seemed as if the burden of their hearts ascended up to God. Dear friend, this was the ministry of the Holy Spirit at work. God is concerned about the trials of His people. *Today the Holy Spirit groans with us and feels the burdens of our weaknesses and suffering in our earthly humanity.* He groans for us before the Father sharing our prayers, our deepest longings and needs. He also moulds these prayers into God’s will before the Father’s throne with unspeakable groans or sighs. As the lampstand with its oil provided the necessary light for the priests to perform their duties at the altar of incense, so we need the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our prayer lives today. We need His ministry to enable our prayers to be heard before the Father. The Spirit shares our deepest longings before the Father and also directs our prayers to conform to God’s will before the Father.

f. The practice of prayer

Exodus 30:7

“And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.”

When is the best time to pray? God instructed Aaron to burn incense every morning. Every believer must admit that it's good to pray in the morning when his mind is fresh and clear and uncluttered with the affairs of the day. Dear friend, we too should begin everyday with God. We need instruction and inspiration to face another day. We certainly do not know what the day may hold but we know who holds the day.

Psalms 5:3

“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.”

Many saints of God found that the morning hours, when all is quiet and one can be alone, is the best time to spend with God in prayer. Jesus set this example for us.

Mark 1:35

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”

If we are going to find a solitary place we need to get up early and pray before we are rushed from one duty to another duty. We need to beware of shoving prayer aside and never finding time to pray as we should. If we unlock the gates of the day with Bible reading and prayer our path is sure to be filled with usefulness and blessing.

Joseph Parker said,

"The morning is the time for meeting the Lord, for then we are at our best, having a new supply of energy. Blessed is the day that is opened with prayer! Holy is the dawn that finds us on 'top of the mount' with God!"

Another good time to pray is also mentioned in Exodus 30:8:

“And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations.”

It is a good thing to stop at the end of a day and look back over its events and count your blessings and praise God for them. Of course, we do this through prayer. Evening prayer is important as we reflect upon God’s goodness and provision for the day. Evening or night prayer is also a time when we can worship God.

Psalm 63:5-6

“My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.”

Psalm 4:4

“Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.”

We can commune with God in the stillness and quietness of the night hour and find strength, consolation, and songs of joy.

Dr. Andrew Bonar, a saintly man, wrote in his diary: "Tonight I gave myself to a time of waiting upon the Lord. I had not been much in the spirit of prayer, but now several things have become clear to me. I realize I have not communed enough with the Lord, nor come to Him as often as I should. Little forethought has been given to the requests I've made. There has been much conversing and outward engagement with men, but I have not been occupied enough with God himself. I also realize that a closeness to Him gives abundant strength and is like sunlight shining through the clouds on a gloomy day."

It’s interesting that under the Old Testament law the Levites were required to arise and "stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even" (1 Chr. 23:30). According to the New Testament, all believers are priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9), and the Lord expects them to commune with Him daily. Furthermore, those who begin and end the day with God are most likely to sense His presence in all that they do.



The brilliant scientist Sir Isaac Newton said that he could take his telescope and looked millions and millions of miles into space. Then he added, "But when I lay it aside, go into my room, shut the door, and get down on my knees in earnest prayer, I see more of Heaven and feel closer to the Lord than if I were assisted by all the telescopes on earth."

g. The persistence of prayer

Exodus 30:8

"And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations."

Please notice that our prayer life and worship before God is to be similar to the altar of incense which continued to burn as "a perpetual incense before the Lord." This is the Old Testament equivalent to the New Testament instruction which says, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Praying without ceasing means that we should have a constant attitude and readiness to pray all day long. We are to pray at frequent intervals ("praying always" – Eph. 6:18). Moment by moment, as the need arises or as praise envelops our heart, the sweet incense of our prayers should ascend up to God. We need to develop the *habit of prayer* so that at the very moment of need we can cry out to God from our hearts knowing that we are in tune with Him. Praying without ceasing means we should keep the receiver off the hook always prepared and ready to pray before the Father. Prayer is to be as natural as breathing. It should come naturally to us and be done often throughout the day as we enjoy the Lord's presence and depend upon Him for sustenance and strength. In short, it is to be a "perpetual incense" going up to the Father. Prayer should come naturally to us and flow from our lips and hearts in a moment's time.

Someone said:

"At the profoundest depths in life, men don't talk about God, they talk with God."

Another wrote:

“Between the humble and contrite heart and the majesty of heaven, there are no barriers; the only password is prayer!”

Develop the habit of praying and your life will be enriched, empowered, and emancipated from sin. *There are times we need to stop talking about prayer and pray.* We have books that tell us how to pray and sermons on prayer. It’s time to stop talking about prayer. It’s time to start doing it! We need to bring forth the “perpetual incense” from our lives if we want God’s true blessing.

#### h. The passion of prayer

Exodus 30:7

“And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.”

The incense was made to ascend by burning. Dearly beloved, our prayers need to have some fire behind them today. We need to have a passion and desire to pray to God and mean business with God. I’ve often said that *God will do business with those who do business with Him.* Our prayers today need to be set on fire by the Holy Spirit.

Someone wrote:

“Don’t expect a thousand-dollar answer to a ten-cent prayer.”

We need to pray with fervency and fire today. This does not mean we pray arrogantly but with zeal that is directed to the Lord, believing that He is still a God who answers prayer and changes the course of our life and the lives of others through prayer. Dear friend, put some fire on the altar. Put some hot coals on the altar. If we want the incense to ascend up to Heaven we should remember to light a fire. We need to have a burning passion for prayer today and pray in such a way that we believe God is going to answer our prayers, that God is still on the throne, and that prayer does change things. Maybe you need to put some fire on your altar again. You might need to ignite the flame one again so your incense can ascend up to God.

i. The perversion of prayer

Exodus 30:9

“Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.”

God warns the priests that they were to offer no “strange incense” upon this altar. There was to be no perversion of the offering of incense. Anything offered other than what God prescribed (Ex. 30:34-38) was foreign incense that He did not recognize as proper worship. The word “strange” in the Hebrew language means alien, foreign, or unauthorized. Anything that was offered which was not in accordance with God’s prerequisites was deemed foreign and an inappropriate form of incense or worship to God. Let us remember today that God demands holy worship that is acceptable to Him or which is according to His requirements. Our worship can never mix with any forms of darkness or unrighteousness (2 Cor. 6:14-17). The church today should remember this. Whenever we try to worship God with the strange incense of the devil’s sound that he uses for sex, drugs, and rebellion, then our worship becomes polluted. Our incense or worship going up to God becomes like strange incense. God does not accept the smell of strange incense or unauthorized worship.

It’s also interesting that no other fire could burn on the altar accept the fire that was generated from the coals on the brazen altar (Lev. 16:12). When burning incense within the Tabernacle the hot coals of fire were to come only from the brass altar and nowhere else. When Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, they immediately died by the hand of the Lord.

Leviticus 10:1-2

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.”

The two oldest sons of Aaron (Ex. 6:23; 28:1; 1 Chron. 6:3) offered unauthorized fire before the Lord which was contrary to His command. Perhaps they offered different coals that were not

prescribed or they may have offered at the wrong time of day (Ex. 30:7-9). Whatever the case might be, these two priests willfully disobeyed the expressed command of God concerning worship at the golden altar of incense. As a result, a fire went out from the Most Holy Place and devoured them as they stood by the golden altar in the holy place.

The lesson is this. Whether it's strange incense or strange fire we can conclude that God only wants worship that He prescribes and sets apart as holy or right. Any other fire or incense is strictly forbidden by God. *The point is this. We should not worship or serve God according to our flesh but according to His revealed will in the Scriptures.* All of our worship must remain untainted by the world system and holy before the Lord (1 John 2:15-17). We who are God's representatives today should bear the special responsibility to illustrate His holiness and glory. Much that passes as contemporary worship today is strange incense and fire. God has a different perspective than man on worship. You can't just barge into the presence of God and worship Him anyway you please! The books of Exodus and Leviticus clearly teach this. God has His holy limits and when you pass over them your fire becomes wild fire, your incense becomes foul, and your worship becomes unauthorized and foreign to a holy God.

Dearly beloved, the church today has polluted God's altar with strange incense and fire that He does not accept. You may say, "But the hearts of Nadab and Abihu were right in offering the incense. We don't know this and even if their hearts were right God still does not compromise His holiness for anyone or anything. God not only wants our heart but our holiness. When will realize that God never compromises His holiness! The offering must be pure and wholesome or else God deems is unauthorized and foreign. Nadab and Abihu were doing a right thing in a wrong way. Let me say this again. Nadab and Abihu were doing a right thing in a wrong way. I think this is an accurate description of those today who are presenting the Gospel in an environment that sounds like the world and looks like the world system which is against everything that God stands for and represents. Let us learn the lesson well today so that we might not begin to offer up strange fire and incense before the Lord.

This can especially be true in connection with our prayers. Our prayers become like “strange incense” and “strange fire” before the Lord when we selfishly pray contrary to God’s will.

James 4:3 says,

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

When you pray for your own personal gain and glory you are praying selfishly. “God, if you give me this Cadillac I will be a better servant of yours.” We offer strange incense to God when we pray with “vain repetitions” (Matt. 6:7) like the heathen do.

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

Did you ever hear a group of nuns praying through the rosary? This is nothing but a bunch of vain repetitions that has nothing to do with honoring God. People offer strange fire and incense unto God when they pray to be seen by others like the religious people of Jesus’ day.

Matthew 6:5

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”

These people who pray with high sounding phrases and clichés do so to be seen of others. I once was at a funeral where a man was wearing a big robe with a large cross tied around his neck. He also was wearing one of those tall hats with a cross upon it. Let me tell you that when he prayed one could not help but be impressed with his flowery statements and high sounding church lingo. But my friend, it was a prayer that was designed to be heard of men. Prayers to be heard of men can easily become the strange incense we are warned not to offer.

We also offer strange fire up to God in our prayer lives when we pray with unforgiveness in our hearts toward a brother or sister in the Lord.

Matthew 6:15

“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Our prayers become strange incense to the Lord when we offer them without submitting to God’s will (1 John 5:14-15), with personal sin in our hearts (Ps. 66:18), and failing to pray in Jesus’ name (John 14:13). Now friend, God demands the right kind of incense and fire when we pray. We might think we are worshipping God and getting through to Him when burning the wrong kind of fire or incense but we are only fooling ourselves. Let us be sure that our worship and prayers that ascend up to God are getting past our head and through the ceiling. We need to often reevaluate our worship and prayer lives.

The best way to come to God is with open hearts that are bare and naked before Him. God is interested in our earnestness, faith, and purity. He is not really interested in our words or the way we express them. He wants our *hearts* and *holiness* and when these two meet together in our time of worship and prayer God hears us.

j. The preciousness of prayer

Exodus 30:10

“And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord.”

What else can we say about prayer other than “it is most holy unto the Lord.” May we keep it this way in our practice that there may be no perversion in our offering. The altar upon which incense was offered was precious because it was holy (Ex. 30:10) and hallowed (Lev. 16:19) by the Lord every year on the Day of Atonement. As we have seen a ritual ceremony took place where the high priest would sprinkle blood on the altar to cleanse it (Lev. 16:18). Why? It’s because the altar was precious to the Lord. My friend, is your prayer life precious to you? Your prayer life should be highly treasured and esteemed as the most important part of your day. It should be a holy and hallowed time that you set apart to commune with God. God wants us to pray. He wants us to talk with Him. It delights Him when

we petition Him and praise Him through prayer. It delights Him when we come to Him as a little child and depend upon Him for everything that we have or ever will need. Let us keep the altar of incense burning today but burning with the right fire and incense that God is pleased with.

In one region of Africa, the first converts to Christianity were very diligent about praying. In fact, the believers each had their own special place outside the village where they went to pray in solitude. The villagers reached these "prayer rooms" by using their own private footpaths through the brush. When grass began to grow over one of these trails, it was evident that the person to whom it belonged was not praying very much. Because these new Christians were concerned for each other's spiritual welfare, a unique custom sprang up. Whenever anyone noticed an overgrown "prayer path," he or she would go to the person and lovingly warn, "Friend, there's grass on your path!" Is there grass on your path today? Have you failed to pray to God as you should? Is your prayer life lacking, shallow, dead, or virtually nonexistent? If so, you need to take more time to pray. Prayer means contact with God. Prayer means fellowship with God. Prayer moves God's hand which brings blessing and power into our lives. Prayer is our lifeline to heaven. Prayer makes the way brighter and the load lighter. Take more time to pray. Send the sweet perfume of incense up to the God of Heaven. You may say, "Something is missing from my life. I feel an emptiness and void." When will we realize that many times it's prayer which is missing, or prayer that has lost its fire and sweet incense. Take more time to pray!

### ***The Tabernacle's Golden Lampstand***

Many years ago I was involved with a music group that was traveling over the east coast. We were in Moosehead Lake Main. After the evening service two of us went home to spend the night with one of the families in the church. I recall wanting to go out on a walk. When I left the home there was still some daylight. However, after about 20 minutes into my walk I noticed that I was losing light rather quickly. So I started back for the home and picked up my pace. To my surprise the light went out! I mean it got dark all of a sudden. There I was in Moosehead Lake Main in the darkness and blackness of midnight. Woods and forest were all around me. There were no lights

or cars out in the country where I was walking. I had no flash light. I could not see my hand in front of my face. I was wondering where the turn off was to the home where I was staying. I became rather unsure of myself since I could not see a thing! Then, piercing through the darkness, I saw a little light. It was a light that was shining through the trees. The people I was staying with had turned on their small porch light so I could see their home sitting among the trees. It was that little light that steered me to their hidden driveway and it was that little light that caused me to see and move in the right direction. It was that light which brought me safely to their home.

Dear friend, there is another light that is shining in the darkness and blackness of this world. It's a light that will steer you to the place called Heaven and give you the assurance that you will safely arrive at your destination someday. This light is none other than Jesus Christ Himself who in the Scripture is called the Light of the World. It is to this Light that all people must come and it's this Light that will bring hope and everlasting life into your own life. We want to study about this Light today as we look at the golden lampstand that stood within the Holy Place of the Tabernacle.

Exodus 25:31-40

“And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold



shall he make it, with all these vessels. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.”

The third item of furniture in the Holy Place where the priests ministered was called the golden lampstand. It was also known as the candlestick. It was actually one of the most beautiful pieces of the Tabernacle furnishings. The table of showbread stood along the north wall of the Holy Place and the golden lampstand was along the south wall. Light from this huge golden lampstand filled every corner of the Holy Place with a warm, shimmering brilliance, which provided illumination for the priest as he ministered and worshipped God.

### 1. Construction of the lampstand

The construction of this lampstand is very unique. The word translated “candlestick” (Ex. 25:31) conveys the thought that this piece of furniture had candles but this is actually not the case. The word is better understood as a lampstand or a branched lamp with several lights. They did not use candles in these days but they did use oil lamps and this is what the name suggests. The lampstand was a large structure that had oil burning wicks.

This lampstand was one of the most beautiful pieces of furniture in the Holy Place and Tabernacle. It had decorative flowerlike cups, buds, and blossoms and was formed or hammered out from a single solid piece of gold (vv. 31, 36; Ex. 37:17, 24). In other words, it was not heated up and poured into a mold but was carefully crafted from a pure gold piece of one talent. The artisan who crafted this piece of furniture was given great ability by God to be able to sculpt such a beautiful piece. The lampstand had a center stem or shaft. On each side of this upright shaft or stem were three branches or arms that extended upward (v. 32). Each branch had three almond flower-shaped cups or saucer cups (v. 33), and the center shaft had four cups (v. 34) to hold pure olive oil (Ex. 27:20; Lev. 24:2). At the top of the center shaft and each of the six branches was a lamp (v. 37). This totaled seven lamps. The seven lamps in the lampstand provided light in the tent (v. 37). It was a light that was to burn continually and was serviced by the priests in the morning and at sunset (Ex. 27:20-21; Lev. 24:3-4). The amount of gold required for this piece of furniture and its accessories, wick trimmers, and trays (perhaps for

oil) was a talent (Ex. 25:39), which was about 90 pounds. Today gold costs hundreds of dollars per ounce. It would be a tremendous cost today if one would want to reproduce the amount of gold that was used in this piece of furniture.

## 2. Typology of the lampstand

The lampstand which held oil and gave light to the Holy Place is rich in typology. We must once again be careful to not create types that the Bible does not intend to convey. We should seek to convey the most basic and very clear types that are presented in the Tabernacle structure. Let us remember the statement about the New and Old Testaments in regards to typology: "The New is in the old concealed and the Old is in the New revealed." May God help us to see the true types as He has given them and not move into extremism with our typology.

### a. The lampstand typifies Christ

The golden lampstand with its light foreshadowed the glory of Christ. Everything in this room pointed to the glory and beauty of Him who was to come. The Bible once again verifies this within this very section of Scripture.

Exodus 25:40

"And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount."

Moses was following the pattern that God gave him on Mount Sinai. The epistle of Hebrews verifies this and reminds us of the true typical meaning of the Tabernacle. Hebrews 8:5 tells us that the priest's service in the earthly Tabernacle pointed to Christ and His work and ministry for us.

"Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."

In other words, the writer of Hebrews confirms that the priest's functioning in the Old Testament Tabernacle was actually a picture or type of Jesus Christ who is today our great High Priest that lives in Heaven to intercede on our behalf (Heb. 7:25). The word "pattern" (tuπος) means type and signifies that what Moses wrote about was actually a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ. The Tabernacle points to Christ! One cannot help but see that everything in the Tabernacle points to Christ in some way. If we miss this then we are going to miss the true type and pattern that God wants to convey to us today. The Tabernacle conveys wonderful truth about Christ's exalted position, person and passion – His saving work.

So how does this lampstand speak of Christ? First, the size, weight, and beauty of the lampstand portray Christ in His fathomless greatness. Colossians 1:16-17, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Paul sums it up in Colossians 2:9, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Jesus Christ is the magnificent and glorious God of eternity.

Second, the lampstand was hammered out of a solid talent of gold (Ex. 25:31). This reminds us of how Christ endured the harsh treatment of sinners before His crucifixion.

Matthew 27:26 says:

"Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

Matthew 27:30

"And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head."

1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

Isaiah 53:4-5 says:

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

Surely He has! The message will never change. It is still the same. Jesus suffered and died for me! As the golden piece of furniture was hammered out of the large talent of gold so Christ endured the harsh treatment of sinners. Jesus suffered greatly for us in view of the cross and during His time upon the cross. He was willing to suffer so that He might pay the penalty for our sins in full. He was willing to be beaten for you and for me. Dear friend, it was for you that He died. This again is the marvel of grace.

Third, the pure golden structure of the lampstand (Ex. 25:31, 38) once again speaks of Christ’s deity as we have confirmed in previous studies. Christ wears the “golden crown” (Rev. 14:14 – “having on his head a golden crown”) of kingliness and deity (Rev. 19:12 – “and on his head were many crowns”). This is because He is still the “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16). This means that Jesus Christ is exalted as the Lord of all. He is God incarnate in the flesh. He is Emmanuel (“God with us” – Matt. 1:23). I’ve got news for you. If Jesus is not “God with us” then we have no hope of ever going to Heaven. Jesus must be God and He is God in every sense of the Word. The gold reminds us of His deity or of His eternal existence and nature as the one true God.

John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Jesus was not “a god” as other cultic Bible’s read. He was God! Jesus said that a person must believe that He exists as the one and only eternal God or else they will die in their sins and go to an everlasting hell. John 8:24, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” Jesus was claiming His deity. Actually the text reads, “I am” which is reminiscent of the statement that God made concerning Himself in the Old Testament (Ex. 3:14). I’ll never forget the time I was witnessing to a Jehovah’s Witness on my front porch. We were talking for a long time. Finally, I said to him what Jesus said, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye

believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). I no sooner got finished saying this when a loud clap of thunder filled the sky. We both jumped but I think the JW jumped higher than I did for he knew that he was not right with God. How can you be right with God if you don’t believe Jesus was the perfect God who came to save you from hell and eternal damnation? Only God can save you! The pure gold in the lampstand reminds us of Christ’s deity.

Fourth, the lampstand provided light for the Holy Place (Ex. 25:37 – “that they may give light” and Ex. 27:20; Lev. 24:2 – “for the light”). This becomes a beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ. The light symbolized Christ’s *holiness* as God. John wrote of Jesus Christ, “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). There cannot be nor ever will be any darkness in Jesus Christ. As the eternal God, Jesus Christ exists in the perfect light of holiness. There are no flaws in Him. Did you ever stop and try to think just how holy God is with all of His perfections? God is so infinitely holy that we as finite sinful creatures cannot fully grasp the infinite purity and holiness of Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:25). Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

Light not only speaks of holiness but also of *illumination*. The lampstand speaks of the spiritual illumination that Jesus gives to lost sinners in their sin and unbelief. I’m reminded of something that Jesus said while He was here on earth that helps us to see the type or picture that was presented in the light of the lampstand.

John 8:12

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

As the lampstand provided light for the priestly functions before God, so Christ today is the Light of the world (John 8:12), who reveals the way to God (John 14:6, 9). Jesus is saying that He has come into this world to reveal to man, or illuminate man, to the exceeding sinfulness of his sins, his need for salvation, and that He was the only Savior for a lost human race. Jesus is the Light that brought penetrating illumination to a world lost in the blackness and blindness of their sins. His claim was that if a person followed Christ because they have believed in the light and expressed faith in His salvation message of

revelation and light, then that person would no longer walk in darkness. Instead, he would possess what Jesus called “the light of life.” In other words, that person would have already receive the necessary spiritual illumination (“light”) that would bring eternal life into their human spirit. The “light of life” figure (illumination for life) stands for the spiritual illumination which dispels the darkness of ignorance and death and results in eternal life.

John 1:4

“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”

Life is man’s most important asset. To lose life is tragic thing!

Mark 8:36

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Christ possessed a kind of life that He offered to others and His message about eternal and abundant life was a message of light designed to be impressed upon the hearts of mankind. One thing is certain, coming to Christ for salvation results in a different kind of life. It’s a light that results in a new way of living. But you can be sure of this. Man needs illumination if he ever going to come to Christ and be saved. He needs to have his eyes and ears opened to the claims of Jesus Christ if he is ever going to see the exceeding sinfulness of his sins and the need for a Savior.

John 9:5

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

John 12:35-36

“Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”

The light metaphor was an ancient concept found in Israel’s history. The Jews associated light with God’s presence. He had created light

on the first day and lights on the fourth day of Creation (Gen. 1:3, 14–19). He had revealed Himself in a flame to Moses on the Midianite desert (Exod. 3). He had also protectively led the Israelites through the wilderness in a cloudy pillar of fire (Exod. 13:21–22; 14:19–25; Num. 9:15–23), and He had appeared to them on Mt. Sinai in fire. The Jews knew that light pointed to God’s holy and illuminating presence. When Jesus said, “I am the Light of the World” they knew He was claiming deity and revealing what His goal was on earth – to convince men of their sin and need for the Savior.

This is one of the famous “I am” statements of Jesus while He was here on earth. It was actually a title given to Christ. What did Jesus mean by these statements? Let’s try and simplify it. What He was referring to was this. His presence, power, and program among the people had an illuminating effect upon their lives. What Jesus *said* (His words) and *did* (His miracles) confirmed to everyone that He was the true God from Heaven who had come to save the world of lost mankind. *His very own words and works had an illuminating effect upon people’s lives while He was here on earth.* In other words, what Jesus said and did opened their eyes to the truth regarding His person, saving work, man’s sin, and his need for salvation. Jesus as the “Light of the World” dispels the darkness of sin and unbelief in man and brings illumination regarding man’s sin, his need for salvation, and the Savior. The lampstand portrays Jesus as the “Light of the World” who illuminates people regarding their sin and spiritual ignorance. It is this particular aspect of light, *illuminating light or the light of revelation (truth)*, which constituted the focus of the controversy surrounding Jesus’ claim. Jesus was claiming that He was “the true Light” (1 John 1:9) that was above the traditions of the religious leaders.

Perhaps the sun was then appearing. It was “early in the morning” (John 8:2). Jesus may have compared Himself to the rising sun. *As the sun is the physical light of the world, so Jesus is the spiritual light of the world.* He brings spiritual light and understanding to the hearts and minds of lost sinners. During Jesus’ day His presence and message exposed the sin and unbelief of the people. In fact, Jesus has just exposed the sin of the scribes and the Pharisees who brought the woman guilty of adultery (John 8:1-11). Because they were just as guilty as she, they had to flee.

Someone said:

“When one turns on the lights, all the rats, the bats, and the bedbugs crawl away.”

This is why the religious leaders departed from Christ. God is light” (1 John 1:5) and wherever the light shines it reveals man’s utter filth and wickedness (Eph. 5:8–14). This is what Jesus did while He was here on earth.

Today we have the written record of Jesus’ words and works (John 20:30-31) and therefore Jesus through the eternal and unchanging message that He gave while He was here on earth is still the “Light of the World.” His message and works are recorded down for the world today in the Bible and this is why we must take the message of Christ to others. They need to come to the Light of the World. They need to see who Jesus is and what He has said regarding eternal life. They need to embrace His claims that He is the crucified, risen, Savior who can grant to them the gift of eternal life. They need to see the Light!

Let me say something today that is not very popular. You will not hear this statement from the many “slick Willie” preachers that are on TV today who are trying to please man and gain a following. But one thing is true. Man is an ignorant sinner. The world is in darkness today. *Darkness is a symbol of evil, sin, and spiritual ignorance.* The Bible confirms this.

John 3:19

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

Today people attempt to put out the light as it exposes their spiritual ignorance, unbelief, and sin. Do you know why? It’s because they don’t want to give up their sin! They love the darkness rather than the light that is shining unto them and offering them a new way of life. Men do not respond to the light of revelation because they want to remain in their spiritual ignorance and unbelief so that they can live their own life, do their own thing, and go their own way. In short, man would rather go to hell than to repent to God over his sin (Luke 13:3).



We can now look back and see the blaze of light Jesus Christ brought into the world in order to reveal God and eternal life to men. We sometimes wonder how they could witness His miracles and life, here is words, and still not comprehend or lay hold of the light. The reason is simple. Men loved their own darkness more than the light! They chose the darkness over the light.

If you go out at noontime and look up into the sun you will discover that there is a tremendous amount of light. You cannot deny that the light is shining. You can see the sun when it shines in its full strength. You can't miss it. How then can you not see that the words and works of Jesus Christ are sufficient evidence, and the only sound advice that can bring eternal life into your spirit, granting you a new life of joy and satisfaction? Can you see it? Dear friend, the Light is shining! There's nothing wrong with the light. But there is something wrong with man. He loves his filthy, dirty rotten sin and living more than his need for the Savior. He would rather go to hell in his sin than be saved and go to Heaven. Man wants to embrace his self-taught humanistic beliefs instead of embracing the light of truth that has come from the very lips of Jesus Christ. Jesus came into this world to dispel the darkness of man's sins but many today do not want to see the light. Man goes down into the basement of his wicked and unbelieving soul and closes all the windows so the light cannot shine in.

John 1:4-5 says:

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

There is something else to make note of at this point of our study. There was no other light in the sacred dwelling place of God but the light of lampstand. There was no window in this sanctuary. All *natural* light was excluded. This reminds us that the natural light of human reasoning does not "comprehend" (lay hold of) the beauties and glories of Jesus Christ. The realm of natural human wisdom cannot see the beauty and wonder of grace. Natural human wisdom cannot see the value and validity of Christ's claims.

1 Corinthians 2:14 reads:

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

One of the major messages in this Gospel is that the spiritual light of Jesus Christ has come into the world and is shining but people cannot comprehend it. Jesus (His words and works) were like a penetrating illuminating light that shined in the darkness of man's sin and unbelief. The sad commentary both in Christ's day and our own day is that great masses of people do not “comprehend” (lay hold, seize, possess) this light. They cannot see the lampstand. They are not willing to see it. It's not that man can't see it but that he won't see it. Mark that down! You can't miss the sun shining in its strength and you can't miss who Jesus was and is today unless you choose to remain in spiritual ignorance and blindness.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Man is said to “believe not” which means man chooses to not believe the claims of Jesus Christ. It's not that he can't believe but that he chooses not to believe (John 5:40). This rejection of Christ and His claims confirms a man's choice to remain in Satan's blindness since the text says that Satan blinds “the minds of them which believe not.” Man sees the light shining but doesn't like what he sees and therefore want no part of the light. He would rather follow the darkness of His own sinful life, ignorance, and pride. Satan is trying to keep man from the “Light of the World” for the text says he is busy keeping and confirming men in there blindness “lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” by causing them to see their sin, their ignorance, and their need for the Savior.

Isaiah 9:2

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”

Matthew 4:16

“The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.”

Mark this down. A world lost in the darkness or blackness of sin, ignorance, and unbelief needs to see Jesus as the “Light of the World.” This can only happen when we take the message of the Gospel to them so that they can embrace the claims of Jesus Christ. They need to hear Christ’s message and claims and when they do the light begins to shine in the darkness, and lost hell-bound, heathen sinners can actually turn from their sins to Jesus their Savior. The world is in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and aimlessness. But there is hope! The light of the world is Jesus. Apart from Him, there is no deliverance from the blackness of sin. Apart from Him, there is no guidance along the way of life, no knowledge as to the real meaning of life and the issues of eternity.

Now let’s go back to our main verse in John 12:35-36. Jesus first said that a person should respond to the light of His revelation and walk in that light “Lest darkness come upon you” (John 12:35). How sad when a person chooses to remain in the darkness. Jesus says that a man will be confirmed in his choice. If he chooses to reject the light or clear revelation of truth He will allow darkness to come upon his life. And how dark is the night!

Alexander Maclaren has written,

“Rejected light is the parent of the densest darkness, and the man who, having the light, does not trust it, piles around himself thick clouds of obscurity and gloom, far more doleful and impenetrable than the twilight that glimmers round the men who have never known the daylight of revelation.”

Jesus also reminds the people that they need to respond to the light of His revelation “for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth” (John 12:35). How sad but true! When a person refuses to walk in the light of truth they walk about in this life knowing where they are going. They have no sense of direction, no meaning, and no eternal hope. They are in the dark spiritually and cannot move in the direction that leads to truth, blessing, and eternal life. Lonely

people! Lonely people! It's written on their faces. They are lost in the dark and cannot find their way. They are sheep without a Shepherd. My friend, people need the Lord!

While Jesus was here on earth performing His miracles and speaking divine and eternal truth to people they should have responded to His light. This is why Jesus said:

“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36).

What does it mean to believe on the light? It means to believe what Jesus says and commit your faith to Him. In the Biblical sense, believing on someone means to take that individual at his word and then to act upon it. In the case of Jesus, it means to take Him at his word when he declares himself to be the Son of God and our Savior and then to act upon that conviction by trusting him as Savior. Jesus was calling for a decision - a step of faith. In essence, Jesus is saying, “While I am here in your midst, take advantage of the tremendous light that you have. While I am here revealing Myself to You, believe in the message of light that I am sharing.” I think there is a correlation or similar comparison to what people do with Jesus Christ today when hearing the Gospel message. They need to believe when the light of Christ's message is shared with them. To continue to walk in the darkness of sin and unbelief is a terrible thing. This is why Jesus says, “While ye have light, believe in the light.” What a message this is for lost hell-bound sinners today. When the light of truth is shared you must respond to the light.

“Come to the light, 'tis shining for thee;  
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;  
Once I was blind, but now I can see;  
The Light of the world is Jesus.”

There is a light that shines brighter than all of the blackness of sin. There is a beacon on a hill that rises above the storm-tossed waves in the night of sin. There is a light that shines through the cults, false religions, religious apostasy, secular humanism, the occult practices, Satanism, sin, blindness, and every form of blackness and unbelief that man can muster up against God. This penetrating, piercing,

illuminating, and exposing light is Jesus Christ (His claims – who He is and what He has done). There is no light in puppets, programs, and pragmatism. The light is in the claims of Jesus Christ! Dear friend, you can come to the light if you choose, but you can also make the choice to remain in the darkness. But when the light comes shining across your pathway and is made plain to you by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, then you should respond to this Light and become a Christian.

How is the message of light brought across to the hearts of those who are lost and on the road to hell? The light shines as the Holy Spirit takes the claims of Christ and begins to open their minds and hearts to these claims.

Jesus said this of the Holy Spirit in John 16:8-10:

“And when he is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.”

The Holy Spirit takes the revelatory claims of Jesus Christ (the Light of the World) and brings conviction upon mankind without distinction. This is because the Holy Spirit convicts the entire world of mankind as God’s servants are busy sharing the Gospel message with a lost human race. He convicts and convinces man that what Jesus said is true in regards to “sin” (that man is an exceeding dreadful sinner and has also committed the sin of unbelief by failing to believe on Christ), to “righteousness” (that Jesus Christ alone can make a person righteous before God) to “judgment” (that eternal damnation in hell for sin awaits all Christ rejecters). The Holy Spirit is moving throughout the world of mankind today *convicting* and *convincing* men that they are low-down dirty rotten sinners before God, that Jesus is the only way to be made right before God, and that hell awaits all Christ rejecters.

The Holy Spirit knows how to impress the illuminating claims of Jesus Christ upon lost people and He does so without distinction (“he will reprove the world” – John 16:8). Jesus is saying to His disciples that as they go with the message of light the Holy Spirit will take this message and convict and convince all men without distinction of their

lost estate and need for salvation. *The Holy Spirit has no favorites.* The Bible does not teach high Calvinism. The Spirit is moving in the hearts of people throughout the world wooing them to embrace the “Light of the World” – the claims of Jesus Christ. When a man receives the wind of the Holy Spirit’s conviction (John 3:8) he can see that Jesus is the “Light of the World” and respond to His message of light. The work of the Spirit (*pneuma*) is invisible and mysterious like the blowing of the wind (*pneuma*). Man controls neither the wind or the Holy Spirit. Neither does he control the work of the Holy Spirit in his own heart and the hearts of others. Dear friend, there is a wonderful work being done in the hearts of lost humanity today. The Spirit’s work is a hidden mysterious work that takes place in the unregenerate hearts of lost sinners convincing them of their sin and their need for Christ. The Spirit takes the claims of Christ and in some unknown and mysterious way, like the wind which blows and changes directions, He impresses upon man’s heart his need for Jesus Christ. Who can fully understand the Spirit’s work and wooing ministry?

“I know not how the Spirit moves,  
Convincing men of sin,  
Revealing Jesus through the Word,  
Creating faith in Him.”

The Holy Spirit helps men to believe but He does not believe for them. This is why Jesus said that every person was to “believe in the light” of His revelation (John 12:36). Jesus makes man responsible for his own believe in His claims (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47). Jesus also said that when a person accepts His claims by placing their belief (faith) in His death and resurrection message, he then becomes a child of light (“the children of light” – John 12:36. Christ’s words also contain a promise. It is the promise that, if we believe in the light, we will be “sons of light.” How gracious this is! How glorious! How grand! In other words, those who believe in Jesus Christ, embracing His claims and receiving His gift of life, will then become like Jesus. They will live holy lives and also be instruments of light to others by living out lives of holiness and sharing the same Gospel illuminating message that Jesus shared while He was here on earth. When the Light changes people they in return want to spread the message of light to others.

What kind of light have you been before a world of lost sinners? Have you been sharing Christ with others these days? Are you living in such a way that your witness would be out of place? If so, you need to turn on the lights by becoming pure in your living and evangelistic in your outreach. As we share the message of Christ's light with others we become a shining light in this world as well (Matt. 5:14-16). Christians need to turn on the lights today and turn down their ungodly music. They need turn on the light of holy living and become greater witnessed for Christ (John 1:7 – "bear witness of the Light"). Dear friend, when was the last time you spoke to someone about Jesus Christ. When was the last time you handed out a Gospel tract? We need to bear witness of the true Light of the World today. Let's get busy. There is a world that is dying and going to hell.

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World" (John 8:12). His claims concerning *who* He was (God in the flesh) and *what* He would do (die on a cross to rescue sinners from hell and rise again to support His claims) is sufficient light to save any lost sinner. All a sinner must do is face his sin and place faith in Christ's claims and he will be saved. The golden lampstand reminds us of Jesus Christ who is the Light of the World. What a wonderful light He is today for the lost sinner.

"The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin;  
The Light of the world is Jesus;  
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in,  
The Light of the world is Jesus.

Ye dwellers in darkness with sin-blinded eyes,  
The Light of the world is Jesus;  
Go, wash, at His bidding, and light will arise,  
The Light of the world is Jesus."

Please notice Jesus is "the Light," not merely a light or another light among many lights. There are many false lights today in our world such as Mormonism, Modernism, secularism, evolutionism, and ritualism. But there is only one true Light! Shine on Jesus! Shine on! Jesus Christ is the only "true Light" (John 1:9) for the whole world.

John 1:9 declares:

“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

This does not mean that every man has received some kind of inward knowledge concerning Christ. Neither does it mean that all men have heard about the Lord Jesus at one time or another. Rather, it means that the Light shines on all people, without regard to nationality, race, or color. John means by this statement that the claims of Jesus Christ (His person and work) are impressed upon the hearts of all people regarding their sin and need for Christ through the Spirit’s convicting, calling, and coercing ministry (John 16:8-11). There is no distinction among the human race when it comes to the message of light. God says that this light is penetrating all mankind as the Gospel is being faithfully proclaimed and presented. God wants to save all men without distinction. The lampstand that brought forth continual illuminating light in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle reminds us of Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the World, shining in the hearts of lost sinners. Let’s repeat something we said at the beginning. As the lampstand provided light for the priestly functions before God, so Christ today is the Light of the world (John 8:12), who reveals the way to God (John 14:6, 9).

Dear friend, Jesus Christ as the true Light has come into the world and is willing and ready to enlighten everyone. The incarnation is in view in the context and this best explains what John was teaching. The point is that Jesus as the Light affects everyone. Everyone lives under the spotlight of God’s illuminating revelation in Jesus Christ since the Incarnation. The light of Jesus Christ is penetrating a world of darkness.

2 Corinthians 4:6

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

God commanded the light to shine out of the darkness at creation and He has done the same thing when he caused His light to shine in the darkness and blackness of our own hearts. You are only here today because the light has shined in our hearts! Praise the Lord, I saw the light! Remember that day when the light shined in our hearts



and we responded to the “Light of the World” and were saved? What a day that was! It was a day of all days! It was a day when He washed all of your sins away and gave you acquittal and pardon in His sight.

“I remember the day when I met my Savior,  
I remember the day, He washed my sin away.  
And ever since that day in every way,  
Things never been the same  
And Jesus, blessed Jesus, is His name.

And what He’s done for me,  
He’ll do for you.  
He longs to change your life, make all anew  
He’s knocking at your door,  
He’s been there times before.  
Why don’t you just say yes?  
And your life be blessed.”

Dear friend, come home! Ye who are weary come home! Earnestly tenderly Jesus is calling! Calling, “Oh sinner, come home!”

Matthew 11:28

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

b. The lampstand typifies the Holy Spirit.

If you will go to the banks of a little stream, and watch the flies, you will see that when they come to bathe in it, they plunge their little bodies into the water, while keeping their wings high out of the water. After swimming around for a little while, they then fly away with their wings un-wet through the sunny air. Now, this is a lesson for us. Here we are immersed in the cares and business of the world; but let us keep the wings of our soul, our faith, and our love, out of the world by keeping filled with the Holy Spirit. It’s only then that we will have true purpose and meaning in life.

Every time we say:

"I believe in the Holy Spirit," we mean that we believe that there is a living God able and willing to enter human personality and change it.

The oil in the lampstand was a beautiful type of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Whereas the lampstand with its light typified Jesus Christ the oil used in the lampstand typified the ministry that the Holy Spirit had in the life of Jesus Christ who was the Light of the World. This is very important to understand.

Exodus 27:20

"And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always."

Leviticus 24:2

"Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually."

The Bible tells us that pure olive oil was used for fuel in order to light the lampstand. The oil would keep the lamps burning continually before the Lord. *Oil in the Scripture is a consistent symbol of the Holy Spirit.* This is seen in connection with the anointing of Saul for his position as king over Israel.

1 Samuel 10:1

"Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"

1 Samuel 10:6 then goes on to say what would happen to Saul:

"And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man."

1 Samuel 10:10 then tells us it happened:

"And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them."

The anointing with oil was accompanied with the Spirit's arrival upon Saul in his Old Testament ministry upon the lives of people. Oil was associated with the personal presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Oil is a legitimate Biblical symbol of the Holy Spirit's ministry of filling and empowerment for service. The Holy Spirit made the inexperienced Saul able to assume kingly responsibilities in much the same way as the judges before him were blessed (Jud. 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). The Bible says in connection with the Spirit's arrival upon Saul's life that "God gave him another heart" (1 Sam. 10:9). Dear friend, one thing is certain. If we are ever going to go anywhere for the Lord today we need a different heart. Praise the Lord. He can make a brand new heart! We need to have our hearts changed by the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit upon our lives. We can't change and possess a different heart without the Spirit's ministry upon our lives. Like Saul, we need His anointing upon our lives. We need His filling and outpouring ministry working in our lives today. We need His power and victory for service and holy living. The Bible records that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon" and that "he blew a trumpet" (Jud. 6:34). Today we should blow our trumpets in appreciation for the Spirit's ministry and work in our lives.

This same anointing ministry of the Holy Spirit was later experienced by David when he became king.

1 Samuel 16:1

"And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons."

1 Samuel 16:13 goes on to say:

"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah."

Here we once again see how anointing with oil and the ministry of the Holy Spirit is connected. When David was anointed with oil the Holy Spirit came upon him as a sign of God's approval. The anointing was accompanied by the coming of the Spirit of God upon David to do the work of God. Now friend, we need a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit in our lives today if we are ever going to do the work of God effectively. Without His anointing ministry we will fail in whatever we do. We need to possess His power and victory in our lives today.

F. B. Meyer discovered that opening up his entire life to the Spirit was the secret to freedom from a sin he couldn't conquer. After a long battle with that sin, he knelt by his bed, held open his outstretched hands, and prayed, "Lord, here are the keys of my life. Take them and unlock every door. Fill every room! Make me willing, dear Lord, to let You occupy every room and free me from every cherished sin." Once he gave the Spirit complete access to his life, the sin was defeated. Dear friend, have you let the Holy Spirit have the keys to all the rooms of your life? If you want to have victory, you must give Him "the run of the house."

Now that we have established the connection of oil with the Holy Spirit's ministry we must come to some Biblical conclusions how the Holy Spirit's ministry was connected with Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. The pure olive oil used in the lampstand reminds us of how the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus Christ for His earthly ministry as the Light of the World.

The Bible teaches that during Christ's earthly ministry the Holy Spirit officially came upon Christ at His baptism.

Matthew 3:16-17

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

If Jesus in His humanity availed Himself to the Holy Spirit's ministry for service and living then certainly you and I need His ministry operating in our lives today. We can't be without His anointing or filling ministry for power, living, and service. Jesus demonstrated that He could do the work of the Father because He had received the anointing of the Holy Spirit's ministry upon His life. Quoting Isaiah 61:1-2 Jesus said in Luke 4:18:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the

brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”

Once again we see how the Holy Spirit’s ministry is connected with anointing. The oil of anointing or the ministry of the Holy Spirit is needed in our lives today if we are ever going to move out for God. Jesus Christ said that He was anointed by the Spirit’s ministry. This resulted in Christ doing a great work throughout His earthly ministry. Since the anointing of the Holy Spirit was with Jesus Christ He would accomplish several things.

First, Christ would be able to preach the Gospel. In a similar way we need the Holy Spirit’s ministry upon our lives if we are going to ever effectively communicate and share the Gospel with others.

Acts 4:31

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

My friend, the filling and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit upon our lives can change our witnessing for the Lord. His ministry can give us boldness in speaking up for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit came upon Christ to empower Him to preach the Gospel to the poor. The same should be true in our lives today. If we want to become bolder in our witness and speaking about Jesus Christ we need the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We need God to shake our lives today as the place was shaken after the people prayed. We need God to do something through our lives today as we pray (pre-evangelism) and then move out for God with the Gospel. We need the shaking and work of God upon our lives so that we will go forth mightily in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and become a better witness and more effective witness for the Lord. We need the shaking of God in our lives today through the ministry of the Spirit’s work. We need God to do something in our hearts and homes and church. Dear friend, if we live by the Spirit’s power and rely upon Him totally God will work through our lives in a wonderful way.

George Duncan once went to visit some friends in the English countryside. For years they had lived in an old-fashioned, rundown

building. To Mr. Duncan's surprise, he discovered that the house had just recently been completely remodeled. The people had installed new lights, an electric stove, and many other pieces of modern equipment. However, he was surprised when he saw the lady of the house still using a kerosene stove for cooking and oil lamps for lighting. After greeting him, she said, "George, don't look so confused. We've had a great change here, but we haven't turned on the power yet." Now friend, it may be like that in your life today. You need to turn on the power of the Holy Spirit in your life so that you might move out and do something for God and say something about Christ. We are spiritual weaklings not experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives when we don't stand up for Jesus Christ and witness for Him as we should.

Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The promised coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost not only gave birth to the Church (Acts 1:5) but it also gave birth to a new dynamic power (Acts 1:8) operating in the lives of His people. The Holy Spirit would come to permanently indwell His people providing them with a new internal source of unending dynamite power for service and living. Dear friend, we have this power today ("he shall receive"). There is no question that the power is available to us. Sadly, many Christians do not tap the recourse that they have in the person and power of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Lehman Strauss once said:

"The Holy Spirit is the greatest unused power in the world."

How about you today? Have you really been allowing the Spirit's power to be unleashed in your life? There is an unending reservoir of power available for service and living that comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit who lives within you.

John 7:38-39

"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which

they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

The Spirit’s work is comparable to an unending river or fountain of living water gushing forth from the inside of our hearts and lives. The Spirit’s work in our lives is comparable to an unending supply of water that provides us with satisfaction, vitality, and power for daily living. The Holy Spirit’s work in our lives results in a constant flow of spiritual power, guidance, fruit, and leading. His work never ends so that we can effectively live for God in the midst of wicked and perverse generation. Friend, we need God’s flood of blessing in our lives today. We need the constant flowing stream of the Spirit’s work and ministry. We need the rivers of water flowing in our life once again.

I long for such a flood, don’t you? What a wonderful thing it would be if we would experience the flood of the Spirit’s work in our lives in a greater way this week. Spurgeon spoke of this work of the Spirit back in the nineteenth century, comparing it to the incoming tides on the Thames River in England that would lift the great river barges. When the tide was out nothing could move those barges. They would just stay stuck in the mud of the river’s bottom. A team of men could not move them. Machinery could never get them moved out to the sea. But then the tide would come, and soon they would be floating. When the tide returned, even a child could move them by his hand.

Oh dear friend, we need the flood of the Holy Spirit upon our lives today. We need the floodtide of God’s grace operating in our hearts. There are some Christian boats today that need floating. Many Christians today are simply not living for God and doing the work of God. They are spiritually weak and waning. Furthermore, they are not interested in the lives others. They do not come out to prayer meetings. They do not witness. They are not growing in their Christian life. They seemingly cannot be moved by anyone or anything. What is their problem? They need to be set afloat. They need the flood of the Spirit’s work operating in their hearts and lives. Let me just say this. When the Holy Spirit begins to do a work in your heart you will experience great satisfaction and new power and blessing in your life. You simply need to come before God and confess your sins and lethargic state and ask God to turn on the

floodgates of the Spirit's power and work in your heart and life. If you earnestly pray in this way you will be surprised at what happens!

Second, Christ goes on to say that he would need the Spirit's anointing ministry "to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). In other words, Christ by the Spirit's assistance would be able to help the lives of other people by healing their broken hearts, delivering them from the spiritual captivity and blindness of the devil, and setting people free from their bondage of sin. It would take the Holy Spirit's ministry operating in Christ's life to enable Him in His humanity to accomplish these liberating works in the lives of other people. The same is true of us today. It takes the working of God's Spirit to enable us to make a difference in the lives of other people today. Let me ask you something. Have you made a difference in the lives of others? Have you impacted the lives of others because the Holy Spirit was working through you?

Jude 1:22

"And of some have compassion, making a difference."

Dear friend, if we are going to impact others and help rescue them from sin and Satan's bondage we are going to need the anointing or power of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives. If we are ever going to step out and make a difference in the lives of others we will have to depend on the Spirit's ministry and be controlled by the Holy Spirit. We can't liberate others until we are first liberated. And only after we experience the Spirit's victory and power can we be ready to help others overcome their brokenness and spiritual poverty. It takes the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit to enable us to go forth and make a difference in the lives of other people. Dear friend, we often live defeated and selfish lives because we are not depending upon the Spirit's work and ministry in our hearts and lives. We are stripped of power because we are not yielding to the Spirit and depending upon His anointing power for our lives. If you ever want to be used of the Lord in a great way then you will need to experience the Spirit's filling ministry. You need His anointing in your life. If you want to impact the lives of others then you will need the Spirit working in your life.



“O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found,  
Wherever human hearts and human woes abound;  
Let ev'ry Christian tongue proclaim the joyful sound:  
The Comforter has come.”

My friend, Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit would come at Pentecost, He would indwell his people forever.

John 14:16-17

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

The Holy Spirit is called the “Comforter” (parekletos - “one called alongside to help or aid”). The Holy Spirit has come to be our helper and aid us in our living, witnessing, and serving. He has come to intercede for us in a special way by providing us with untold power for victory and overall Christian living. His filling, fruit, and fathomless work in our lives provide us with a new dynamic for Christian living and service. The hallmark of the new dispensation of the Church is the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of His people.

“The Comforter has come,  
The Comforter has come,  
The Father's promise giv'n.  
O spread the tidings 'round,  
Wherever man is found  
The Comforter has come.”

My friend, this is the promise. What a promise it is! We would receive an anointing from on high to live for God and do His work on earth. We would be given the presence, power, and provision of the Holy Spirit to aid us in our walk, work, and witnessing for the Lord. O spread the tidings round. The Comforter has come! He is here today. Have you sensed His work and ministry in your heart and life lately? Perhaps you have been overcome by the world instead of the Holy Spirit? Maybe you need a fresh stirring today in your own heart and life. Dear friend, the Comforter has come! The Holy Spirit from Heaven has come down to help us and aid us in our living and

service for the Lord. There is no excuse to live depressed, defeated, and in disarray. The Comforter has come! There is no excuse to live in a battered and backslidden state. The Comforter has come. There is no excuse to live in a state of rebellion and reckless living. The Comforter has come. The power of the Spirit from on high has come to rescue us, reshape us, and restart our lives. My friend, you need the power of God's Spirit operating in your life today as a Christian. If the Spirit is moving in your life you will stop being a bad dad, a bad husband, a bad mother, a bad wife. You will stop being disobedient to your mother and father. You will stop watching filth on TV. You will start witnessing for the Lord and shining for Him instead of being a grumpy individual. You will start expressing love, joy, peace, and longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness to others as the Spirit's fruit begins to be seen in your life. You will start treating others fairly and living for the Lord once again.

You may say, "My situation is hopeless. I've been beaten by the devil." The Comforter has come! You may say, "I'm doomed to a life of monotony and sameness. The Comforter has come! You say, "I'm tired and worn out in the fight." The Comforter has come! He is here my friend. We don't need excuses. What we need is His anointing and power.

So we have seen that the oil used in the lampstand corresponds to the ministry that the Holy Spirit had in the life of Christ while He was on earth as the Light of the World. The Holy Spirit empowered Him and sustained Him in life. Now let's return to Exodus 25:37 and note an important detail about the lampstand and how it relates to Christ.

"And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it."

The lampstand had seven lights. This gave adequate light in the Holy Place so that the priest could do his work. The wicks and oil kept the lampstand burning and bright. It was again the pure olive oil (Ex. 27:20). The fact that it was to be "pure" speaks of the Spirit's person. He is pure and as His name suggests He is the Holy Spirit. There are no impurities in His person and work. Now let me ask you something. Why are there so many empty pews in our churches today? Why are many churches not winning souls for Christ? Why are Christians just

existing and not really living for the Lord? Could it be that their wicks in their lamps are dry? Could it be that they have run out of oil? Dear friend, there must be the pure oil of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives if a testimony is to be given that will honor the Lord. We used to sing:

“Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning.  
Give me oil in my lamp I pray.  
Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning, burning, burning,  
Keep me burning till the break of day.”

We need the oil of the Holy Spirit burning in our hearts and lives today if we are ever going to amount to anything for the Lord. We can do nothing, be nothing, and say nothing that is worth while without the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit upon our lives (Eph. 5:18). Nothing will cause the light to burn but the oil. Let us never forget this. We need the oil of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the church today. Nothing is going to set our churches or personal lives on fire except the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We must empty ourselves and let the Spirit fill our hearts today. Has the flame gone out in your life? Maybe it’s on its last flickering ray of light. God must get through to us again so that the ministry of the Holy Spirit might once again become a constant burning flame in our hearts and lives. Someone wrote:

“Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With all Thy quickening powers;  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
In these cold hearts of ours.”

Let us remember that the oil was to “cause the lamp to burn always” (Ex. 27:20). This was to be a constant burning. It was not enough to let the lamp burn bright one day and be quenched the next day. In Samuel’s day “the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD” (1 Sam. 3:3-4). God was not pleased with this. In a similar way God is not pleased when we quench the Spirit’s filling ministry in our lives and allow the lamp to go out. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says: “Quench not the Spirit.” We are not to extinguish or put out the Spirit’s ministry in our lives by sinning and living independent of God’s power and provision. It was not enough for the lamps to be filled once.

God said in Exodus 27:21:

“Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.”

Aaron’s sons were to fill the seven lamps with oil morning and evening. In a similar way, we need a continual filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Ephesians 5:18

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”

The understanding behind the verb “filled” (pleroo) means to “keep on being filled” with the Spirit. Believers are commanded to be filled constantly with the Holy Spirit. A believer, rather than being controlled by other things, such as wine, is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. The wine that fills a person controls every area of his life as long as that person consumes it. Instead of wine controlling a person the Holy Spirit is to control him. The point is this. We are commanded to keep being filled or controlled by the Spirit. There needs to be a continual filling or constant supply of the Spirit’s energizing, enabling, and empowering work in our lives for victory and service. Without the Spirit’s filling and power upon our lives we will be like Samson and go out powerless and find defeat (Judges 16:20-21). Too many, like Samson, do not know that they are not filled with the Holy Spirit. For our lights to shine we must have a continual filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

E.M. Bounds said:

“The Holy Spirit fills men, not machinery.”

Today God’s work is trying to be done by man’s machinery and his pragmatic maneuvers to impress other men. We must remember that God still works through Spirit-filled people and not fleshly performances geared around impressing lost people or through all the gadgets and church guru techniques of today. If we will just live a Spirit-filled life people will see the difference in our lives and this will open up a witness for Christ.

Exodus 25:37 once again says:

“And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it.”

The fact that there were seven lamps is significant in light of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ and how the Holy Spirit enabled Him to be the Light of the World. The prophetic word spoke of Christ (the Branch) receiving a seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit upon His life during His earthly ministry.

Isaiah 11:2 says of Christ:

“And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.”

What was true of Christ during his earthly ministry will be true during His kingship over the earth during the Millennium. Christ received a seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit during His earthly ministry. There are not seven Holy Spirits. However, seven different aspects or attributes of the Holy Spirit are given in this verse. These seven attributes of the Holy Spirit would characterize the Holy Spirit's work in the Messiah. It's interesting to think of the seven-stemmed lampstand as each aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry is related to Christ. There were seven lights on the lampstand that were filled with oil and there was a seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit given to Christ during His earthly ministry. This seems to be a valid typical comparison. The number seven in the Bible speaks of perfection and completeness. Therefore, these seven traits symbolize of the perfection and fullness of the Spirit's ministry as God. Let me say that the Spirit's ministry upon Christ's life and ours today is a complete work that can provide us with everything we need for life and godliness.

First, the Holy Spirit is said to be “the spirit of the LORD” (Isa. 11:2). One might think of this as the center or the main shaft of the lampstand. The central figure and person that the Holy Spirit portrays and represents to the world is the LORD (Jehovah). The Holy Spirit is said to be “of the LORD” because He is part of the Godhead. *He is one with the LORD in His eternal being and existence.* If you identify the Holy Spirit as only a force like the cults do then you no longer

have God the Spirit. One cannot separate the Holy Spirit from God (Acts 5:3-4). Since the Holy Spirit is the LORD we can be reassured that we have God's power on high to rescue us from the contamination in this world. We can be assured that God is on our side since we have the Holy Spirit of God residing in us.

Second, the Holy Spirit is said to be "the spirit of wisdom." Wisdom speaks of the proper use of knowledge and facts. Wisdom discerns things properly. Wisdom discerns the nature of things. The Holy Spirit grants us wisdom. A wise person is someone who has discernment and knows how to apply the knowledge of God's Word and ways to his life. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said:

"Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. To know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom."

Third, the Holy Spirit is said to be "understanding" which means that the Holy Spirit provides us with spiritual understanding on how to live and walk in life. We need His enlightening ministry for our lives today. The Spirit gives us understanding regarding the many issues that we face as Christians. He helps us to face the world with a Biblical view. He gives us understanding regarding the decisions and paths we must take in life.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit is said to be "the spirit of counsel." My friend, the whole Christian counseling movement of today would go debunk if we would learn to rely upon the counseling ministry of the Holy Spirit for our lives. We have a built-in counselor today who is ready to help guide our lives and give us advice on making proper, right, and holy decisions. He counsels us by the truth of God's Word and confirms in our hearts the decisions that we must make which relate to everyday living. The promise was given that the Holy Spirit would guide us in truth.

John 16:13

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

Fifth, the Holy Spirit is said be “might” which means that He provides the necessary power for daily living. He gives us the power we need to face the world, the flesh, and the devil. We have seen this already. There is no greater power or assistance for daily living than the power of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:16

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

Galatians 5:25

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

To walk in the Spirit is the greatest privilege we have today. It means that we walk in the Spirit’s daily power and provision for our lives so that we can live victoriously over the world, the flesh, and the devil. He is still the Spirit of might!

Zechariah 4:6

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

The Holy Spirit also gives us power for victory and for service. He will charge us up for God’s duty and help us to start and finish the task that He has called us to do. This is what the Lord promised Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4:6. The temple was destroyed but the people of God would be able to rebuild the temple just as they did the foundation (vs. 9). Dear friend, the work we are involved with today is a spiritual work and can only be accomplished through the abundant energy and supply of the Spirit of God.

Zechariah 4:6

“Not by might (human might), nor by power (human power), but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

In addition, the Spirit also fills us with His fruit (joy, peace, longsuffering) while at the same time empowering us for the daily grind and routine of life.

Alexander MacLaren once said:

“God gives patient power for the persistent pursuit of weary monotonous duty.”

Sixth, the Holy Spirit is also called “the spirit of knowledge” because He imparts the knowledge of truth in our minds and hearts. The Spirit anoints us in regards to the understanding of truth, so that we can first know what absolute truth is and then make right decisions based on this knowledge of the truth. Mark this down. This is a knowledge that is Bible-based and Word-directed.

1 John 2:20

“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”

The word “unction” (chrisma) literally means a smearing and refers to an ointment that was prepared with oils and aromatic herbs. The concept and idea behind this word is that Jesus Christ (“the Holy One”) has given us the anointing ministry of the Holy Spirit that enables us to know all things regarding truth. When a person is saved, he receives the indwelling promise and presence of the Holy Spirit, whose teaching ministry enables him to know truth and discern between truth and error. When John tells his young readers “you know all things,” he means they can now have the capacity to know spiritual truth and also recognize what is true and what is false. They won’t have to rely on any Gnostic teachers (antichrists) to tell them what is truth and what is not truth. They have the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives to impart knowledge into their minds and hearts.

1 John 2:27 explains further:

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”

This does not mean that we do not need Christian teachers in the church. God has made specific provision for such teachers in Ephesians 4:11. It means that the Christian does not need to follow those who are teaching something contrary to the way of truth since they have been taught by the Holy Spirit what the truth is. The Gnostics professed to have additional truth or knowledge outside the



Bible. John is saying that there is no need for any born again Christian to embrace the higher so-called knowledge that is outside the parameters of the Bible. With the Word of God in our hands and the Spirit of God in our hearts, we have all that we need for instruction in the absolute truth of God. The Holy Spirit will give us the knowledge that we need regarding the truth. No outsider with a different Bible and a different message can teach us otherwise. No would-be teacher with a different word and conclusion will cause us to stumble. We will be inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit what truth is and be able to discern truth from error (1 John 4:6) as we grow in the truth of the Word of God and the Spirit teaches us the knowledge we need from the Bible. This knowledge will enable us to embrace right teaching so that we are not influenced by those who are trying to lead us astray with false teaching. The Holy Spirit imparts knowledge to us so that we don't have to be lead astray with every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14) and every new fad of change in the modern-day church. We need the Spirit's teaching ministry today in our lives. He is still the Spirit of knowledge.

Seventh, the Holy Spirit is also called "the fear of the LORD" (Isa. 11:2). This means that the Holy Spirit imparts the *wholesome fear or dread* in our hearts of displeasing God. He also implants within our hearts a *reverential fear* of God whereby we seek to honor God's holiness and ways in all that we do and say. My friend, a proper holy and reverent fear of God means that I will want to live my life in a manner that does not evoke God's displeasure. My daily *living* and *worship* before the Lord should be done out of a wholesome fear of God. I should practice right living and worship simply because I fear God. I don't want to hurt God and evoke His displeasure nor do I want to offend God's holiness by my actions and conduct. Let me say today that the Holy Spirit only produces reverent worship and promotes the kind of living that excludes all fleshly practices. He is the Holy Spirit. Therefore, He lives up to His name, and promotes or produces only holy living and worship that honors God. Much of what is called worship today is flesh-produced and not Holy Spirit produced. Then too, much of our living can be for self instead of by the Spirit's fullness.

Here's a final note. The oil in the lampstand caused its light to be cast on the other two pieces of furniture in the Holy Place. The oil

produced light illuminated the table of showbread which spoke of the believers fellowship with God. It also illuminated the altar of incense which speaks of the believer's prayers and worship ascending up to God. In short, the Holy Spirit's work and ministry in our hearts and lives will produce fellowship and worship that is pleasing and God-honoring. The Holy Spirit inspires us to fellowship with God (1 John 5:20) and worship God (John 4:24). These are two important ministries of the Spirit of God today. He wants to keep us in tune with God and point us to the glories of Christ (John 16:14) who is the Light of the World. For all these reasons we ought to sing:

“Spirit of the Living God,  
Fall fresh on me.  
Spirit of the Living God,  
Fall fresh on me.  
Melt me, mould me,  
Fill me, use me.  
Spirit of the Living God,  
Fall fresh on me.”

### ***The Tabernacle's Holy of Holies***

D. L. Moody told the story of a passenger on an Atlantic steamer who lay in his bunk during a raging storm with a severe case of seasickness. Suddenly he heard the cry, "Man overboard!" "May God help that poor fellow," he prayed, "but there's nothing I can do." Then he thought, "I can at least put my lantern in my small window," and with much effort he did so. The man was finally rescued. In recounting the story the next day, he said, "I was going down in the darkness for the last time when someone put a light in a porthole. It shone on my hand, and a sailor in the lifeboat grabbed it and pulled me in." Dear friend, there was Someone else who pulled us in from a stormy sea of sin and sure damnation. His name was Jesus. We saw the light of His grace, responded to Him, and He saved us from the endless night of sin and the sure judgment of God. We should be so thankful today for His work of saving grace. Oh the wonder of it all! In this study we are going to see that there is mercy with the Lord since Jesus died for us and made the way of access into God's presence

possible. It's only through Christ's death that I can be accepted in God's presence and rescued from the judgment of an everlasting hell.

## 1. The purpose of the Holy of Holies

We have all seen those posted signs which read: "Warning! Do not enter!" This sign was not posted on the veil which lead into the Holy of Holies but every functioning priest in the Holy Place (first room of the tabernacle structure) knew that they could not pass through the second veil that lead into the Holy of Holies (second room). Only the high priest had this privilege and he could only do this but once a year (Ex. 30:10; Heb. 9:7). On the other side of the second veil was an item of furniture called the ark of the covenant. It was a rectangular shaped box with a lid called the mercy seat. As we will see, the ark of the covenant with its mercy seat pointed to the person, perfections, and passion of Jesus Christ. However, the entire box was designed to represent the throne of God in the midst of His people. This was the true purpose of the holy of holies. The room was designed to be God's throne on earth as He dwelt among His people.

### Exodus 25:21-22

"And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

It was in the Holy of Holies where God dwelt and manifested His presence. It's believed by many students of the Bible that God manifested His presence in what became known as a Shekinah glory cloud that stood between the two cherubim figures that were resting upon the mercy seat. This seems to be what the Scriptures teach.

### Leviticus 16:2

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat."

Psalm 80:1

“Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.”

God manifested His presence above the mercy seat in the form of a cloud. Apparently there was a cloud that came forth from this room which was symbolic of the Lord's presence (Exodus 40:34-38). When the tabernacle was set up and finalized God came into the Tabernacle structure and manifested His presence by a cloud. This demonstrated His approval of the Tabernacle that was built according to His design. The pillar of cloud was the visible indication and expression of God's presence among His people. The appearance of His glory is sometimes called the Shekinah or the Shekinah glory, which is a word that actually comes from a Hebrew word meaning “to dwell.” The Shekinah was a non-biblical term which grew out of the Palestinian and Babylonian Jews. However, it became a wonderful way to express the presence of God.

When everything the Lord had commanded had been completed, He came near in an epiphany, a dramatic cloud appearance and descent which was designed to manifest His resplendent glory among the people. When the Lord came upon Mount Sinai in a cloud the people were terrified (Ex. 19:16-21 – “so that all the people in the camp trembled”). Dear friend, when law is given without mercy there can only be terror and fear in our hearts! This is because we are all lawbreakers and when seen and judged on the basis of law every one of us would be condemned to die the sinner's death and go to hell.

Romans 3:19

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

This is true and will never change. We are condemned by the law and have the death sentence upon our lives. With law there is no hope of ever getting to Heaven and into God's presence since we are all lawbreakers. When the law is brought beside us it tells us that we are great sinners and condemns us to hell. There is no mercy with the law. Let me say this today, you will die the sinner's death and go to

hell unless you pray the sinner's prayer and put your faith in Christ as your only hope of Heaven. When we do trust in Christ to be our only Savior we can sing:

“Free from the law – Oh, happy condition!  
Jesus hath died, and there is remission:  
Cursed by the law, and bruised by the fall,  
Christ has redeemed us once for all!”

My friend, we have no hope of ever getting to Heaven by the law principle (Rom. 3:20, 28 – “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified”). The giving of the law and God's presence was an awful and terrible scene. And let me say that it's an awful thing to place ourselves under the law as a means of salvation. The law condemns us as hopeless sinners. The law tells us that we are sinners (“for by the law is the knowledge of sin” – Rom. 3:20). The law is a revealer of our sin and not a savior. I would be shaking, shivering, sighing, and sobbing in utter despair if I were placed under the ruthlessness and regime of God's law as a way of salvation. Why? It's because the law condemns me as a sinner and gives me no hope of a Savior. I must look to Calvary and Christ if I want a Savior.

“By God's word at last my sin I learned;  
Then I trembled at the law I'd spurned,  
Till my guilty soul imploring turned  
To Calvary.”

Now when the Lord came to dwell among His people in the Tabernacle the people were overjoyed. Why? It's because this was not a descent in judgment but in mercy! The fact that God would manifest His presence above the mercy seat (Lev. 16:2 – “for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat”) points to how God was manifesting mercy to His people instead of judgment. Oh dear friend, as we will see in a later study, there is mercy with the Lord! Mercy reigned in the Holy of Holies! Without it the people would be forever doomed. We too would be doomed to hell and the Lake of Fire without God's mercy. Everyone knew that God had come to dwell with them in mercy. God's law inside the ark of the covenant condemned the people but the law was kept underneath the mercy

seat which was above the law. It was the place where God manifested His divine presence among the people reminding them that He is merciful and willing to accept His people if they came by the prescribed way into His presence.

Now the glory of the LORD filling the tabernacle demonstrated His Presence with the Israelites. Apparently the cloud that represented God's presence was seen above the mercy between the two cherubim and it's from this area that it ascended above the Tabernacle to lead the people. In other words, the cloud was seen to emanate from this place inside the Holy of Holies (God's throne) and from here is spread out above the Tabernacle structure (Ex. 40:34-38). The point is this. The ark of the covenant with its lid (the mercy seat) was where God manifested His presence. It was the room called the Holy of Holies since this is where God's throne or dwelling place was manifested among His people. This room was the most sacred place in the Tabernacle structure. It was the place where God dwelt. It was the holiest of all for God dwelt here. It was the place of God's holy throne! You can't get any holier than this!

“Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.”

This is what the Holy of Holies represented. It was the most holy place (Ex. 26:33-34) and “holiest of all” (Heb. 9:3, 8) and “the holiest” (Heb. 10:19) for God in all of His absolute holy splendor and perfections dwelt here. It was the place of God's throne on earth when He dwelt with sinful man. No wonder it was called the most holy place. Where God dwells there can be nothing but holiness. Only holiness and perfection can enter His glorious and majestic presence.

We must also remember that the Holy of Holies was a picture of heaven itself and the place where God dwells on the heavenly throne (Heb. 9:8-12; 23-26). The Tabernacle with its Holy of Holies was but a faint picture of the glorious place called Heaven and the throne room in Glory. This little four-squared room on earth which housed God's presence is but a faint foreshadowing of the heavenly city of Jerusalem and God's eternal throne within this four-squared city.

There up yonder in Heaven all Christ's glory and beauty are seen in that "city ... foursquare" (Rev. 21:16).

"In that land of fadeless day  
Lies the city foursquare;  
It shall never pass away,  
And there is no night there."

## 2. The particular items of the Holy of Holies

Now that we have established the significance or purpose of this second room called the Holy of Holies we need to study about each item that is connected with this room. We must remember that every item which is linked to the Tabernacle has important typical meaning.

### A. The veil

The veil gave entranceway into this sacred place where God dwelt on His throne. The veil that covered the entrance into the Holy of Holies is rich in typology and meaning.

#### 1. The construction of the veil

Exodus 26:31-34

"And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place."

##### aa. Its colors.

In a previous study we spent some time discussing the colors of the curtains of the Tabernacle and what they represented. You will remember that there were actually three curtains or veils in the entire

Tabernacle structure and all of them had the same color code. There was a curtain or veil that was used for an entrance into the court of the Tabernacle (Ex. 27:16; 38:18). There was also an outer veil that was used as a door which led into the tabernacle's tent structure and first room called the holy place (Ex. 26:36; 36:37). Then too, there was an inner veil that separated the "holy place" from the "the most holy place" (Holy of Holies) where the ark was placed (Ex. 26:31-33; 36:35-36). This is where we are at in our present study. It's interesting that all of these veils were made out of the same colors. They were created with the colors of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined white linen. Because of their significance we will repeat a few thoughts previously shared on these colors.

The blue undoubtedly speaks of Christ's heavenly origin and character. Blue reminds us of the color of the sky. It is the heavenly color. It points us to the heavens.

Jesus said in John 3:13:

"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

Dear friend, if you want to be saved then you must look to the heavens. It's from the heavens that Jesus came as the eternal God and Savior. You have no Savior if He did not come from Heaven! Buddha did not come from Heaven. Mohammed did not come from Heaven. Confucius, Mary Baker Eddy, Gandhi, Brigham Young, Joseph Smith, and Harry Krishna did not come from Heaven. Only Jesus has come from Heaven as God of very God to provide salvation and eternal life to a lost human race. If you want to be saved you must look to the heavens! Heaven has the answer for your salvation – not cults, eastern religions, or spiritism.

Scarlet was a bright red color. The color scarlet one again speaks of the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. *It is the blood color.*

"Oh the blood of Jesus  
Oh the blood of Jesus  
Oh the blood of Jesus  
It makes me white as snow."



The suffering and death of Jesus Christ was divinely predetermined (“the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world” - Acts 2:23; Rev. 13:8). Christ’s death and blood sacrifice was foreshadowed in types and figures (Gen. 3:21; 4:1-5; Exodus 12; Lev. 23; 1 Cor. 5:7). We are forgiven “through the blood” (Eph. 1:6; Col. 1:14). Jesus has “washed us from our sins” (Rev. 1:5) through His blood. The blood will never lose its power! Although many suggest today that the phraseology of blood is simply a metonymy (another name and figure) for Christ’s death the Bible places too much emphasis on the blood to pass it off as just a complimentary phrase for Christ’s death. Let me set things straight today. Christ not only died for me on the cross but He also shed His blood for me. Both are important. You can’t separate Christ’s death and the shedding of His blood because both are important to God. They are inseparably bound together in God’s plan of redemption. Don’t undo one at the expense of the other. Christ’s shed blood on Calvary’s cross is important to God. If it was not important to God He would not reference blood the way He does in the Old and New Testaments. Let’s stop fooling ourselves. Without the shedding of Christ’s blood there can be no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22).

The color purple reminds us of the color of royalty (Judges 8:26). Purple was the color of the garments of kings. It was a very expensive dye that when worn displayed the dignity of a king and gave expression of his official standing (Esther 8:15). Purple was then a badge of honor and a sign of royalty. Purple in the veils of the Tabernacle undoubtedly represents Christ’s kingliness. As stated before, Jesus was from the kingly line of David (Lk. 1:32). He was born a King (Matt. 2:2), mocked as a King (Matt. 27:29), declared to be King as His crucifixion (Matt. 27:37), and is someday coming back as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16) to rule as King forever (Luke 1:33). He’s still the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

The “fine twined linen” was a white material that had no flaws in it. It was not coarse but very smooth. It was a material of the highest quality and grade. It was superior to all other material. The white fine twined linen in the veil reminds of Christ’s holy and sinless life. White speaks of purity and righteousness (Rev. 19:8). Hebrews 7:26 speaks of Christ and says, “For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the

heavens.” The Bible teaches that Christ offered Himself “without spot to God” (Heb. 9:14). I will say it again as I have on two other previous occasions in our study. Jesus did not sin, would not sin, and could not sin. Do you know why? It’s because He is God incarnate in the flesh. God cannot sin! God demanded a perfect or flawless sacrifice to take away sin and Christ was the only sacrifice that God would accept as a sin offering which could actually remove sin and bring a person into the presence of God (“as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” – 1 Pet. 1:19). It would take a perfect sinless (impeccable) sacrifice to appease God and satisfy His justice and holiness (1 John 2:2). Jesus was the perfect and flawless sacrifice, as indicated by the “fine twined linen,” that died to meet the demands of the Law and vindicate God’s holiness, righteousness, and justice for those sinners who express faith in Him.

#### bb. It’s casing

Exodus 26:32

“And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver.”

The casing or frame upon which the curtain hung was made out of wood which we have already seen was a type of Christ’s humanity. He was the “root out of dry ground” (Isa. 53:2). Jesus came into this world as a man so He could die for humanity. Without His manhood we could not have a Savior. However, the wood casing or frame was overlaid in gold. As we have already seen, gold is the color of Christ’s kingliness and deity (Rev. 14:14; 19:16). Jesus was not only man He was also God. He was the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We could have no salvation if Jesus was just a man. He also had to be God incarnate and this is exactly what He was and is today. He is God manifested in the flesh. He is the Lord of Glory. He is the divine exegesis or unfolding of God to mankind (Heb. 1:3 – “the express image of his person”). If your Jesus is the Jehovah Witness Jesus or the Mormon Jesus or the Jesus of the cults and modernists then you don’t have the true Jesus. You have another Jesus.

2 Corinthians 11:4

“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received,

or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”

We are living in a day when another Jesus and another gospel are being propagated. Don't be fooled. There is only one Jesus and He Lord of all. He is King of Kings and is part of the eternal Godhead. Jesus is the expression of God's eternal being and existence. If He is anything less then we are all going to hell. By the way, hell is the place you are going if you don't believe Jesus is God and the only Savior.

The “silver sockets” (Ex. 26:32) or bases points to redemption. God allowed people to be redeemed with silver money in the Old Testament to indicate His plan of redemption.

Leviticus 25:51-52

“If there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubile, then he shall count with him, and according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption.”

The reoccurring expression “the price of redemption” was a practice given by God. Slaves could be purchased by silver money and bought back. This became a picture of Christ who would redeem us by His own blood. The money was a symbol of the purchasing price that Jesus would someday pay in order to release men from the penalty of their sins. The silver purchasing price was also typified in Exodus 30:12-13 and 38:25-26 where those who were numbered gave a silver donation that would be used in the silver sockets or bases of the Tabernacle. This was called “a ransom for their soul” (Ex. 30:12). Let me say something once again. Jesus paid a tremendous purchasing price to release us from our sins and grant us pardon in God's sight. The price for our redemption was His own blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19). The picture of silver money and the purchasing of people is just that – a picture of Christ redeeming His people.

“Redeemed how I love to proclaim it,  
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Redeemed though His infinite mercy,  
His child and forever I am.”

cc. It's clasps

Exodus 26:32-33

“And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.”

The frame was made out of wood which we have already seen speaks of Christ's humanity. The fact that the “taches” or hooks were made out of gold also speaks of Christ's deity. All the gold items in the Tabernacle spoke of Christ's kingliness and deity.

Two cultists came to the door of an old Plymouth Brethren one day. The one was under training. The cultist began to downgrade the person of Jesus Christ. The old Plymouth Brethren quickly took the cultist to Hebrews 1:3 where the Bible says that Christ “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” The young trainee said to the other cult leader, “I do believe that speaks of kingship.” The Plymouth Brethren quickly replied, “You're right, and Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” Of course, the cult workers needed to be going after that statement. The point is this. The veil was suspended by the gold clasps or hooks. Let me just say that everything regarding our salvation and eternal life hangs on the fact that Jesus was God in the flesh (John 1:1, 18). Without Him, how lost we would be!

dd. It's confession.

The veil which gave entrance into the Holy of Holies (God's presence) confessed something to all people in picture form. The silent confession or acknowledgment being stated by God was very plain. God is infinitely holy. Man cannot enter beyond this point. To do so means sure death. This silent but sure confession was made to the priests when they viewed the cherubim figures that were intricately woven into the veil.

Exodus 26:31

“And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made.”

The presence of cherubim woven into the veil that lead into the Holy of Holies was a frank confession by God that nothing unholy can enter His presence and live. In a previous study we saw how the cherubim were guardians of the holiness of God. They were symbolic of protecting the holiness of God. Their presence on the mercy seat indicates this (Exodus 25:22). In Heaven these living creatures are seen to surround the throne vindicating and protecting God’s holiness.

Psalms 80:1

“Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.”

Psalms 99:1

“The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.”

The Lord of Heaven dwells between the cherubim and this is the same arrangement God made on earth in picture form. This is why pictures of cherubim were woven into the veil that gave entrance into the Holy of Holies. These cherubim were also on the inner roof or ceiling of the Tabernacle structure so they could be seen by the priest ministering in the Holy Place (Exodus 26:1). The figures of the cherubim speak to us of one important truth. God’s mercy cannot be separated from His holiness and justice. God did not set aside His absolute holiness, justice, and righteousness in redeeming man. God gave His righteous son to take the sinner’s place and allow His holiness and righteousness to be vindicated. The confession of God by the presence of cherubim in the veil was this. “I’m holy and you can’t come into my presence.” The cherubim were God’s bodyguards. Ancient oriental iconography pictured them as human-headed winged lions guarding holy places. There were pictures of cherubim everywhere in the Tabernacle structure. They were on the curtain of the ceiling and they were on the curtain or veil that lead into the Holy of Holies declaring the message that God is holy and His holiness will

be vindicated. Nothing unholy can ever barge into His presence and live. This is the confession that God was making by the cherubim.

Genesis 3:24

“So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

Cherubim were placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden to protect man from eating from the tree of life in his sinful state and living forever in sin, misery, and his unredeemed state. God did not want man to eat of the tree and have no hope of receiving the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23). God did not want man to be immortalized in his sinful condition with no possibility of redemption and transformation. God had a different plan. It was a plan of grace and mercy. Dear friend, it was judgment as well as mercy that drove man out of the garden. The cherubim guarding the tree of life reminded Adam and Eve that God is holy and that unholy people cannot fellowship with God and possess eternal life apart from Him. Every avenue of approach to the original happy state that Adam had enjoyed before the Fall was now closed. Humanly speaking, there was no way to return to the tree of life and have paradise regained or restored. The cherubim made sure of this. Their presence sent the message that God was holy and that He demanded holiness in order to fellowship with Him. Adam and Eve were no longer welcome in God's presence, but they had the hope that one day Paradise would be regained. Of course, spiritually speaking, this would come through Christ and His sacrifice.

The cherubim guarded the way to God while the veil was not yet torn. The significant place of the cherubim on the veil suggests that man cannot enter into God's presence as a sinner. It is hopeless for man to try and enter God's presence by his own means and measurements. Unless God's flaming sword of wrath and holiness are satisfied by a perfect sacrifice, no person can ever enter His presence or become accepted by Him. There is no hope to enter paradise without God's help and this only comes through Jesus Christ. We are going to see that Jesus Christ died in our place, experienced God's vengeance and wrath our behalf, and brought us

into the presence of God by forgiving us, acquitting us, and making us righteous.

Let me ask you something. Do you actually think you can get passed the cherubim with their flaming sword. Do you think you can sneak in the back door of heaven by your own merit and human accomplishments? Do you think that the cherubim with the flaming sword will say to you, "Well, you baked pies for the church bake sale, you gave to charities, you went to Sunday School, you were a member of the church, you were baptized. You never killed anyone. I think we can let you into paradise." If you think that you can get passed the Cherubim and that they are somehow going to bypass your sins and give a free pass into Heaven, then you are fooled. No person can enter God's presence without Jesus Christ and the path that He has opened for us into God's presence when He took the wrath of God's flaming sword on our behalf.

## 2. The meaning of the veil

The key to recognizing the significance of the veil is to understand that it points to the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are very clear about this typology. One cannot miss this unless they ignore the very clear statements of the Scripture.

Hebrews 10:19-20

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."

This verse reveals that the veil was a type of the body of Jesus Christ. The "new" (fresh or recent sacrifice of Christ) and "**living way**" (resurrection and priestly ministry of Christ) has now become the way of access into God's presence. The Old Testament animal sacrifices were different than Christ's sacrifice on the cross. His priestly sacrifice was a new kind of sacrifice. It was a fresh sacrifice that could provide actual forgiveness of sins and give a person complete acceptance in God's presence forever. It was life-giving! It was a sacrifice that inaugurated (opened for the first time) a way for man to have direct access into God's presence and know that He is eternally accepted by God. What was once a closed door has now been

opened! What was once banned has now been cleared. What was something of fear and dread has now become something of beauty, wonder, and amazement. Because of Christ's death upon the cross we can have the assurance that we are eternally accepted in God's presence forever. We can enter into "the holiest" (the Old Testament expression for God's presence) and know that we are accepted by Him and that God will never ban us from His presence again. This is the wonder of the ages! Just think of it this way. A lost hell-doomed rotten sinner has been forgiven through Christ's sacrifice, acquitted of all his sins, made righteous in God's eyes, and brought into the very presence of God fully and finally accepted by Him.

"Complete in Thee! No work of mine  
May take, dear Lord, the place of Thine;  
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,  
And I am now complete in Thee."

Hebrews 9:7-8

"But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing."

You see, when the Tabernacle structure was on earth and functioning according to God's design "the way into the holiest of all" (the Old Testament expression referring to the presence of God) was not yet made. In other words, people could not be brought into the presence of God and become eternally forgiven and justified in God's sight.

The Old Testament saints had indirect access to God through a priest and animal sacrifice. *The barrier of a curtain or veil taught that access into God's presence could never be fully realized and obtained under the present sacrificial system.* Our access is different in that Christ, as our high sacrifice and priest (Heb. 7:25), is seated at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3; 8:1). His resurrected life in Glory proves that the Father has accepted His blood sacrifice on our behalf and that now we can be brought into the very presence of God, fully accepted and forever acquitted in God's sight. Hallelujah!



The Old Testament system was temporary system and provided only a legal and temporary ritual covering for sins but could not take away the sins of the people and provide them with eternal forgiveness and acceptance in God's presence. The blood of bulls and goats could never bring a person into the presence of God. This is why there was a barrier between God and man in the Old Testament economy. The blood of bulls and goats could not tear down the veil for that blood could never pay for the penalty of sin and cleanse the sinner from his actual sins and give him acceptance into God's presence. The blood of animals was only a temporary covering.

The atonement sacrifices in the Old Testament could not bring a person inside the veil. Do you know why? Animal sacrifices cannot take away sins and provide a person with a perfect standing in God's presence (Heb. 10:4). Goats cannot get us into the presence of God. Goats cannot save us and take us to Glory. It would take the shed blood of Jesus Christ to open up the pathway to God. His shed blood and sacrificial death on the cross was the only sacrifice that could pay the penalty for our sins, pardon us, and provide us with perfect righteousness in God's presence.

Romans 5:9

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

"Not all the blood of beasts  
On Jewish altars slain  
Could give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or wash away our stain.  
But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
Takes all our sins away;  
A sacrifice of nobler name,  
And richer blood, than they."

There is no way into God's presence outside of Jesus Christ and the path He has opened for us. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus did not say I am "a way." He said He was the only way. There is no other way. There can't be any other way. You won't get in

another way. You must come the way of the cross and the cross alone if you are ever going to enter the presence of God.

“I must needs go home by the way of the cross,  
There’s no other way but this.  
I shall ne’er get sight of the gates of the light,  
If the way of the cross I miss.”

Let us remember that the veil covering the entrance to the Holy of Holies was both the way and the barrier to God’s presence. It was the way for the high priest to enter but once a year, but it was a barrier to all others at all times. The veil shut out everyone from the Holy of Holies except the high priest. The veil kept everyone from the immediate presence of God. The hanging veil was a constant reminder to the people that they could not enter the presence of God. The word “veil” means “to separate” and describes its purpose.

I often wonder what the priests thought as they went into the Holy Place and looked at the veil which led into the Holy Place. What went through their mind? Perhaps some of them thought, “Would I really die if I entered? Maybe I could just take a peek into the Holy of Holies. However, the convicting answer from his conscience would come ringing across loud and clear, “No! Don’t!” He probably remembered when Nadab and Abihu were disobedient in their ministry and how God struck them down (Lev. 10:1-2). Let me tell you something. You don’t play around with God’s presence and get away with it!

The point is this. The presence of God was banned from the people. It was not something God opened and revealed to the people. Something needed to happen. Someone needed to come in order to open the pathway into God’s presence. This Someone was Jesus Christ. Christ provided a perfect sacrifice that could appease God’s wrath, vindicate His righteousness, and provide acquittal or pardon for every believer. If the pathway was to be opened and people could be finally and forever accepted in the presence of a holy and righteous God Christ had to die and pay the penalty for our sin in full.

I’ve said this before but it is worth repeating. A penalty had to be paid for us to enter God’s presence. The wages or penalty for our sin is

death (Rom. 6:23). Death is the expression of God's wrath against sin and sinners and will be finally meted out on them in hell forever. But Jesus took the wages on Himself and paid the penalty in full so that believing sinners can go free.

Galatians 3:13

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

The curse of the law was the penalty that is enforced upon us. The law said, "Guilty and away with you to hell forever." But Jesus as the pure and sinless sacrifice bore the curse or penalty of the law upon Himself saying, "I'll take their guilt and sin upon myself and set them free from the penalty. I'll pay for their penalty with my own life." And this is exactly what He did. If we would pay for the penalty for our sins we would die and go to hell forever. But since Jesus paid the penalty we can live forever in God's presence and be eternally accepted by Him. This is the never-ending story of God's grace. Jesus paid our debt so we could be forever and finally accepted in God's presence on the basis of His death and resurrection.

"Believing, we rejoice  
To feel the curse removed;  
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,  
And trust his bleeding love."

Christ's death allowed God's wrath to be satisfied with a perfect sacrifice so that this same death can be credited to us and God can now be satisfied with every believer.

1 John 2:2

"And he is the propitiation (satisfying sacrifice) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Christ's death also allowed every Gospel believer to receive a righteous position before Christ through Christ.

Romans 3:22 states:

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.”

God is satisfied with Christ’s sacrifice and for this reason every Gospel believer can be brought into the presence of God with full pardon and perfect righteousness. Oh what a wonder!

### 3. The tearing of the veil

The Bible says that when Jesus died on the cross and paid for the penalty for the sins of the world that the way of access was opened into God’s presence whereby every Gospel believer could be acquitted in His presence and also enter His presence someday. This was demonstrated by something that happened in the veil within Jerusalem.

Matthew 27:50-51

“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.”

God gave a vivid reminder to all mankind that when Jesus died on the cross the legal system and sacrifices of goats and bulls were no longer necessary. The veil in Herod’s temple was torn in two. This was a divine work and miracle. God visibly demonstrated that the way of access into His presence was now made available through the death of His Son who was the righteous servant on the cross (Isa. 53:11). Jesus cried, “It is finished” (John 19:30). It really was finished! Jesus Christ had paid the penalty of a broken law by dying as the sinner’s substitute. When Jesus said “It is finished” it means that God’s demand for justice was finally satisfied and the price or payment for man’s release from judgment was paid in full. Now the way of access into God’s presence was made available.

Matthew 27:52

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.”

The tombs of many holy or righteous people were opened, probably at a Jerusalem cemetery. The tombs were no doubt broken open at

Christ's death by the earthquake. The resurrection of some people was a historic event to indicate to others that the way into God's presence was now open and that God's people who were once in the center of the earth in sheol (Abraham's bosom – Luke 16:22) could now enter God's presence and live with Him forever. Their resurrection was living proof that the veil was torn and that the way of access into God's presence was now opened. The Bible does not say whether these risen saints died again or went to Heaven with the Lord Jesus. It would be fitting to think that they received glorified bodies and went to Heaven after showing themselves to confirm the fact that the way of access into God's presence was now open. The fact that the people who were raised "appeared unto many" in the "holy city" of Jerusalem (Matt. 27:53) implies that they had been contemporaries of the people who saw them. In other words, they had died and were now raised and reunited with people they had previously known. What a day this must have been. This miracle confirmed that God opened the way of access into His presence.

Please notice that the veil was torn "from the top to the bottom" (Matt. 27:51) which indicated that this was God's work and not man's work. The God of Heaven with His unseen hand took a hold of that veil and tore it right in half. Why? It's because Christ had completely satisfied the standards of God and in so doing God was propitiated and man could be completely reconciled to God and accepted in His presence forever. Tradition says that the veil was four inches thick, and two teams of oxen hitched to each side could not tear it apart. Tradition also says that the priests tried to patch together the veil that God had rent in two for the temple services for the next forty years. The **open** veil spelled the end of all legality and animal sacrifices under the law. The **patched** veil becomes a form of legalism and man trying to bring back something that is dead and useless.

Acts 4:12

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Dear friend, Jesus changed the veil from a barrier to the gateway into God's presence. What a day it was when God tore the veil in two. It was a day of all days. The access into God's presence The tearing of the veil was a supernatural act that symbolized the opening of access

to God and the termination of the Mosaic system of worship. This event marked the end of the old Mosaic Covenant and the beginning to the New Covenant (Matt. 26:26–29).

A. B. Simpson is reported to have said that the gospel “Tells rebellious man that he is reconciled to God, that justice is satisfied, that sin has been atoned for, that the judgment of the guilty may be revoked, the condemnation of the sinner canceled, the curse of the Law blotted out, the gates of hell closed, the portals of heaven opened wide, the power of sin subdued, the guilty conscience healed, the broken heart comforted, the sorrow and misery of the Fall undone.”

Several years ago a man and his wife were found frozen to death in their car. A blizzard had dumped tons of snow in the area, burying their vehicle. Before she died, the woman scribbled a note on a piece of paper and stuffed it in the glove compartment. The note read: “I don’t want to die this way.” Tragically, less than six feet from their icy grave was a stranded bus, whose festive passengers remained warm throughout the night. Friend, how are you going to die? Will you die and go to hell or will you die and go to Heaven? If you will just place your faith in Christ, who has opened the pathway to Heaven and God’s presence, then you can be sure that you will be with Him someday.

#### B. The Ark of the Covenant

Dr. A. C. Dixon related the following incident: "A friend of mine who was very fond of hunting lived in an area that abounded with wild deer. One morning as he was walking across the meadows, he heard the barking of hounds in the distance. As they approached, he saw the object of the chase - a young doe, very weary, its tongue hanging out, and panting with exhaustion. Hesitating for a moment and gazing about in a pathetic and frightened manner, the animal saw its pursuers closing in. Its first impulse was to run again, but instead, it fell defenseless at the feet of my friend. He said, 'I stood there for some time with a stick in my hand, fighting off the barking dogs. I was determined that none of them should capture the little deer which in its weakness had appealed to my mercy and strength!'"

Dear friend, as we come inside the Holy of Holies we come face to face with the ark of the covenant and its mercy seat. When studying this section of Scripture we are reminded that the only thing a tired worn-out sinner can do is to fall before the mercy of God and say, as the prodigal said, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13) There is mercy with the Lord!

David Levy said:

“In a spirit of reverence, we loose the shoes from our feet, part the veil, and enter the sacred ground of the holy of holies to gaze upon the small golden ark of the covenant.”

Louis Talbot said something similar:

“And as we enter there, we recall God’s words to Moses at the burning bush, ‘Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Ex. 3:5).

The ark of the covenant was the only piece of furniture in the holy of holies which was in the second room of the Tabernacle structure. It was a rectangular box with a lid. The word “ark” suggests that it was a chest, box, or coffin. The lid on this ark was called the mercy seat. This item of furniture was the most important piece of furniture found in the Tabernacle. In our last study we discovered how God manifested His divine presence above the ark in the glory cloud (Lev. 16:2; Numb 7:89). The ark with its mercy seat was actually a **symbol** of God’s throne on earth. It’s the place where God would manifest His presence and dwell with His people (Ex. 25:22). The foursquare little room called the Holy of Holies with its throne was actually a picture of God’s throne in Heaven. This is because in Heaven God also dwells between the cherubim (Ps. 80:1; 99:1) just like He arranged in the Holy of Holies on earth (Ex. 25:18). The Bible teaches that Heaven itself is foursquare (Rev. 21:16).

We often sing:

“There they need no sunshine bright,  
In that city foursquare;  
For the Lamb is all the light,  
And there is no night there.”

The foursquare land of Heaven with God's throne was put in picture form when God designed the Holy of Holies with the ark of the covenant and mercy seat. Today Christ as our high priest is ministering for us before the throne as our intercessor (Heb. 7:25). The earthly high priest ministering in the Holy of Holies becomes a prophetic picture of Christ, our great High Priest, who intercedes for us before the throne of Heaven.

Hebrews 9:24

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

So the Holy of Holies with the ark pictures the throne room of God that is displayed in Heaven. *It was a miniature display of Heaven on earth.* God made sure that everything was after “the patterns of things in the heavens” (Heb. 9:23).

The ark is given many names in the Bible such as “the ark of the testimony” (Ex. 25:22) for the commandments of God on the two tablets were kept inside the box. It was also called “the ark of the covenant” (Numb. 10:33) since it was a reminder of God's covenant relationship with His people. It was called “the ark of God” (1 Sam. 3:3), “the ark of the Lord God” (1 Kings. 2:26), “the holy ark” (2 Chron. 35:3), and “the ark of they strength” (Ps. 132:8). The ark is mentioned in Exodus 25:10-22.

#### 1. The command for the ark

Exodus 25:10

“And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.”

Please note that God commanded the ark to be made (“make and ark”) so He could reveal Himself to mankind. The way to approach God and the way to meet Him comes from a *revelation* of God and not the reasoning of man. Man in his own wisdom could never know God. God must take the initiative to reveal Himself to man. This has always been true.



Romans 3:11

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”

God had to seek man or man would never seek God. Man’s part in salvation is running from God. God’s part in salvation is running after man. Man left to his own wisdom would not seek God and want to know God. In fact, he would seek false gods and change “the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” (Rom. 1:23). God had to reveal Himself to man. In revelation, God begins with Himself and works outward to man. I am so glad that God sought me and revealed Himself to me.

“Though I knew Him not,  
Still He loved me!  
Though I sought Him not,  
Still He sought me.  
He was seeking for me.”

This is the wonder of grace! God came seeking after man to reveal His presence and the way of salvation to a lost human race. The command to build the ark reminds us of this. God had to break into human history and reveal Himself and His plan of salvation or else all mankind would die in their sins and go to hell. So God commands that man build an ark to He could reveal His presence and mercy to the people.

## 2. The construction of the ark

Exodus 25:10-16

“And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the

ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.”

The size of the ark was about the size of a small cedar chest. The dimensions were three feet nine inches long and two feet three inches wide and high (vs. 10). These dimensions are figured from a cubit measuring eighteen inches. The ark or box was made out of wood and once again overlaid with gold (vv. 10-11). The same was true concerning the “staves” or poles that were used to carry the ark (vs. 13). The rings that were fastened to the ark were made out of pure gold (vs. 12). The poles would be placed through the rings of gold and the ark could be carried without being directly touched (vv. 14-16). By now we know that the combination of wood and gold speaks of the two-fold nature of Jesus Christ. The wood represents His humanity whereas the gold represents His deity. The wooden ark overlaid with gold reminds us of who Christ was and is today. He is the God-man who has come to rescue us from judgment. Do you know that the Jesus of the cults is not the Jesus of Christianity! The Jesus of the cults is “another Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:4).

The Bahai religion says that Jesus is only one of nine great world manifestations. He is not a unique path to salvation and all religions are basically the same. The Unitarians believe that Jesus was a good man who was mistakenly deified by His followers. Freemasonry teaches that Jesus was only a moral teacher. He was no better than Buddha, Confucius, Moses or Mohammed. Freemasons deny that Jesus was the Light of the World and that Freemasonry is the true light of the humanity. Scientology claims that Jesus is a false dream. Spiritists say that Jesus is an advanced medium in the other sphere of the astrological projection (whatever that is). The School of Unity Christianity teaches that Jesus is a man who perfected a divined idea. Rosicrucians claim that Jesus is a manifestation of cosmic consciousness. Maharashi and Transcendental Meditation followers say that Jesus was an enlightened guru who never suffered or died for anyone. My friend, the cults do not know the Jesus of the Bible for the Jesus of the Bible is God incarnate in the flesh.

John 1:18 says:

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

This means that Jesus exegetes God to mankind. In other words, Jesus Christ fully expounds, explains, and brings God out into the open. Jesus Christ is the incarnate exegesis of God's existence and being (1 Tim. 3:16). He brings God's existence and nature out into the light. When men saw Jesus they saw God's very own existence, being, nature, and character. My friend, you don't have a Savior if you don't have the right Jesus! The only Jesus that can save you from hell is the Jesus who is God of very God. Oh friend, do you know Him? Do you know who the true Jesus was and is today and have you embraced His claims?

### 3. The career of the ark

Now let's give a little history on the ark. The ark has a long and illustrious history. It was carried by the Kohathites (Numb. 3:30-31) before the children of Israel and often led the way during the nation's journeys through the wilderness (Numb. 10:33-36). This reminds us how God wants to lead us throughout our pilgrimage on earth.

John 10:4

“And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.”

Because of Israel's apostasy the ark was captured by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:1-11). Eli's daughter-in-law gave birth to a son and named him Ichabod, meaning “the glory is departed” (1 Samuel 4:19-22). The lesson is this. When God's presence is no longer respected, revered, and truly appreciated, then the glory of His presence is no longer witnessed. We need to remember this in our churches and personal lives today. We don't want God to write “Ichabod” over our churches and personal lives when we fail to properly represent God's presence in our midst. We must remember that God is holy and when His presence is no longer revered and respected in some sense His glory departs and we lose sight of who God is and what He truly represents. We should be able to say, “In my life Lord be glorified today!”

Later we find that the ark was sent back to Israel since God severely plagued the Philistines with boils or tumors (1 Samuel 5:6-9) presumably caused by the land being overrun by rats (1 Sam. 6:5). The Philistines finally sent the ark back to the people after seven months of torture so that their plague would stop (1 Sam. 6:1-18). However, even God's people suffered when they desecrated the ark (1 Sam. 6:19-20). The ark finally ended up in the home of Abinadab in Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam. 7:1-2). Many years later the ark was transported to Jerusalem under David's rule after a time of resting in the home of Obed-edom (2 Samuel 6:12-14). The final whereabouts of the ark are shrouded in speculation since the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 586 B.C. The ark may have been destroyed by the Babylonians and the gold confiscated. It may have been taken back to Babylon as a trophy of war. Others suggest that the ark was buried by priests under the Temple Mount before the Babylonians captured the city and has never been unearthed to this day. Some tradition states that Jeremiah removed the ark from Jerusalem and hid it in some cave to be discovered at a later time and once again used by Israel. But this contradicts the millennial passage of Jeremiah 3:16-17 which says Israel will no longer have a use for the ark. The description of the millennial temple in Ezekiel 40-44 does not mention the ark. Others believe the ark was transported to Heaven based upon Revelation 11:19. This too is highly unlikely. We simply don't know what happened to the ark. However, we do know this. Today Jesus Christ is our ark of safety and provider and is all we need in this life and the life to come.

#### 4. The carrying of the ark

Exodus 25:14

"And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them."

The poles were to be used to carry the ark. The veil was lowered and the ark was then covered by the veil so that the holy ark could not be seen by the gaze of human eyes (Numb. 4:5). God gave clear instructions concerning the carrying of the ark. The ark was to be carried by Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness. The fact that they could carry the ark with them assured them of God's presence. Today we too can be assured of God's presence as we

journey as pilgrims through the wilderness of this world. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you alway" (Matt. 28:20).

Many years later, when David had established his throne in Jerusalem, he placed the ark on an ox-drawn cart, contrary to the instructions given in Exodus 25, which demanded the sacred ark be carried by poles. As the ark was being transported to Jerusalem it began to wobble and was steadied by one of David's men causing his instant death (2 Samuel 6:6-7). God wanted the sacred ark to never be touched by human hands. This is why He designed poles to carry the ark. The ark was the symbol of God's throne and presence and man was to respect and reverence God's presence and never touch the ark. This was God's design and unchanging word. *The lesson is this. We should not try to improve on God's plan and method.* Today there are many people trying to put the ark on the cart instead of carrying the ark, following God's design and plan, and respecting God's holy presence. Today they want to change the way of worship and evangelism. They want to market the church and cater to the ungodly and make deals with sinners. But the Bible teaches that God wants His work done in His way and not man's way. *He wants the ark to be carried. He wants His presence revered and respected.* The scriptures make it very clear that it is not enough simply to do the right thing (evangelism or worship); we must also do it in the right way (2 Tim. 2:5 – "lawfully" – play by the rules). God's rules are that we honor His Word and holiness in all that we do and say. God has one way to do something – the right way and holy way. We must follow divine directives and not deviate from the pattern that the Lord in His wisdom has given.

A. W. Tozer once said:

"Heresy of method is just as evil as heresy of message."

The question is not: "Does it work?" but "Is it holy?" (1 Pet. 1:15-16) and "Is God pleased with it?" (Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:4; 1 John 3:22). David thought that carrying the ark on the cart would be an easier and better way to do God's work. However, he found out that it was not of God and that God was not pleased with it. So David, fearing God's wrath, put the ark in the house of Obed-edom (2 Sam. 6:10-12). It remained here three months and Obed-edom and his house was greatly blessed by God. How wonderful when our homes

are blessed by God's presence. Reassured, David then carried the ark to Jerusalem as God had instructed. He had learned the lesson that God's ways are best and when they are not followed there are consequences that that must be reaped (Gal. 6:7-8).

## 5. The contents of the ark

The Bible tells us that there were three objects placed inside the ark. In fact, the epistle of Hebrews makes it very clear what the original contents of the ark were.

Hebrews 9:3-4

“And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.”

This Bible verse gives us a complete summary of the objects that were placed inside the ark. Some have suggested there is a discrepancy and contradiction about the contents of the ark since in 1 Kings 8:9 it says that only the tablets of the law were inside the ark. However, this is no discrepancy. It is simply stating that when the temple was erected later there was nothing in the ark but the tablets of the law. They may have been removed by the Philistines or some other enemy.

### a. The golden pot of manna

Exodus 16:33-34

“And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.”

Manna was the food miraculously provided by God for the children of Israel during their 40 years of wondering in the wilderness. The manna inside the ark reminded the people of God's provision for them in the wilderness. The manna was known by several names such as the “bread from heaven” (Ex. 16:4), “angel's food” (Ps. 78:25), and “light bread” (Numb. 21:5). The manna appeared every

morning around the camp when the dew fell on the ground (Ex. 16:14). The manna tasted like wafers made with honey (Ex. 16:31) or oil (Numb. 11:7-8). The manna spoiled when the children of Israel tried to keep it a day longer. Therefore, God had to supernaturally preserve a sample of manna inside the ark since manna normally decayed in one day (Ex. 16:20). One again, the manna was a reminder of God's provision for the people. In giving the manna God revealed that He was able to meet and sustain the physical needs of His people. Sadly, Israel did not appreciate the manna that God had given them (Numb. 11:5-6). They remembered the leeks, onions, and garlic they had while living in Egypt. But they forgot that when they were living in Egypt they were under Egyptian bondage. The practical point is this. When we begin to complain about God's provisions we normally do so because we want to satisfy our own fleshly appetites. It is a dangerous thing to look at the past old life and set our affections on temporal things. Never forget this. We begin to complain when we lose our taste for the things of God! When we are not appreciative of God's provision for our lives (the manna of His Word and promises) we will find ourselves complaining and seeking out the old ways of life and living. When we get our eyes off the manna it's because we start looking at the mammon and meaningless things of this world system. God provided the needs for the people and the manna represented God's provision for the people.

It's interesting that in the New Testament Jesus likens Himself to the bread of life as He speaks about the miracle of manna that was given to the children of Israel in the wilderness. As the Bread of Life Jesus promises to give the greatest miracle of all to a lost human race – the miracle of the new birth and eternal life.

John 6:32

“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.”

John was referring to Christ. The manna given in the wilderness to the children of Israel was not the true manna. The manna was a type or picture of Christ and the provision that He would provide for lost sinners through His death and resurrection. Jesus was the true

manna that came from Heaven to provide for the spiritual need of lost human race.

John 6:58

“This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”

Jesus is saying that He is the true bread from Heaven (Ex. 16:4) which provides spiritual life and everlasting life to everyone who embraces His claims. Those who ate the earthly manna eventually died. It was only a temporary provision much like the atonement covering. However, Jesus Christ is saying that He is an improvement on the earthly manna. Jesus Christ is the heavenly manna that can give people eternal life! What a promise! The manna that came from Heaven was then a picture of Christ who came down from Heaven in order to meet the greatest need of the human race which is salvation from hell.

What is so important about bread? The primary answer is that bread is *necessary for life*. In Christ's day bread was even more essential than in our own time, for it was a staple in most people's diets. Without bread, men died. If you see that, then you also see that Jesus was claiming to be the One whom men and women could not do without. Let me ask you a question today. Are you trying to do without him? You may say, "I'll take care of myself. I can get by." But the fact of the matter is this, you need bread! You need spiritual bread. You need the provision of eternal life through the Bread of Life who is Jesus Christ. Jesus satisfies the hungry soul!

The resurrected Christ also gave the promise that He would reveal Himself as "hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17) to those who overcome in this life. The "hidden manna" seems to be a reference to the manna that sustained the lives of the Israelites in the wilderness and this same manna lay "hidden" in the holy of holies. Since manna has consistently been a type of Christ and His provision for the believer this expression may refer to some sweet and secret communion that the child of God will experience with Jesus Christ in Heaven. In Heaven Christ will in a special way become spiritual manna to our lives as we fellowship with Him and experience the wonder of His



presence and person. One day we will feast upon the manna or hidden glories of the resurrected Lord in a greater way. He will be our complete satisfaction, delight, and glory. Jesus, what a wonder You are!

b. Aaron's rod that budded

The second item inside the ark was Aaron's rod that has undergone a rather miraculous change. The story of the budding rod is given in Numbers 16 and 17. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had gathered 250 leaders from the 12 tribes to challenge Moses and Aaron's right to lead the people and impose upon the God-given right of the priests. Moses accepted the challenge and God vindicated the leadership of Moses by opening up the ground and swallowing up Korah and a those who stood with him (Numb. 16:32-34).

The next day the people accused Moses of killing God's people (Numb. 16:41) and were still unbelieving and came against Moses and Aaron. So to provide further proof of Aarons' right to be high priest, God instructed a representative from each tribe to bring an almond shaped rod with name of the tribe engraved on it (Numb. 17:1-2). The rod of the man that God chose to be high priest would blossom. All twelve rods were put in the Tabernacle before the testimony of tablets of commandments. The next morning, Aaron's rod had budded, blossomed, and even yielded almonds (Numb. 17:8). This indeed was a miracle of God. The liberal says, "This is not possible. No rod can bring forth blossoms and almonds." I wish the liberal crowd of Jesus Seminar people today would stop taking potshots at God and His miracles. The problem with the liberals is that they are liberal. When will we realize that God can do anything! Now Aaron's rod was placed inside the ark for a sign against the rebels ("a token against the rebels" - Numb. 17:10), proving that he alone has the right to be high priest.

Since everything in the Tabernacle is pointing to Christ we cannot help but see that the budding and blossoming rod points to the resurrection of Jesus Christ who today is God's ordained High Priest ministering on our behalf in Glory (Heb. 9:24). Aaron's rod was a dead rod but miraculously life came into it. The same was true of Christ. Jesus died on the cross and miraculously He rose from the

dead three days later (1 Cor. 15:3). The blossoming rod points to Christ who rose again as God's ordained man who has become the mediator and intercessor on our behalf (1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus broke the bars of death and was mightily raised from the dead (Matt. 28:1-9). He validated His resurrection by appearing ten times over a 40-day period (Acts 1:3). Jesus has blossomed forth. He has bloomed! He is the "firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:20) meaning that He was the first to rise from the dead. He is the first to rise from the dead but there is another harvest that is coming! There are more almonds to be seen!

I read somewhere that it's healthy for you to eat 20 almonds a day. I'm not sure what would happen if I only ate 19 almonds a day but twenty seems like a good number. Well, this rod brought forth almonds (Numb. 17:18) and someday there will be a great harvest of almonds that will follow Christ's own resurrection.

#### c. The tables of the covenant

Hebrews 9:4 calls the Ten Commandments by the name "tables of covenant" for these commands were a reminder of the Mosaic Covenant which He made with Israel (Ex. 19:5).

Exodus 34:28

"And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."

The commandments of God were also called the testimony which God had given to the people. They were the clear spoken revelation of God's holy will for His people.

Exodus 25:16 says:

"And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee."

The ten commandments which were written by God's finger (Ex. 31:18) and were placed inside the ark. They were also called "the testimony" reminding the people that these commands were God's spoken testimony concerning holy and righteous living. What we need today is for the moral testimony of God to sweep across the hearts of this sin-laden nation once again. God's moral testimony

never changes from one generation to another. These standards cannot be lowered by philosophy and humanism. God's commandments still condemn adultery, covetousness, stealing or cheating, and such things as murder and disobedience of children. No wonder this nation wants to get rid of the commandments of God! Our leaders do not want God's moral authority over them and the young generation certainly does not want any authority over them. This nation wants to get rid of God and kick Him out of the public domain but when a tragedy happens they want to cry to God. This is the height of insanity. It's like the child who talks back to his dad and then later comes to dad for money.

You will remember that the first set of commandments were broken by Moses (Ex. 32:19) when He came down off of the mount and found the people dancing naked around a golden calf. A second set was made and put into the ark according to the record of Scripture (Deuteronomy 10:1-5). So the law of commandments written on stone within the ark was a continual reminder of God's covenant with them and also a reminder of God's moral law which He expected His people to follow.

As the law relates to Christ we must remember that when Jesus came into the world He fulfilled the law perfectly by keeping every aspect of it (Matt. 5:7). He was flawless in his following of the law. No man today can follow the law without violating it (James 2:10; Gal. 2:16). In fact, man is under the curse of the law which condemns him to an everlasting hell (Gal. 3:10). Man has violated God's law and is under its curse. This is why Jesus died on the cross. There on the cross he bore the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13) which was a sentence of condemnation and judgment for sin. On the cross Jesus bore your condemnation and the very wrath of God as He suffered, bled, and died in your place and as your substitute. In Christ the demands of the law were satisfied and now the believing sinner who places faith in Christ can have the curse and demands of the law lifted from his life (John 3:16-18, 36; 5:24).

The law was hidden within the ark under God's mercy seat. This reminds us that no person must live under the curse and condemnation of the law. He can find mercy with the Lord and have God's judgment withheld from him. What a joy this is to realize today.

Romans 10:4

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

The purpose of the law is to reveal sin and to convict and condemn transgressors (Rom. 3:20). It can never impart righteousness simply because man cannot meet its standards. Dear friend, you cannot get to God by the standards of the law. You have no hope if you are trying to live by the dictates of the law and gain a righteous standing before God’s presence. What is so wonderful is that your long and impossible journey of attaining righteousness before God can end! It can end today if you will only trust in Christ.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

How can this be? How can I stop striving and know that I’m saved and accepted by God. How can I know that I am righteous in God’s sight without trying to meet some kind of righteous standard? You can know that you have a righteous standing before God if you understand what Christ actually did for you. When Christ died on the cross He bore the penalty of the broken law (Gal. 3:13) and as a result you can be freed from that penalty forever, forgiven of all your sins, and declared righteous in God’s presence on the basis of Christ’s work (2 Cor. 5:21). Today when a sinner receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior (John 1:12), believing only in Christ’s work to grant his pardon and righteousness in God’s presence (Acts 16:31), it’s then that the law has nothing more to say to him. There is no more condemnation (Rom. 8:1). We are free from the law! Oh happy condition! It’s hidden in the ark under the mercy seat! Christ has paid for the penalty and granted us righteousness. Glory hallelujah, Christ has set me free! I’m free!

Did you catch what God is really saying? If you will just trust in Christ you no longer must strive for God’s acceptance. Instead of trying you can trust! Instead of running you can rest. Instead of hoping you can know that God accepts you forever. The penalty has been paid and the Father is satisfied! Christ has given you a righteous standing in the presence of God. How wonderful it is to be free! Are you free

today? Free from the fear of dying and going to hell? Free from the fear of not being sure that you are good enough, holy enough, and working hard enough so that God will accept you?

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

How many tracts must you hand out before God will accept you? How much service and work must you do before God accepts you? How many good deeds must you do? Where is the line that you must cross that will give you the assurance that you are good enough and that you have arrived? There is no line and there is no hope and assurance of salvation unless you look to Jesus Christ as providing for you that perfect righteous standing before God through His death. The law condemns you but Christ saves you! The law judges you but Christ frees you! If you will see the law hidden underneath the mercy seat within the ark you will remember that there is mercy with the Lord. There is mercy! Will you just cast yourself upon Christ’s mercy and grace today? Dear friend, you cannot try and trust at the same time!

“Only trust Him,  
Only trust Him,  
Only trust Him now.  
He will save you,  
He will save you  
He will save you now.”

Right now He will deliver you from the law and save you. Hallelujah!

#### 6. The cover on the ark (mercy seat)

Edward Sill shows us the importance of mercy in his poem entitled, "A Fool's Prayer." He writes:

"The royal feast was done; the king  
sought some new sport to banish care,  
and to his jester cried,  
'Sir Fool, kneel now and make for us a prayer.'

The jester doffed his cap and kneeled  
upon the monarch's silken stool;  
his pleading voice arose:  
'O Lord, Be merciful to me, a fool!

No pity, Lord, could change the heart  
from red with wrong to white as wool.  
Thy grace must heal the sin;  
So, Lord, be merciful to me, a fool!

Our faults no tenderness should ask;  
But for our blunders, O, in shame  
before the eyes of Heaven we fall.  
Thou, O Lord, be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose the king,  
and sought his gardens cool,  
and walked apart and murmured low,  
'Be merciful to Me, a fool!"

My friend, we should be thankful today for God's mercy. It's mercy that was extended to fools like you and me who were running away from God and doing our own thing in life. We were all fools but God had mercy and pity on us! The wonder of the ages is that God has shown mercy toward foolish people. The ark in the Holy of Holies, which was a smaller box overlaid with gold, contained a top or lid of pure gold which was called the mercy seat. There were two figures of cherubim placed on this lid and they were facing each other looking down at the mercy seat.

Exodus 25:17-22

"And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou

shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

#### a. The purpose of the mercy seat

The purpose of the mercy seat was to hide the ten commandments that God had given to Israel (Exodus 25:21; Heb. 9:4). These are the commandments that they had repeatedly broken. Even before Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the commandments the people were found dancing naked around a golden calf (Ex. 32:15-19). Moses broke the law (Ex. 32:19) indicating that the people had broken the law and were under its curse or sentence of death. Moses was then given a second table of unbroken stones (Ex. 34:1) that God commanded to be placed inside the ark. The hiding of the ten commandments in the ark was actually a display of God’s mercy directed toward the people. This is because the law was the expression of God’s absolute holy and righteous character and it demanded judgment for sin and sinners so that His holy character could be maintained. Hiding the unbroken law under the mercy seat reminded the people that God could view the law unbroken and perfectly kept when approaching them through mercy instead of law.

The thing to remember is that the mercy seat rested on top of a set of unbroken laws. Here is the wonder of God’s love. God could keep an unbroken table of His laws under the mercy seat and see the righteousness and holiness of the law unbroken. How can this be? It’s because in the mercy seat His holiness and justice were satisfied and His anger for sin appeased. Think of it this way. The law required death for breaking it but God would allow a substitute animal to die in the sinners place. As we will see, the blood would be sprinkled on the mercy seat so that the holy, righteous, and just demands of the law, which cried out for the sinner’s judgment, could be satisfied and appeased, without the person dying.

God would meet the law’s requirement for death in the death of the animal allowing Him to vindicate (maintain, defend) His own holiness

and righteousness by judging sin in a perfect animal sacrifice instead of a sinner and his sins.

This is the wonder of God's mercy! The mercy seat allowed God's holy character to not accept sin. It allowed God to punish sin through a perfect sacrifice causing Him to protect and honor His own holiness and perfections without judging sinners.

Let us remember one thing. When those who seek to live under the law break God's perfect standard they come under the sentence of the law which is one of death, doom, and damnation. In the court of the law we are all found guilty.

Galatians 3:10 says:

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

The law that is broken places a curse upon our lives as it did to every Israelite who broke it. It's a curse of judgment that demands our doom in hell. It demands that God brings righteous judgment against unrighteous sinners who break His law. When witnessing today we must remember why the law was given. The law was given to reveal the sin in people's lives.

Romans 3:20

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

The purpose of the law is to condemn sinners in their sins, stop them in their tracks, shut them up (Rom. 3:19), and help them to see their need for God's mercy. The law only has one standard – perfection. This is why no person can be made right before God on the basis of law. The law reveals our sin; it does not redeem us from sin. There is no mercy with the law. There is only a strict demanding code that enforces its penalty upon the lives of every lawbreaker and this penalty is death in hell forever ("The wages of sin is death" - Rom. 6:23). This is the penalty of the law that we must face. The law says, "You must die the sinner's death and go to hell and this is exactly what is going to happen." The law reveals to us that we are



sinner and in need of God's mercy. It curses and condemns us to hell for violating the righteous standard of God. This curse and our hopeless state of condemnation (John 3:18) should drive us to the mercy seat. We don't need laws for salvation and the legalistic pursuits of man. We need mercy today! God be merciful to me a sinner! The word "mercy" speaks of God's pity and compassion that he bestows upon hell-bound lost sinners. This is illustrated in a parable that Jesus gave.

Luke 18:9-14

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

This parable is addressed to people who pride themselves on being righteous and acceptable before God on the basis of their own lifestyle or living. Although the self-righteous Pharisee went through the motions of prayer ("God, I thank thee"), he was really not speaking to God. He was rather boasting of his own moral and religious attainments. Instead of comparing himself with God's perfect standard of holiness and righteousness and seeing how sinful he really was, he compared himself with others in the community and prided himself on being better. His frequent repetition of the personal pronoun "I" reveals the true state of his heart as conceited, self-sufficient, and self-righteous. Let me say one thing. If you are ever going to be saved from hell you must get the word "I" off of your lips. Your salvation has nothing to do with how you live and what you do. Do you know why? It's because of all the seemingly good things you do are only a mask or costume trying to hide your sins! What are you going to do with your terrible and wicked sins that have offended God? You can try to cover them up but God will never cover them

and forget about them. What are you going to do when you sit in God's courtroom and the law calls out "Guilty." My friend, you need mercy. The publican repeatedly smote his breast for he knew where his greatest problem was. It was with himself. He was a sinner. This sinful tax collector who cheated people was willing to cry out to God for mercy and receive a justified standing before God. "God be merciful to me a sinner." When you face your sin and sense the weight or burden that sin gives, and when you sense the condemnation that your sin brings upon your life, then you will be ready to call out to God for mercy.

1 Timothy 1:13

"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

If God was not merciful we would all end up in hell. A clerk was caught embezzling and was summoned to the office of his employer, who was a Christian. The least the man could expect was a blistering dismissal; he might even be turned over to the police. When the clerk entered the office, the older man spoke his name and asked him if he was guilty. Shamefully, the employee stammered out, "Y-y-yes." The employer told him he was not going to press charges, but then asked, "If I take you back, can I trust you?" When the surprised but still remorseful clerk assured him that he could be trusted, the employer continued. "You are the second man who has fallen and has been pardoned in this company," he said. "I was the first! I'm showing you mercy because I received mercy." The same is true for each one of us. We have been shown mercy when Christ died in our place and took the penalty of judgment for our own sin. Christ took our judgment upon Himself so that God could withhold His judgment from us. That is mercy! God has freed us from the curse of the law (a curse of judgment I hell) by allowing His only Son to be cursed in our place. He bore the penalty and curse that we deserved so that we could be freed from this dreadful curse.

Galatians 3:13

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

“Free from the law – Oh, happy condition!  
Jesus hath died, and there is remission:  
Cursed by the law, and bruised by the fall,  
Christ hath redeemed us once for all!”

Through faith in Christ’s death on our behalf we can be cleared of all our guilty sin, acquitted before God, and accepted in His presence. This is mercy.

Here is the simple story. God’s holiness and righteousness would not allow Him to fellowship with a sinful people who had broken His divine standards. The people wanted God to deal with them on the basis of His perfect law. But this meant their own doom and judgment.

Exodus 19:8 records what the people said:

“And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.”

In ignorance of their own spiritual condition and spiritual pride they presumptuously agreed to keep the law. They made a resolution to follow the law not knowing their own guilt, weakness, and depravity. The same is true today with mankind. Man thinks God can somehow accept him on the basis of law and righteous acts. He somehow thinks that he is good enough, righteous enough, and holy enough for God to accept him. He is deceived. The law is a rigid code that condemns the sinner over and over again to an eternal hell for offending God’s holy standard. Now think of this. When Israel placed themselves under God’s law it would mean that they would be bound to perfect obedience and God would be obligated to punish disobedience (James 2:10). In other words, the people would be condemned by the same law which they chose to live under by making their relationship with God depend upon their own human efforts. When the law was given and placed beside the people it revealed to them that they were poor, lost, dirty, rotten sinners. Their resolution to keep the law perfectly came back to haunt them for it placed them under the sentenced of death and in a hopeless condition whereby God had to judge them for their sin. This is why the law is called “the ministration of death” (2 Cor. 3:7). It condemned

every person who broke the law to die the sinner's death and go to hell. There was no provision of mercy in the law. It cried for the death and doom.

The lesson is this. Sinful people cannot be accepted in God's holy presence. Sinful people must be judged by God's law in order to vindicate His holiness and satisfy His justice and judgment for sin. God knew that His justice upon sin and sinners needed to be carried out in the form of judgment. Sin cannot be accepted or condoned in the presence and sight of perfectly holy and righteous God.

Habakkuk 1:13

"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity."

Sin cannot go unnoticed and unchecked in the sight of God. This is why God cannot accept sinners in His presence. You may ask, "Why must God judge sinners?" The answer is simple. It's because God is holy.

Leviticus 11:44

"For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

If God would not judge sinners, who broke His law and righteous standards, then He would no longer maintain His own holy character and He would cease from being God. People say, "God is not a very good judge." Really! Would you think of a secular judge who lets people go that violate the laws of the land a very good judge? The very nature of a righteous judge is that he judges those who break the law. God is no different. Think of it this way. If God would overlook sin this action would be a breach, infraction, or violation of His own character and purity. God must judge sinners. His holy and righteous character demands that sin be judged. God cannot be God without judging sin. He can't be holy and righteous and just without judging sin. Some people are trying to recreate God today. They are trying to make God into a God who is merciful but not just and righteous.

Let's state it very clear. You can't have mercy without justice. If there were no just and righteous standards to condemn a person then there would be no need for mercy. But God is just, righteous, and holy and because of this justice must be served upon those who break His holy standards and laws. Therefore the message of God's righteous law is clear. You are guilty and you must die the sinner's death in hell forever. You have broken God's law and God's holiness and righteousness cannot overlook your sin without His own character and reputation becoming corrupted.

One thing is certain. God must judge sin. But wait! There is another side to the story. God is also a merciful God. He gave His people a mercy seat whereby He could withhold the judgment that sinners deserved for their sins. To demonstrate His pity or mercy He hid the commandments, which the people had repeatedly broken, underneath the mercy seat. This action reminded the people that the God who was infinitely holy and righteous, the God who could not overlook sin, was also a merciful God. As we will see, God demonstrated His mercy by allowing blood to be applied to the mercy seat, which rested above the law in the ark. God hid the law under the mercy to remind the people that He was willing to demonstrate His abundant mercy to them in spite of the great sinners that they were. God would express compassion to them instead of His righteous judgment and justice. He would shower His mercy upon them instead of His holy vengeance and judgment against sin. There was a mercy seat that covered the law! What a merciful God we have!

God looked down at Israel and said, "I pity you. I want to express mercy to you. I want to shower loving compassion upon you. I don't want to see you damned to hell forever. I want to express mercy to you by offering pardon and the forgiveness of sins." And this is exactly what God did. By allowing the sacrificial blood to be applied to the mercy seat God would provide an atoning sacrifice that could take the sinner's judgment and satisfy God's justice and wrath against sin. This same blood would also vindicate (maintain, defend) His holiness and righteousness by viewing a righteous victim taking the sinners place.

God did the same thing for us when He left Jesus die on the cross in our place. The mercy seat is a foreshadowing or type of God's mercy (pity or compassion) expressed to us through Jesus Christ, who died in our place, in order to satisfy God's justice, wrath, and holiness. God looked down at us and saw our hell-bound future in the Lake of Fire. He saw us headed toward hell and having no hope. He saw us as sinners, separated from him, serving our own lusts, and sinking close to the brink of damnation and destruction. And God said, "I pity you. I want to show my compassion on you. I want to save you from hell and give you new life."

Joseph Addison wrote:

"When all thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I'm lost  
In wonder, love, and praise."

#### b. The provision of the mercy seat

To fulfill His purpose of expressing mercy to His people God had to allow His people to offer something on the mercy seat to provide forgiveness and pardon for them. The offering that God received so that He could demonstrate mercy to His people was a blood offering. The provision of the mercy was atonement by a blood sacrifice.

Leviticus 16:14-15

"And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat."

We will have more to say about this practice or procedure of sprinkling blood on the day of atonement when we study about the priests work in the tabernacle in our next lesson. For now we must understand that the blood was applied to the mercy seat. God

required that blood must be shed in order for Him to express His mercy. God had to remain just and righteous without lowering His standards while at the same time showing mercy. Therefore, there was only one way God could cover or make atonement for man's great sin of breaking His law. A substitutionary animal had to die. God could extend mercy through the sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat which provided pardon and forgiveness for the sinner every year. The blood of innocent animals had to be shed and sprinkled on the mercy seat for God to extend His merciful pardon and forgiveness to the people for another year.

Long ago, a poor woman from the slums of London was invited to go with a group of people for a holiday at the ocean. She had never seen the ocean before, and when she saw it, she burst into tears. Those around her thought it was strange that she should cry when such a lovely holiday had been given her. "Why in the world are you crying?" they asked. Pointing to the ocean she answered, "This is the only thing I have ever seen that there was enough of." Well, God has oceans of mercy. He has enough mercy to go around and God delights to show his mercy and compassion in relationship to the salvation of souls.

Let us review the picture once again. The demands of God's law (death) could be met in the substitute animal that died in the place of the sinner. At the same time God's holiness and righteousness could be vindicated or protected by judging sin and allowing Him to look upon a perfect animal sacrifice instead of the sinner. God cannot look upon sin with favor and still be God. Therefore, a God-ordained and blood-sprinkled sacrifice had to be made on the mercy seat to satisfy God's requirements for justice, appease His anger, and maintain His perfection, righteousness, and holy character as a God who cannot overlook sin. This blood sacrifice was placed on the mercy seat. As a result, God could look upon the perfect sacrifice of the animal as paying the law's death penalty for the sinner while at the same time vindicating or protecting His holiness and righteousness as the eternal God.

The Psalmist declared in Psalm 85:10:  
"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

This will be especially true during the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus Christ reigns on the earth. Both His truth and mercy will be seen. Both His righteousness and peace will be experienced. However, the enduring principle we learn from this text cannot be missed. When God works both mercy and truth work together, both righteousness and peace work together. In other words, God's shows justice while at the same time showing mercy. This is what He did when He left Jesus die on the cross. He showed justice by allowing His only Son to be judged as a sinner in our place. Therefore, He judged sin in the perfect sacrifice of His Son and upheld His righteous and holy character as God. But He also showed mercy in that through Christ's death believing sinners could be set free from their condemned state and escape the penalty for their sin which was hell. On the cross God's justice and mercy kissed each other.

Albert Midlane

Our sins were placed on Jesus' head.  
'Twas in His blood our debt was paid.  
Stern justice can demand no more,  
And mercy can dispense her store.

Romans 3:26

"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

When Jesus died on the cross God's perfect justice ("that he might be just") was maintained while at the same His saving work accomplished ("the justifier"). When Jesus died on the cross God's justice in judging sin and His mercy in saving man could all come together. How wonderful this is! When Jesus died on the cross both justice and mercy were being carried out. Through Christ's death I can now receive something I don't deserve – mercy! I can believe on Christ and know that God now sees Christ as paying for my own judgment, granting me His own righteousness, saving me from hell, and giving me a justified position in His sight. This one thing I know. God in great mercy has pardoned me. He snapped sin's fetters and set me free! He set me free from hell's judgment and given me a right standing before God forever. I have received something I don't deserve. I have received mercy.



"Did you ever hear of the mother who visited Napoleon on behalf of her condemned son? The emperor told her the young man had committed the same offense twice, and justice demanded the death penalty. 'But Sire,' she pleaded, 'I don't ask for justice -- only for mercy.' 'He doesn't deserve mercy,' said Napoleon. 'No, he doesn't,' she admitted, 'but it would not be MERCY if he deserved it.' 'You're right!' said the ruler quickly, 'I'll grant your request and show him mercy!'" My friend, we did not deserve mercy. But mercy cannot be mercy unless we deserve something. Let me say that every last one of us deserves hell but God through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ demonstrated His mercy to us. It was on the cross where God demonstrates His mercy to us. Because of the shed blood of the cross God withholds something we deserve (hell) and gives us something we don't deserve – eternal life. This is mercy! Dear friend, there is mercy with the Lord. The Old Testament mercy seat reminds us of God's mercy as found in the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf. Christ took our penalty of judgment upon Himself so that we could be free from the penalty. This is mercy.

Hebrews 9:5

“And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.”

On the day of atonement, the blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat which covered the tables of law within the ark. God did not look at the law. Instead, He saw the blood. The blood provided pardon for the people so they would not have to face the demands of the law. In a similar way God sees Christ's blood as our “mercy seat” today. However, His blood does not just cover sin; it takes away sin forever. The Greek word translated “mercyseat” (hilasterion) is a word that relates to the work of atonement in the Old Testament. In other words, the idea of the mercyseat was to appease God's wrath and satisfy His righteous standard and holiness by covering the sins of the people.

The typical meaning of the mercy seat is divinely explained in Romans 3:25:

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

The word “propitiation” is the same Greek word that is translated “mercyseat” in Hebrews 9:5. By comparing the two verses we see that Jesus fulfills the typical teaching about the mercyseat. The New Testament “mercyseat” is seen to be the cross of Christ and His sacrificial blood which was offered on the cross. The same Greek word translated “propitiation” (hilasterion) once again speaks of a satisfying sacrifice that could appease the wrath of God toward the sinner while at the same time vindicate His righteous and holy demands. It was on the mercyseat where goat’s blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement to cover (atone) Israel’s sins (Lev. 16:15). This blood would satisfy God for another year. He would be satisfied with the atonement sacrifice. The analogy is clear to see. Jesus’ death is the final sacrifice which completely satisfied God’s righteous demand for judgment against sinful people thus averting (turning away) God’s wrath from those who believe. My friend, the Father is satisfied with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

God is satisfied for Christ’s sacrifice on the cross has satisfied His holy and righteous demands that sinners be judged for their sins. God is satisfied because the perfect and final sacrifice of His only Son has paid for the penalty of sin (judgment for sin) in full, which was due sinners, making it possible for the removal of sin that stands between God and sinners. God is satisfied for the simple reason that His own righteousness and holiness is vindicated and maintained by judging sin in the perfect and spotless sacrifice of His Son (Heb. 9:14). God could never lower His standards and bypass sin. Therefore, Christ had to be judged. God had to defend His own character and reputation. So God is satisfied (propitiated) with the sacrifice of Jesus for all these reasons. The question is this. Are you satisfied with it? Are you satisfied with Jesus? Are you ready to only trust in Jesus Christ, who paid for you penalty for your sin, in order to rescue you from hell? God is satisfied with Jesus. Are you?

1 John 2:2

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

The extent of the “propitiation” or expression of God’s mercy is universal (1 John 2:2). Christ’s death upon the cross becomes the New Testament mercy seat which was a satisfying sacrifice provided for everyone. Please notice that the Christ’s sacrifice is *sufficient* to save everyone but only *efficient* to save those who are willing to receive it. If you are ready and willing to trust Christ then why don’t you look to Him for mercy today?

1 John 4:10

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

As we have already stated, the New Testament word for “propitiation” (satisfying sacrifice) is the word that is used to express the fulfillment of the priestly work before the mercy seat in the holy of holies. When the priest sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat it became a sacrifice that God was satisfied with and a sacrifice that could atone for their sin throughout the year (Heb. 9:7). In a similar way, the Father was satisfied with the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ for the blood sacrifice of His Son was the final sacrifice that could take away sin forever (Heb. 9:26). God expressed His love by providing a mercy seat for us today. This mercy seat is the cross of Christ and the blood He shed on our behalf. I know that God loves me for the simple reason that He sent His only Son to be my mercy seat through which I can receive the pardon and forgiveness of sin forever.

“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,  
I will sing, I will sing.  
I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,  
I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.”

c. The protection of the mercy seat

Exodus 25:18-20

“And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even

of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.”

The cherubim were made out of solid gold and were an integrated part of the mercy seat. The mercy seat was made out of one slab which was a solid piece of gold (vs. 17). The gold once again speaks of the deity of Jesus Christ (John 1:1; 10:30-33). Divine attributes were ascribed to Jesus such as His eternal existence (Rev. 1:8), omniscience (John 2:24-25), and omnipotence (Phil. 3:21). The cherubim with their outstretched wings overshadowed the mercy seat. They are seen facing one another and by their position (“toward the mercy seat” – Ex. 25:20) they seem to be bowed in the presence of the holy God, indicating an act of reverence. We must remember that the ark and mercy seat picture the throne room of God on earth. It’s here that God manifested His presence in the glory cloud above the mercy seat (Lev. 16:2). The cherubim remind us that we should have deep reverence and respect when we enter the holy presence of God. We should also demonstrate reverence for God in all of our worship and show that we revere Him. Only those things that are holy should be presented to Him.

The cherubim were present on this mercy seat for they represented those angelic beings that protected and vindicated the holiness of God’s presence. Their presence around the throne (Ps. 80:1; 99:1; 1 Chron. 13:6; Ezek. 10:1) and their protective missions (Gen. 3:24) indicate that they are creatures designed to guard the throne room and way of access to God from all ungodliness and unholy intruders. Their presence as the guards of God’s throne indicate that nothing unholy can enter God’s presence. They protect the untainted, unsullied, and uncompromising holiness of God and the only way that man could be accepted before His presence! The cherubim guarded the way to God while the veil was not yet torn. Their presence on the mercy seat of God’s throne reminded everyone that the way of access into God’s presence had not yet been made available. The golden carved figures of these angelic beings looking down on the mercy seat reminding everyone that sinful man cannot be accepted in the presence of God without the proper atoning sacrifice. Therefore,

they are seen looking on the blood-sprinkled mercy seat (Ex. 25:20) in order to guard the presence of God from the tainted and unholy methods that man might use when attempting to be accepted by God's presence. It's also interesting to realize that these angels were looking at God's plan for salvation through blood sacrifice which was representative of Christ's blood sacrifice. The Bible teaches elsewhere that Christ's sufferings and the redemption of man are "things the angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. 1:11-12).

#### d. The priest of the mercy seat

As the priest entered the holy of holies to offer the blood sacrifice on the mercy seat so Jesus Christ, the final high priest, offered Himself upon the cross – the New Testament mercy seat. Afterward, He rose from the dead and went into the holy of holies of God's presence in Heaven to officially present Himself as the final and completely sufficient sacrifice and payment for sin.

Hebrews 9:11-12 puts it this way:

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

This Bible reference is alluding to the Old Testament practice of the priest entering the Holy of Holies to offer the blood upon the mercy seat. The Scriptures are very clear. Jesus Christ is the final "high priest" who would shed His blood upon the cross (Heb. 7:27; 10:11-14; 12:2; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20; 2:14) and then enter God's presence as the risen Lord to give the sinner access before God (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34). Christ could enter heaven through means of His shed blood on the cross ("by his own blood" – Heb. 9:12) by which He had already "obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12) and now "appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24) declaring that He had paid for sin's penalty in full and continually please the efficacy of His sacrifice before the Father. Jesus would be the final "high priest" that would bring the "good things to come" (eternal redemption – Heb. 10:1) by offering His own blood sacrifice

on the cross and then entering into the presence of God, which is explained as the holy of holies of Heaven.

Leon Morris aptly remarks:

“While the sacrifice Christ offered took place on a physical cross on a definite day in a definite land on the physical earth, the essence of that sacrifice was that it was effective in the presence of God.”

In other words, Christ shed His blood on the cross and this sacrifice was made effective in Heaven when He arose and went there to represent Himself and sacrifice before the Father. The blood was shed on the cross and the blood is represented in heaven by the living presence of Jesus Christ whose presence confirms that His sacrifice was sufficient payment to take away our sins forever and whose presence allows Him to plead the eternal efficacy of His saving sacrifice (Heb. 9:24 – “now to appear in the presence of God for us”). I believe the physical presence of Christ is in Heaven to represent His blood that was shed on the cross. The blood of Christ has value in Heaven because Jesus Christ is there representing in His risen life the efficacy or eternal value of His shed blood on the cross. It’s on the cross that our High Priest (Jesus Christ) offered Himself and He is in God’s presence today as the risen Christ interceding on our behalf. His risen life is declaring that He paid the penalty for our sin in full and that His sacrifice is the only way into Heaven or God’s presence. What a Savior!

The point is this. Jesus fulfills the Old Testament priestly ministry before the mercy seat in that Jesus Himself is both the sacrifice and final priest to enter God’s presence (the holy of holies) providing the sinner with final deliverance from His sin and acceptance in God’s presence forever. The New Testament mercy seat is pictured as Christ’s priestly sacrifice. It’s the sacrifice where both the justice and the mercy of God meet bringing peace before God to all who believe.

In the days of the Revolutionary War there lived at Ephrata, Pennsylvania, a Baptist pastor by the name of Peter Miller who enjoyed the friendship of General Washington. There also dwelt in that town a man by the name Michael Wittman, an evil-minded man who did all in his power to abuse and oppose this pastor. One day Michael Wittman was involved in treason and was arrested and

sentenced to death. The old preacher started out on foot from Ephrata and walked the whole seventy miles to Philadelphia to plead for this man's life. He was admitted into Washington's presence and at once begged for the life of the traitor. Washington said, "No, Peter, I cannot grant you the life of your friend." The preacher exclaimed, "He is not my friend--he is the bitterest enemy I have." Washington cried, "What? You've walked seventy miles to save the life of an enemy? That puts the matter in a different light. I will grant the pardon." And he did. And Peter Miller took Michael Wittman from the very shadow of death back to his own home in Ephrata--no longer as an enemy, but as a friend. In a similar way, Jesus expressed mercy to you and me who were His enemies.

Romans 5:10

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

God loves us when we were his enemy. He looked down and pitied our poor wretched lost souls. He had loving compassion upon us. My friend, mercy reigned in the holy of holies with the blood-sprinkled mercy seat. It was mercy bestowed upon the unworthy and undeserving. We have a mercy seat today found in Jesus Christ. We can cling to Him and know that we are going to Heaven only because of the mercy that was extended to us long ago when Jesus died in the cross paying sin's penalty, appeasing God's wrath against sin, and satisfying the demands of a holy and righteous God.

#### e. The privilege of the mercy seat

Exodus 25:22

"And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

God wanted to commune with His people. The mercy seat was the place where God could meet with man and have direct fellowship with Him. This was God's ultimate desire with man. An example of this

was seen with Moses who entered the first room of the Tabernacle and communed with God from the other side of the curtain.

Numbers 7:89

“And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.”

God definitely wanted to have direct fellowship and communion with man as He did with Adam in the garden before the Genesis Fall. However, sin had become a barrier between man and God and the direct fellowship he could have with Him. We know this is true for the Tabernacle also had a veil which kept the high priest from going into the very presence of God except once a year on the Day of Atonement. The direct presence of God in the Old Testament was hidden from the people and only one person once a year could enter His presence with great caution and fear. We must remember that the atonement by blood ritual upon the mercy seat would allow God to forgive the sins of the people for the past year (Heb. 9:7). This forgiveness was temporary and had to be repeated every year (Heb. 10:1-4). This meant that the people could never be accepted in God's presence. There was always more sin that needed to be forgiven.

The mercy seat of the Old Testament was used only for the *temporary* covering and *ritual* forgiveness of sins. Sin could not be finally and forever forgiven through the blood of animals (Heb. 10:4). For this reason a veil had to remain over the miniature throne room that resembled God's presence. However, the privilege of the New Testament mercy seat, as portrayed in Christ's sacrifice on the cross and His entrance into God's presence on our behalf, provides us with the complete forgiveness of sins (Heb. 10:17), direct access into the throne room of God's presence, and full and final acceptance in God's presence forever (Heb. 10:14). This is something the Old Testament saints did not have. Today we can have the confidence that the way of access into God's presence had been opened and that God is very approachable and ready to commune with us in a direct way and on a daily basis. What a privilege we have today. It's the privilege of having direct access into God's presence whereby we



can commune with Him, fellowship with Him, experience the wonder of His person, and also find His help in the time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16 says:

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Today we can pray knowing that at any time we can come “boldly” (confidently) into the presence of God. We can approach God directly and commune and fellowship with Him directly in His presence knowing that He has through Christ’s sacrifice forgiven us and accepted us forever. We can know that through Christ’s sacrifice our sins are all forgiven, we are acquitted before His presence, justified, and can now obtain mercy and strengthening grace to help us at God’s throne in Heaven. In the time of need we can experience God’s pity, mercy, or compassion as well as His enabling and strengthening grace for our lives. No longer is the mercy seat open only once a year! It’s open year round and Jesus is there to provide us with day-to-day mercy and grace for our daily living. We no longer need an earthly priest to intercede for us. We no longer need a sacrifice to be slain. Today we can come bask in the glorious presence of the Lord and exercise the wonder of His person, pity, power, and presence for our lives.

“From every stormy wind that blows,  
From every swelling tide of woes,  
There is a calm, a sure retreat:  
‘Tis found beneath the mercy seat.

There is a place where Jesus shed  
The oil of gladness on our head;  
A place than all besides more sweet:  
It is the blood-bought mercy seat.”

Dear friend, He’s only a prayer a way. And when we pray we are immediately ushered into the very presence of God or the throne

room. There is no more lightening, thunder, and fear as it was at Mount Sinai. There is confidence, joy, peace, and blessing knowing that God accepts us and wants to help us in our times of need and distress. God's judgment throne has become a throne of grace! We can "draw near" (Heb. 10:22) to God and experience His direct presence. We can draw near to God possessing "the full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22) knowing that He always accepts us and that He wants to help us.

"And He'll come to you if you ask Him to.  
He's only a prayer away."

### ***The Tabernacle's Priestly Ministry***

Ida L. Reed, who was bedridden for many years because of physical afflictions, was asked, "How do you stay so sweet amid your many trials? She answered without hesitation, "Oh, it's because I belong to the King!" The phrase stuck in her mind, and in 1896 she penned the following words:

"I belong the King, I'm a child of His love,  
I shall dwell in His palace so fair;  
For He tells of its bliss in yon heaven above,  
And His children in splendor shall share."

My friend, it's a wonderful thing to be a child of the King. As God's child, He has given us direct access into His presence, so that we can experience the wonder of the King's power, presence, and all the blessings that He wants to shower upon our lives. This is our privilege as a New Testament priest who has direct access into God's presence.

A final area of study concerning the Tabernacle has to do with the priestly ministry. As we will see, the priestly ministry of Israel points to Jesus Christ and His priestly work on our behalf. At the same time, when studying about the priests of Israel, there will also be many practical points of application to our own personal lives today as believers who are also called New Testament priests.

## 1. The concept of the priesthood

The term priest (Heb. – kohen) means one who officiates. The concept of a priest or one who officiates for another did not originate with the nation of Israel. We find that Job offered burnt offerings for his children (Job 1:5). Job was a devout man who loved his children. Therefore, he prayed for them and presented them before the Lord. The first thing Noah did after leaving the ark was build an altar and offer a burnt offering to the Lord of all the clean beasts that were with him on the ark (Gen. 8:20). Wherever Abraham traveled through the land of Canaan he built an altar and offered sacrifice to the Lord (Gen. 12:7-8; 13:18; 22:9). Isaac and Jacob likewise erected altars and performed the ministry of a priest before God (Gen. 26:25; 33:20). The patriarchal period records many instances where the leaders of the household performed the function of a priest for their families. Before the Aaronic priesthood was established, the head of each family offered sacrifices on behalf of the household (Ex. 24:4-5). The need for the sacrifice was obviously passed down from generation to generation and known since the days of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21). God required sacrifice for sinners and this truth was engrained in the hearts and minds of people throughout the passing generations.

The practical application of this to our own day is easy to see. As a man God expects us to be the leader of the family unit. We are expected to *intercede* on the behalf of our families. God expects that we take the initiative to have contact with Him and see that our families are spiritually right before God. God places the leadership and spiritual responsibility for the home squarely on the shoulders of the man. Joshua said “but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). Men, we must make the decision to do what’s right and live for God. We must stand up as men in these days of wickedness, weirdness, and wackiness and become the spiritual priests or intercessors of our families. God expects us to be a spiritual leader in our families. That means we must learn to say no to certain things and explain to our family why we don’t do certain things. It means we must lead our families in living right and worshipping God. God wants us to stand in the gap today and be a leader and man of God.

“Rise up, O men of God!  
Have done with lesser things;  
Give heart and mind and soul and strength  
To serve the King of Kings.”

b. The choice of a priesthood

God delivered the Israelites from Egypt and wanted them to become a people for His own possession. It was God’s plan that Israel be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This is clearly revealed in Scripture.

Exodus 19:6

“And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”

Today God is trying to speak to us. If we will just stop running and listen God will speak to our hearts afresh and anew. The function of a priest was to represent God before men. This is what God wanted Israel to be. He wanted all of His people to function as priests representing God before a world that does not know God. *A priest was to be an example and representative of God.* You know, the same is true for us today. God has called us to be priests today that represent God to a lost and dying world that has no understanding of God and His ways. Please notice how the Israelites were to represent God to man was to be “an holy nation.” This is exactly what God says concerning His Church today. *Peter uses similar terms to point out similar truths.* Peter reaches back into Old Testament history to demonstrate God’s desire for the nation of Israel and then *applies* it to the Church today. The Church today is called upon to be a “royal priesthood, and holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9) representing God, as priests, before a world that does not know God or act like God. I don’t need a Roman Catholic priest to show me how to live for God or give me access to God. I am a priest! I have the power and privilege to live for God and I also have permanent access into His presence through grace. As a priest I can come directly to God and receive of His power and new life and then represent God before a world that does not know God.

The Bible teaches that God has called “you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9) so you might as a priest represent God to a world that acts like sinners, thinks like sinners, and looks like sinners. God did not call us to salvation and elect us in His corporate body to live for ourselves. No! We are to shine for God by representing the “light” of His holiness to a world of darkness. I have come from the darkness to the light! I’m so thankful I don’t have to live in the darkness any longer. We can live in the light of God’s truth, liberty, and holiness. And as a New Testament priest God expects us to represent His light in the midst of a dark world. The world is blinded by Satan, lost in the darkness of unbelief, sin, and ignorance. God has called us to shine forth.

Philippians 2:15

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”

This world is a morally “crooked” (spiritually warped or wicked) and “perverse” (turned aside from the right path). Did you catch what God’s Word is telling us? God has called us to be a “holy nation” (1 Pet. 2:9) in the midst of a “wicked and perverse nation” (Phil. 2:15). My friend, most people today have turned their backs on God and truth. In this kind of world God’s people are to shine like the stars of heaven representing Him. We must stand out more clearly against the dark background of this world.

When I was preparing a power point presentation I mistakenly put black font on a black background. I couldn’t figure out what was wrong. I wanted the font to show up but it would not show up on the black background. Black on black does not work. Once I detected my problem I changed the black font to white font. What a difference! It was a difference between night and day. That white font stuck out and was clearly seen on that black background. In a similar way, God wants us to be like white font on black background. God wants us to stand out as Christians and priests representing His holiness before a dark and sinister world. He wants us to light the way in the midst of the dark hour in which we live. The children sing “This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine.” Well, we need to also sing it and start living it before a world that knows nothing about God and His ways.

This is God's calling for each one of today as New Testament priests. If we talk like the world, think like the world, act like the world, neglect God like the world, and do all the same things that the world does then we will have no light or testimony. We will not be shining lights but simply blend in with the dark background. Let me ask you some questions at this point. Are you living out your New Testament priesthood before a world that does not know God? Are you fulfilling your privilege and obligation before God? Are you a representative of God before a lost and dying world? Let us remember that God expects us to clean up our act and start living like priests that represent His character of holiness and His righteous ways. If we don't act like God and live like God then we are not fulfilling our obligation as a New Testament priest. We are also living below our privileges.

God wanted His people to be a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). If this is the case, why did God institute the Levitical priesthood in favor of an entire nation of priests? What changed God's mind? In Exodus 19:5 we discover that the privilege of being a kingdom of priests who represented God to mankind rested upon their obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. When Israel failed to obey God's Law which they had promised to follow (Ex. 19:8), their standing as a kingdom of priests was dissolved. As a result, God decided to choose Aaron and his family to constitute the priesthood and represent the nation of Israel before Him.

Exodus 28:1

"And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons."

In other words, through the institution and example of the Aaronic priesthood, God began to teach the people how He wanted them to live. The clothing, consecration, and conduct that God required for the priests were specific ways that He began to teach His children how important it was to live holy. *The priests were to represent to the rest of the nation and what God required in relationship to holy living.* In other words, the intricate procedures that God gave regarding the priests office were designed to teach in typical fashion that God

expects His children to live holy, reverently, righteously, and differently so that they might represent Him before a pagan world. The priesthood then becomes a picture and type of what God expects for holy living. It demonstrates that God demands a *distinction* and *difference* among the lives of His people if they are going to properly represent Him and His righteous ways before a heathen world.

All the dietary laws and the multitudes of other detailed laws of the Old Testament served as a way to illustrate to the people their need to live holy or separate lives (Lev. 20:24-26). Although the believer no longer lives under the intricate miniscule rules of the Mosaic Law (Rom. 6:14) let us never forget that the principles behind all of God's moral and ethical laws are still in tact. In other words, what God teaches in the Old Testament regarding separation or holiness establishes an enduring principle that cannot be undone. God wants us to be different and refuse to adopt the heathen customs of the world that are all around us (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1). If we see this in the priestly requirements we will learn an important lesson for our lives today. What God required under law in relationship to holy and separated living becomes a typical lesson and teaching tool in the New Testament regarding the believer's separation. Although we don't follow the intricate laws established under the law we do follow the principles and practical lessons being taught by them.

### c. The clothing of the priesthood

The garments of the high priest are explained in Exodus 28. His garments have much typical significance regarding Christ and the believer's own sanctification and walk.

#### 1. Beautiful Garments

Exodus 28:2

“And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.

The garments were beautiful for they matched the colors of the Tabernacle. They were also garments of glory for they exalted the priestly office in the eyes of the people. In these garments we see first of all that God loves beauty. We know this is true when reading

about the description of heaven with all of its wondrous beauty. God is a God of beauty and order. The priest with His garments point to Jesus Christ, who is the New Testament High Priest (Heb. 2:17), that is seen to be beautiful in every way. The beauty of Jesus Christ is seen in His person and work. In Isaiah 4:2 the returning Messiah is called “beautiful and glorious.”

Psalm 45:8 prophetically says of Christ:

“All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.”

Jesus is beautiful in every way to the believer today. Isn't He beautiful? We should be experiencing the wonder of His person these days as we fellowship with Him and walk close to Him. The Song of Solomon 5:16 says, “He is altogether lovely.” The beauty and loveliness of Jesus Christ should thrill our hearts, put a spring in our step, and a song in our hearts today.

In relationship to the believer, our lives of dedication and service to the Lord, as New Testament priests, is a thing of beauty. The beauty of the priestly garments reminds us of the beauty of living out our lives as New Testament priests, which represent God to the world, and express God's holiness to a world that knows nothing about holy and righteous living. Living a holy life is still a thing of beauty (Rom. 10:15 – “How beautiful are the feet of them”).

## 2. Holy Garments

Exodus 28:2

“And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty.

The garments are called “holy garments” for the simple reason that they were made holy by their consecration to God's service, as the materials of the tabernacle had been. They were set apart to be worn only during the service in the Tabernacle. They were also set apart as garments which were pleasing to the Lord. Typically speaking, the “holy garments” remind us of Christ's perfect holiness and how He offered Himself without any taint of sin when He died on the cross (Heb. 9:14 – “without spot to God,” 1 Pet. 1:19 – “the lamb without



spot and without blemish”). We must remember that Jesus Christ is our holy High Priest that offered Himself as both the sacrifice (Heb. 9:25-26) and the intercessor (Heb. 9:24). Because of His holy character, Christ is the only High Priest suitable to officiate before God’s throne on behalf of sinful mankind (Heb. 7:26). The Bible teaches the impeccability of Jesus Christ. Christ was and always will be without sin. The holy garments remind us of this.

As we think of “holy garments” there is also a practical application to our lives today as New Testament priests. The application is this. We too should remember to worship God with reverence and respect. *The look of the priest was to match the function of his ministry as he worshipped God in the beauty of holiness.* I think there is a valuable lesson for us today in the dress of the high priest. Most people today could care less what they look like when they come to church or God’s house. Many are preaching these days, “Come as you are.” I’m tired of all this irreverent talk. Our great high priest (Jesus Christ) who is “higher than the heavens” (Heb. 7:26) deserves our reverence and respect. God sets forth an important principle that we can and should follow today as His children. The way we look when we come to worship God does send a message to God. It tells God what we think about Him. When we come to church with a carefree and careless attitude about our dress it sends the message to God that we really don’t think He is holy enough and worthy enough of our respect and reverence. God is worth more than a pair of old blue jeans! Many today are teaching the younger generation disrespect for God House when they tell them to dress down and forget about reverencing God in worship. The “holy garments” of the high priest establishes the *principle of reverence* in our time of worship. We can and do reverence God by dressing in a different manner when coming to God’s house. The way we dress can be part of our expression of worship today.

Psalm 89:7

“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”

The “holy garments” remind us of something else today. It reminds us that we need to dress in a manner that is pleasing to God not only when we meet together in worship but also in our daily living. I know

there are those today who are teaching that it does not matter how we dress but God's Word does have something to say about dress and we should hear His Word today in the midst of this sex-crazed world who is dressing in a manner that is heathen and ungodly.

1 Timothy 2:9

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.”

I wonder if there is any preacher brave enough to preach on this verse today. I almost feel like I am a voice crying in the wilderness today. In relationship to a woman's hair, gold, pearls, jewelry, and clothing God is saying, “Don't overdo it.” Some of the ladies were apparently coming to church looking like a fashion model and Paul in this verse is condemning excess just as Peter was in 1 Peter 3:3. He is not condemning the wearing of jewelry and makeup. A woman is not to become a walking fashion show before the world. Ladies, remember this. You can look pretty without being a peacock! No, you don't have to wear clothing from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. You can be in fashion without becoming a fashion model. God is condemning showy expression and excess in this verse.

In relationship to modesty God is saying something else – “Don't dress immodest.” Now listen. As a lady God expects you to cover up and not show off your body to the eyes of a watching world. Ladies are not to dress in a manner where they invite men to lust at them. God is addressing a woman's modesty simply because of a woman's natural attraction to men. Ladies, God holds you accountable for the way that you dress. How you dress sends a message to everyone around you. Certainly there is no exact line one can draw concerning modesty but one thing is certain. When you dress to be seen and showy you can be sure that you have crossed the line. Ladies, there is a difference between being feminine and being sexually expressive in your dress and mannerisms. The world says, “Dress sexy, dress to be seen, live free.” But God says, “Dress modest, don't live to be seen, don't show off the nakedness of your body.”

Certainly the principle of modesty applies to men as well. Some of these fellows today want to wear their trousers below their belt line

and wear clothing that is indecent and immodest. A man has no more a right to dress immodest than does a woman. God wants us to remember that our garments should be “holy garments” in relationship to our manner of dress.

Zephaniah 1:8

“And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.”

Now listen. The way God's people were dressing was similar to the foreign dress. *Their foreign dress implied that they had adopted and absorbed the worldly values of the heathen.* This verse reminds us that the way God's people should be different than the heathen. We learn from this verse in Zephaniah 1:8 that a person's rebellious attitude toward God can be revealed by the way that they dress. When we want to reflect heathen dress (indecent dress, odd dress, prideful dress – dressing to be seen) then we have bought in to the world and its values which are passing away even as we speak (1 John 2:17). Today many Christians are buying into the tattoo craze and excess body piercing of heathenism. But these things are nothing more than prideful expressions and heathen customs that Christians should refuse to participate with. How can we be different when we want to adopt the heathen lifestyles and customs? We should apply the principle of “holy garments” to our church meetings and everyday living unless we become swept away in the current of this world which drifting far away from God and godliness.

### 3. Typical Garments

Exodus 28:4

“And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.”

The garments of the high priest all had typical meaning and significance. However, before viewing the different pieces of the garments we are reminded of a very practical point that we should apply to our Christian lives today. God says, “that he may minister

unto me” (vv. 3, 4). This should be true about all of our ministry. We should remember that we are ministering for the Lord. Whatever we do for the Lord and how we live for the Lord should be an expression of gratitude and thankfulness to the Lord. We should remember that we are doing it for Him. I have begun the practice to dedicate my messages to the Lord before I preach them. I enjoy holding my Bible and notes before the Lord and saying, “This is for you.” If we are serving and living for any other reason than to please the Lord then we will eventually become discouraged and out of focus in our service and living.

#### a. Their colors

Exodus 28:5

“And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.”

The material and colors of these garments speak of Christ. We have already confirmed the meaning of these materials and colors in the Tabernacle structure so I will only mention them in passing. Gold is the color associated with kings and therefore point to Christ’s kingliness and deity (Rev. 19:16). Blue is the color of the sky and points to Christ’s heavenly origin who came down from Heaven to do the Father’s will (John 3:13, 31; 6:58). The purple is also a color of royalty and speaks of Christ’s kinship and sovereignty as Lord of all (Luke 1:32; Matt. 2:2). Scarlet was a very bright red dye and is the color of sacrifice and blood. It points to Christ’s blood sacrifice that was needed to purchase our salvation (Rom. 3:25; 5:9). The “fine twined linen” was a type of white yarn tightly woven together which speaks of the purity and righteousness of Jesus Christ who was the “lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19).

#### b. Their characteristics

The descriptive characteristics of these garments are now given to help us envision what they looked like.

##### 1. The Ephod (Exodus 28:6-14)

The “ephod” was a general name for a garment. Here it denotes a special garment of religious significance. Over his regular priestly garments, the high priest wore what was called an ephod, a two-piece apron or vest that was ornamental. It consisted of two pieces of material. One piece covered the chest of the high priest and the other covered his back. The two pieces of material were joined at the shoulders by two golden encasements (vs. 7 – “two shoulderpieces”) called “ouches” (ornamental encasements of gold vv. 13-14). The sides were probably open but two braided chains of gold (vs. 14) were attached to these “ouches” or golden encasements that rested on each shoulder. In these golden ornamental cases the onyx stones were placed as we will see in a moment.

The ephod was probably a sleeveless outer garment that covered the priest’s upper body. It had a girdle or belt that wrapped around his body in order to keep the garment close to his body (“the curious girdle” - vs. 8). We are reminded of the time when Jesus “girded himself” (John 13:4) with a towel in order to take on the status of a slave and serve His disciples. His service taught the lesson that we should reach out to others and restore them spiritually. Jesus set the example of service and we should, as New Testament priests, seek to serve others as well (John 13:15). The girdle or belt reminds us of the sacrificial and spiritual service that we are to extend to others.

The vest was mounted with two onyx stones (vs. 9) which had the twelve tribes of Israel engraved on them (vv. 9-12). On the two onyx stones were to be engraved the names of Israel’s 12 tribes (six on each stone - vs. 10). The Jewish historian Josephus wrote that the names of Jacob’s six oldest sons were on the stone on the right shoulder, and the names of his six youngest sons were on the stone on the left. These onyx stones (emeralds or sardonyx stones) were placed on the shoulders of the high priest to remind him that he was representing the twelve tribes of Israel before God during his ministry (vs. 12).

This reminds us of how Christ, the final and eternal High Priest (Heb 7:25), represents us before the throne of God. What is Jesus Christ doing in Heaven today? He is interceding for us before God’s presence declaring that He has paid the price (bore the judgment) for our sins in full when He died on the cross and that we are free from

judgment forever. Because of Christ's interceding work on our behalf no person can ever condemn us and count us as recipients of God's judgment (Rom. 8:34). This is because Christ has risen from the dead to become our living intercessor in Heaven. His present priestly work before God's throne is a work of intercession that declares to the Father that His redemptive work is final, that He has paid the penalty for our sins in full, and that we can be freed forever from God's wrath and judgment as a result of His saving work.

"My hope is in the Lord,  
Who gave Himself for me,  
And paid the price of all my sin at Calvary.  
For me, He died, For me, He lives,  
And everlasting life and light He freely gives.

And now for me He stands,  
Before the Father's throne,  
He shows His wounded hands and names me as His own.  
For me, He died, For me, He lives,  
And everlasting life and light He freely gives."

a. The Breastplate of the Ephod (Exodus 28:15-29)

The most noticeable and important part of the high priest's garments was the breastplate. It was made of the same materials as the Ephod and girdle (vs. 15). It was made of one piece of material, folded over ("doubled" – vs. 16) to form a pouch, nine by nine inches square (vs. 16). A gold ring was attached to each of the four corners of the breastplate. The rings on the upper corners were fastened by a gold chain to the shoulderpieces of the ephod (vv. 22-26). The lower rings were fastened just above the curious girdle with a ribbon of blue lace which sown to the front of the ephod above the girdle (vs. 27-28). It was called the "breastplate of judgment" (discernment and decision – vs. 15, 29) because on the backside of the breastplate was a pocket for the "urim and thummim," which were used by the high priest to ascertain or discern God's will for the people (vs. 30). More on this later. Joined or affixed to this breastplate were twelve precious stones, each with a tribe's name engraved upon it (vv. 17-20). The stones were arranged in four rows, three to a row, in settings of gold

(vs. 20). They represented the twelve tribes of Israel. The position of each tribal stone is not given.

The important thing I want you to see is that the high priest went into the holy of holies and ministered on behalf of the nation of Israel who was represented by the twelve stone on the breastplate. The stones upon his breast would remind the priest of his obligation to sympathize with the needs of the people, especially their need for cleansing and forgiveness, as he ministered for them.

Exodus 28:29

“And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.”

It's interesting that the high priest carried the tribes of Israel before God on his shoulders (v. 12 - the place of strength and security) and over his heart (v. 29 - the place of affection). First, I want to say today that our salvation and security is resting upon His shoulders. I have complete security and peace today knowing that nothing can separate me from God's love as expressed through Christ's intercessory work on my behalf (Rom. 8:38-39). Second, I want to also say that the Lord Jesus Christ bears us close to His own heart as He represents us before the throne of God (Rom. 8:33-34). Each blood-bought believer is a precious stone close to His own heart. Dear friend, Christ loves you. As the high priest bore the names of the children of Israel upon his heart so Christ, our great High Priest today, bears our names close to His heart. He knows your name! As He ministers for us before the throne of Heaven He does so with loving compassion. We are dear to His heart. We are near to His heart. Our great High Priest is “touched with the feelings of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15). Our High priest not only has a *saving* ministry but a *sympathetic* ministry. Jesus is before the throne of God, feeling our pain, and waiting to intercede for us, by reaching out to meet our needs (Heb. 2:18). We are close to His heart and He still is the sympathizing Jesus.

“The great Physician now is near,  
The sympathizing Jesus;

He speaks the drooping heart to cheer:  
O hear the voice of Jesus.”

Let us also remember by way of application that we too should have people close to our hearts. Every believer priest should have a heart for people so that he might reach out in love, as a New Testament priest, helping the lost. The precious gems of lost souls should be near and dear to our hearts these days.

Matthew 9:36

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”

May we have this same kind of love today for others as Christ did. The poor lost souls of humanity should be close to our hearts. Lost souls should be bound to our hearts. We should go as New Testament priests with a love for people who don't know Christ and which have no hope. I want to say that living for Jesus is a heart matter. “And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart” (Ex. 28:29). If you have a right heart then you will move out for God, invest in the lives of others, and be what God wants you to be.

b. The Urim and Thummim of the Ephod (Exodus 28:30)

Exodus 28:30

“And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually.”

The “Urim and the Thummim” were also connected with the breastplate. They were probably carried inside the pouch of the breastplate. The term “urim is mentioned seven times in the Old Testament, Thummim is mentioned five times (Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Numb. 27:21; Dt. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Neh. 7:65). Urim means lights and thummim means perfections. Apparently the Urim and Thummim were two special types of stones that were placed in the pouch area of the high priest.



Some suggest the Urim and Thummim were a collective name for the stones placed upon the breastplate which shined forth as lights and perfections. However, Leviticus 8:8 seems to suggest that the Urim and Thummim were additional to the stones that were already placed upon the breastplate. In some way unbeknown to us both were used in seeking divine counsel and guidance from the Lord. They were used to help determine the will of God for the Israelites. The priest would receive enlightenment (“lights”) and perfect knowledge (“perfections”) as the names suggest in order to decide what God’s will was for the nation. For this reason, the breastplate is often called the “breastplate of judgment” or decision (Ex. 28:15, 29, 30).

Numbers 27:21

“And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.”

1 Samuel 28:6

“And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim, nor by prophets.”

It’s clear that God used what were probably two special stones to give divine counsel to the nation through the priests. Most scholars are puzzled about how the Urim and Thummim actually functioned in the decision making process. How they were used in determining God’s will is unknown. However, some suggest the Urim represented a negative answer and the Thummim a positive answer. Perhaps this view is indicated by the fact that Urim begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and Thummim with the last letter. The name of these stones suggests that they might have been associated with some kind of special shining or lighting process through which the high priest could receive enlightenment (‘lights’) and perfect knowledge (‘perfections’) from God and be able to determine the will of God for the nation of Israel.

The Urim (lights) is a beautiful type of Christ reminding us that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World.

John 8:12

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

Jesus is the only true light in this world in the midst of many false lights such as Mormonism, Catholicism, and liberalism. If a man is ever going to know how to get to Heaven he must come to the true Light which is Jesus Christ.

The “Thummim” (perfections) speaks of the perfections found in Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:22

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”

Jesus Christ was both the true Light and perfect reflection of God’s personal existence when He was here in this world and yet great multitudes missed Him (John 1:11) and loved the darkness more than the light (John 3:19). The same is true today. The light and perfections of Jesus Christ is clearly seen in the Biblical record and yet many people miss Him. They don’t want to see the glory and wonder of His grace for the simple reason that they want to remain in their sin and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. How wonderful and glorious His light and perfections are! If you will but see Him in all of His light and perfections you will embrace His claims and receive Him as the only Lord and Savior of your soul.

Then too, we must remember how Jesus Christ is our perfect counselor and guide in life (Isa. 9:6 – “Counsellor”). We can come to Him for wisdom and guidance on how to live. We pray and ask for His leading and direction and He lights the path for us (“Urim”) and gives us knowledge for living (“thummim”).

Colossians 2:3 says this of Christ:

“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

When we live close to Christ He can give us direction and wisdom on how to live. His life within us is available to lead us and direct us in the right path. Jesus lights the path we are to tread and He guides us

along the way. I'm thankful for this today. We don't need professional shrinks to help us on to godly living. The divine life of our Lord, who lives within us, will lead and direct our lives. We must give Him the opportunity to do so. The sufficiency of Christ is available to all of us as believers to meet our needs (Col. 2:10).

Finally, we must also remember, as New Testament priests, that we too should shine forth as spiritual lights in this world today as the term "Urim" (lights) suggests ("ye shine as lights in the world" – Phil. 2:15). This is an important note of application. Others need to see that Christians are different than the world. If we live, act, and look like other people who are departing from God's divine will then how will they ever see Christ in us? How will they ever be able to know God's divine will for their lives? We also have the knowledge to impart to them about Christ and eternal life as the "Thummim" suggests which imparted knowledge to the high priest. We have the truth which is able to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:4 – "knowledge of the truth"). We need to be sharing this truth or knowledge to others today. Let them know! Let them know! That Jesus came and loves them so! As Christians we have the answers that can make the difference between life and death, heaven and hell, hope and hopelessness. What a privilege we have as God's New Testament priests. We have the answers. We have the Urim and Thummim – the lights and the knowledge to give to others.

#### c. The Robe of the Ephod (Exodus 28:31-36)

Under the ephod of the high priest, which covered the front and back of the priest's upper body, was a blue sleeveless robe that hung down below his knees and was reinforced at the collar. The robe was actually a seamless garment with slits in the sides for the arms and a hole in the top for the head (vv. 31-32). It was trimmed with "pomegranates" (vs. 33) which were actually embroidered on the hem of the robe. As we have already seen, the colors of these pomegranates harmonized with all the other colors (vs. 15) and were symbolic of Christ's heavenly origin (blue), royal person (purple), and sacrifice (scarlet).

Now what do these pomegranates on the hem of the priest's garment represent? We can't be sure but the pomegranates may have

reference to Christ's resurrection since he is called "the firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:20, 23) or the first one to rise from the dead to never die again. He leads the way in the resurrection program and because He lives we too shall live someday (John 14:19). By way of application, each child of God today, who is a New Testament priest, must also remember that they should bear fruit in their daily lives and possess a good testimony before a watching world. The fruit of our lives has to do with holiness, Christlikeness, and evangelism. Jesus said in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." We also should be bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23). What kind of fruit have you been yielding these days? What kind of fruit is growing on your tree? Does your life show or express fruit to others. Are you a fruit bearing believer? God expects us to be growing fruit in our lives.

The robe or garment also had gold bells on its hem which were placed in between the pomegranates (vs. 34). We know that these were literal tinkling bells that would allow the people to hear the high priest when he ministered in the holy place on the day of atonement. As he ministered the bells would sound forth.

Exodus 28:35

"And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not."

God required that the high priest would dress in a certain manner when they serve Him and that there were bells on his garments which would ring forth while he served. First, God wanted to hear the bells ringing or else the high priest would be struck dead. No bells - no priestly ministry and sacrifice. This was God's way. God had His own holy requirements for priestly ministry and service which were designed to convey typical meanings and truth about Christ's mercy and grace. If these requirements were abandoned then death would occur. Without properly following God's requirements no sacrifice could be given. God wanted an outward sign to assure the people that He was accepting the priest and blood sacrifice. He wanted bells to be ringing as the high priest did his work on the day of atonement to remind and assure the people that He would express mercy to

them. This was God's way. Without the bells ringing there would be no high priest or atoning sacrifice.

Second, the sound of the ringing bells was designed to be heard by the people. As already mentioned, God required the bells to be placed on the high priest's garments to assure the people that He was extending mercy to them through the priestly ministry. This is why God regarded the bells as being important and necessary. The sound of ringing bells was a sweet sound in the ears of the Israelites for they knew that God was willing to extend mercy to them through the priestly ministry and work. God has His own music. The ringing bells were actually God's music that was intended to give reassurance and comfort to the people of His amazing grace and mercy that was being extended to them through the priestly ministry. The tinkling bells were a reminder of God's marvelous love, grace and mercy that reached out to His people. Let me ask you a question. Have you heard the bells ringing lately? Have you heard and experienced the sweet music of God's bells ringing in your own heart and life as you remember of His great mercy and grace that was extended to you? Only those Christians who hear these bells will launch out into the deep, win souls for Christ, and serve Him faithfully. When life seems monotonous and you are only serving the Lord out of a sense of duty, or out of legalistic habit, then put your ears to the wind. You need to once again hear the bells ringing. You need to remember how God has shown mercy to you and saved you from an eternal hell and pit of despair. You need to remember where God has brought you from and where you could have been. You need to rejoice once again in His abundance mercy and grace. Some of you have not heard the bells ringing lately? You have become dormant, indifferent, preoccupied, and disinterested in the God's work. What is wrong? You need to put your ear to the wind and listen to God's bells ringing again. You need to be revived by looking at God's grace and mercy in a new light and seeing what God has done for you.

We must also remember that the sound of bells ringing would assure those outside that the priest was interceding on their behalf. The ringing or sounding bells also indicated that God had accepted the work and sacrifice of the high priest. If the bells would stop ringing

then the people knew that something happened to the high priest and the offering was not accepted.

Ronald Youngblood wrote:

“A popular Jewish interpretation of 28:35 taught that one end of a long rope should be tied to the high priest’s ankle before he entered the Holy Place. Since his slightest movement would cause the bells to tinkle, the people outside would assume that all was well as long as they could hear them. But if the bells fell silent for a time, the people outside would naturally assume that their priest had either fainted or died. They would then tug on the end of the rope to pull him out, making it unnecessary for unauthorized persons to enter the Holy Place in order to remove his body.”

Now remember this. Only a priest that was properly attired could enter the holy place and live. Only a priest that would meet God’s requirements would be accepted in the holy place. Was this not true of Jesus Christ? He was the sinless priestly sacrifice and perfect priest before God (Heb. 9:14 – “offered himself without spot to God”). The typical teaching of the high priestly ministry for Israel is a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ who would someday become the actual fulfillment of the Old Testament priestly work and the final High Priest who would take away the sins of His people. He would offer Himself upon the cross as the priestly sacrifice (Heb. 9:25-28) and then represent His people in Heaven (Heb. 7:25) declaring that sin’s penalty had been paid in full by Him and that no harm or judgment can ever come to His own (Rom. 8:34). Let me say that when Jesus Christ offered His sacrifice on the cross the Father accepted His sacrifice (Eph. 5:2).

Let me illustrate it this way. When Jesus died on the cross the bells of Heaven were ringing! The Father had accepted His sacrifice. When He ascended back to Heaven to represent us in Heaven the bells were still ringing. The Father accepted Him in His presence on our behalf. Do you hear them through the ears of faith? Let us remember that the presence of Jesus Christ in Heaven today reminds us that He has paid for sin’s penalty in full and that we can go free forever. God wanted the bells to ring to assure the people that He had accepted the work and sacrifice of the priest. What a wonderful picture this becomes of the Father’s acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross

and His priestly ministry on our behalf today. The next time when you hear bells ringing remind yourself of how the sacrifice of Christ was accepted by the Father on your behalf. Remember how Christ's priestly work and ministry provided you with eternal life and safety before the throne of God.

Not long I was walking by a church when the chimes began to play. They were beautiful as they rang out throughout the neighborhood playing the assuring promises of hymns which were rooted in Scripture. May I say that we need to possess the ear of faith today and hear the chimes or bells ringing that are sending forth the message of our final salvation and redemption through Christ. When Jesus paid sin's penalty in full, He cried out, "It is finished" (John 19:30). The chimes of time are still ringing forth the message that says, "Jesus paid it all." This is God's music for it's the music of a final redemption through the finished work of Jesus Christ. You may say that I can't be sure of Heaven and that I might forfeit the promise of eternal life. But you are wrong. I know you are wrong because Jesus is my High Priest interceding for me and He has said, "It is finished." I also know you are wrong because the Father has accepted the sacrifice of His Son (1 John 2:1-2). I know you are wrong for in faith I can hear the bells ringing! I can hear those golden bells sounding out clear and plain. And the message they are sending is ringing in my heart today. It's a message of assurance, safety, and rest. Have you heard the bells ringing?

"Beautiful bells of Eden chime,  
Softly they breathe in their tones sublime;  
Echo of joy from a white-robed throng,  
Praising the Lord in a world of song.

Sweet, beautiful bells;  
That oft in a dream I hear. . .  
Welcome the message they bring to me,  
Over the waves of the crystal sea."

## 2. The Miter

Exodus 28:36-37 states:

“And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be.”

The miter which in the Bible is spelled “mitre” (vs. 37) speaks of the headdress worn by the high priest. The word “mitre” means to wrap or roll around. Josephus said that the headdress was made of thick linen swathes wrapped around the head of the high priest. It was similar to a turban. On the front of this turban, attached by a blue lace (vs. 37), was a plate of pure gold with the engraved words “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” (vs. 36). These words reminded the people of the holy life and sacrifices that the high priest offered before God. The high priest was to be holy or pure before God and the sacrifices which he made were also deemed holy before God. Both his personal life and particular ministry were to be holy.

Exodus 28:38

“And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”

This verse provides us with the explanation for the engraved words across the priest's forehead. The words “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” (vs. 36) were placed upon Aaron's forehead in order to portray that only a holy priest could provide the needed atonement and forgiveness for the people. The sacrificial offerings were also to be holy for God to accept them and this is another reason why the high priest wore the words “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” on his forehead. The expressions “holy things” and “holy gifts” seem to refer to the sacrificial offerings that were given to the priest by the people. So the engraving “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” written upon the priest's forehead would not only portray that the priest was holy but also that the sacrifices that he offered were holy. This is why they are called “hallow” and “holy things” and holy gifts” – sacrificial gifts.

There are two reasons why the high priest and the sacrificial gifts needed to be holy. Mark this down for it's very important. First, both the priest and his offerings had to be holy to provide forgiveness for



the people. The meaning of the phrase “bear the iniquity of the holy things” seems to indicate that the high priest would use these “hallow” or holy sacrificial gifts every year to “bear” or carry away the sins of the people (an expression for ritual forgiveness) through the atoning blood sacrifice. The high priest would have the privilege to provide forgiveness for the people as he offers on the altar the atoning sacrifices. Scripture is its own best interpreter for this verse.

Leviticus 10:17

“Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord?”

The Bible teaches that a holy high priest with a holy blood sacrifice was able to provide forgiveness for the people. There could be no forgiveness without a holy priest providing a holy sacrifice.

Second, the holy high priest and his sacrifice would also provide the people with forgiveness and acceptance before God instead of condemnation (“that they may be accepted before the LORD” – Ex. 28:38). This too is very important. God could not cover the sins of the people and accept them as forgiven without a blood sacrifice. A holy blood sacrifice had to be offered in order for God to temporarily cover their sins and accept them as being clean in His sight for another year.

It’s very clear how all of this was but a foretaste and foreshadowing of the greater High Priest who would come – Jesus Christ. As our great High Priest Jesus Christ is holy (Heb. 7:26) and He alone had the privilege to provide actual forgiveness for our sins and eternal acceptance before God (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25) on the basis of His own blood sacrifice (Rom. 5:9). The Scripture teaches that “by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26) he took away our sin (Heb. 9:26) and sins (Heb. 10:17) in order to give us eternal acceptance in the very presence and throne room of God (Eph. 1:3; 2:6). What a marvelous High Priest we have! Without Him we would have no forgiveness or acceptance in God’s presence. Without Him we would have no assurance and hope. But since Jesus died for us and “has passed into the heavens” (Heb. 4:14) to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Heb. 9:24) we can be sure that the Father has accepted

His sacrifice and that Jesus is “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” (Ex. 28:36) on our behalf so that in Christ we might be made righteous and holy (2 Cor. 5:21).

### 3. The Regular Garments

The items mentioned in Exodus 28:39 are a final statement about the high priest’s wardrobe. The tunic was an undergarment, the turban covered his head, as we have already seen, and a woven sash served as a belt for the tunic. The tunic was worn under the robe of the ephod. Josephus states that it had tight fitting sleeves and reached down to the feet. The tunic was held in place by the girdle of needlework (Lev. 8:7). All these clothing items were made out of fine linen and were for the high priest.

The other priests also had ministerial garments for their everyday ministry as priests. Exodus 28:40 mentions their clothing as well which consisted of “coats” (tunics), girdles (belts) and bonnets (hats) which were also very beautiful (“for glory and beauty” – vs. 40). As underclothing, they wore linen trousers (“linen breeches” – vs. 42). It’s interesting that they were clothed from head to ankles, but there was no covering on their feet. This is because they were on holy ground when they ministered to the Lord. We remember the words given to Moses by God.

Exodus 3:5

“And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

A similar experience happened to Joshua (Josh. 5:15). The important thing to remember is that all the priests ministered barefoot out of reverence for the holiness of God. They were to respect God’s holy presence and worship him in “the beauty of holiness” (1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 29:2; 96:9). Once again we can establish a lasting principle for all of our worship and living from these verses. The principle is this. God is holy and demands great reverence and respect when we approach Him in worship. Respect for His holiness should be seen in our worship. We should not sound and look like the world when we worship God! Then too, we should practice living holy in all manner of our living since God is holy (1 Peter. 1:15-16).

The “linen breeches” or undergarments (trousers) were designed “to cover their nakedness” (Ex. 28:42) from the loins to their thighs. The linen breeches were required undergarments because of the loose-fitting, skirt-like robes the men wore. There are two possible reasons for this instruction. First, when the priests would ascend the steps to offer the sacrifices on the brazen altar God was concerned with preserving their modesty (Lev. 9:22; Ezek. 43:17). Second, this command was given to counteract the cultural worship of the heathen nations around them. Many of the nations surrounding Israel did not cover their priests as the Israelites did. God wanted to make a clear distinction from these heathen nations and their type of worship. The same should be true for us today. God wants us to make a clear distinction from the world’s type of worship and living.

Much of the heathen worship of the ancient world was sensual and obscene. Services were performed by naked people. Dear friend, the unchanging principle of this verse cannot be missed. God demands that worship be carried out in modesty and decency. Our worship before the Lord as New Testament believer priests and our everyday walk in the world should be modest and unrevealing. As we have already seen, the New Testament Scriptures give clear and explicit instructions to women concerning how they should dress (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:3). I’m not riding a hobby horse. I’m just riding God’s horse! The principle of modesty applies to men. God wants people to dress modest and unrevealing. I know this is not a popular message in a day of cultural down-dressing and under-dressing but it’s still God’s way! God expects that our manner of dress be glorifying to Him which means that it upholds and represents His character of holiness. We live in a day of nakedness! May I remind you that God clothed Adam and Eve to hide their nakedness which reflected their fallen sinful state. The divine prescription for the priest’s undergarments reminds us of the clothing which God made for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in order to cover their nakedness (Gen. 3:21).

What is the lesson for a Christian today? The lesson is simple. You should be ashamed when you come to church showing your nakedness! Ladies, you should cover yourself and not seek to expose those feminine areas that draw men away to lust. You must learn to dress in a manner that is unrevealing and holy or set apart from the heathen dress that is all around us today. This does not mean you

must wear a potato sack over your body but it means that you must never seek to expose the feminine parts of your body before the world. Our worship is to be holy in every way! God wants you to hide your nakedness in public for it shames His holiness and command to cover our bodies. God wanted no sign of nudity in the service for Him. God wanted no display of the flesh. We should keep this in mind for today. The principle and application of Exodus 28:42 to our day should not be dismissed as Old Testament but God's unchanging moral code for decency and respect. Although we do not dress in the same way as the Old Testament priests we must be modest as we present ourselves to the Lord and live within a society that is not modest. This is what God is teaching.

Exodus 28:43 concludes with these words:

“And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.”

It is difficult for us to grasp the seriousness of the priests' responsibility as they ministered before the living holy God. They had to serve God and worship without deviating from the commands of God. To fail to do so would invite God's judgment upon them, even death (“that they bear not iniquity, and die”). Sadly, there were priests that did die because they failed to show respect for the holiness of God (Lev. 10:1, 2; 1 Sam. 4:17; 2 Sam. 6:7). The question we must ask ourselves today is this. Do we respect the holiness of God in the way we dress and live out our lives? Do we really want to honor God's holiness? It's easy to be sucked into the spirit of the age which does not care about the holiness of God. We can mimic the world's standards instead of God's standards. In our next point we are going to discuss the priest's consecration to God (Exodus 29). Perhaps an introductory verse for this study would be Exodus 28:41 which says:

Exodus 28:41

“And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.”

God uses those people who are anointed (empowered for service) consecrated (dedicated to God's service), and sanctified (holy or set apart for service). It's these people who are really ready to be used of God and minister for him in a world of darkness and sin. If we are not careful we can allow our lives to become spotted by the flesh (Jude 23). When this happens we lose our effectiveness for the Lord. Do others see the glory, beauty, and holiness of Jesus Christ in our lives by the way you dress, live, and act? Can others tell that you are different? Or do they see our lives as having no real difference than their own life? If this is the case then we are not living out God's mandate for us as believer priests (1 Pet. 2:9) who are to represent His holiness before a world that does not know God. If you look like them, drink like them, and live like them they won't see Jesus in you! We not only need to tell the world that we are Christians. We must live like Christians. In 2 Corinthians 3:2 the apostle Paul tells us that we as Christians are to be living epistles "known and read of all men." What are people reading when they see your life?

A young policeman spoke at a statewide law officers' retreat held at Hume Lake, California. He said, "I've been doing a great deal of thinking about my own life and just how much I have really 'come out' for Christ in my daily and public conduct. I often wonder, though, if being a Christian were a crime, would there be enough evidence to convict me?" Let me ask you the question. If being a Christian were a crime would there be enough evidence to convict you? Do others see Christ in your life by the way that you live and conduct yourself?

A small crippled boy was hurrying to catch a commuter train. Carrying some gift packages under his arm, he was experiencing great difficulty in manipulating his crutches. As the people rushed by, someone accidentally bumped into him, knocking the brightly wrapped parcels in all directions. The man who caused the mishap stopped only long enough to scold the youngster for being so clumsy and getting in his way. Another gentleman, seeing the boy's distress, went to his aid. He quickly picked up the scattered gifts and slipped a dollar bill into the youngster's pocket, saying, "I'm sorry, sonny! I hope this makes up a little for your trouble." With a smile he went on his way. The child, who had seldom been shown such kindness, called after him in gratitude, "Mister-- please sir, are you Jesus?" "No," replied his now-found friend, "but I am one of His followers."

#### d. The consecration of the priesthood

Exodus 28:41

“And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.”

A few centuries before Christ a man named Alexander conquered almost all of the known world using military strength, cleverness and a bit of diplomacy. The story is told that Alexander and a small company of soldiers approached a strongly fortified walled city. Alexander, standing outside the walls, raised his voice and demanded to see the king. When the king arrived, Alexander insisted that the king surrender the city and its inhabitants to Alexander and his little band of fighting men. The king laughed, "Why should I surrender to you? You can't do us any harm!" But Alexander offered to give the king a demonstration. He ordered his men to line up single file and start marching. He marched them straight toward a sheer cliff

The townspeople gathered on the wall and watched in shocked silence as, one by one, Alexander's soldiers marched without hesitation right off the cliff to their deaths! After ten soldiers died, Alexander ordered the rest of the men to return to his side. The townspeople and the king immediately surrendered to Alexander the Great. They realized that if a few men were actually willing to commit suicide at the command of this dynamic leader, then nothing could stop his eventual victory.

Dear friend, are you willing to be as obedient to the ruler of the universe, Jesus Christ, as those soldiers were to Alexander? Are you as dedicated and committed to Him? Are you willing to give you whole life for Him? Think how much impact we could have in our home area and in the lives of others if we would be willing to consecrate ourselves to His service and work with great zeal and vigilance.

Phillips Brooks once said:

“It does not take great men to do great things; it only takes consecrated men.”

God is looking for consecrated or dedicated people in His work and service today. The Church today on a whole lacks true dedicated followers. Most are not prepared to serve God. They are not prepared to fully dedicate or consecrate themselves to His work. So in this study we need to find out the importance of preparing ourselves for consecrated and dedicated service for the Lord.

How can a person prepare themselves for consecrated service?

1. He must be cleansed.

The official consecration of the priests began when Moses thoroughly washed Aaron and his sons at the door of the Tabernacle. They went through a ceremony of consecration that involved washing and sacrificing animals. This procedure reminds us that we need to be cleansed from all our sins before we can be ready to serve God.

Exodus 29:4

“And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.”

Leviticus 8:6

“And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.”

Now let's first think about the typical meaning of this action. There are several ways to view this cleansing action with the priests. If Christ is being typically depicted by Aaron the high priest we must remember that the Lord Jesus had no sin that needed to be forgiven (Heb. 7:26). This creates a typological dilemma in the minds of some. However, we must remember that Jesus was willing to be baptized by John the baptizer in order to identify with the sins of mankind (see Matt. 3:13-17). John's baptism reflected a need for cleansing in the people's lives (Matt. 3:6) and Jesus was willing to enter through the baptism of John, not as a sinner Himself, but as the sinless One (Heb. 9:14) who would one day take their sins upon Himself and remove them (John 1:29). Jesus was baptized in order to identify (the real meaning of baptism) with the sins of sinners declaring that He would one day take away their sins. So Jesus wanted to be baptized by John to “fulfill all righteousness” or the righteous requirement that He

commanded for His own baptism so that He might convey a message of hope to all lost sinners. Jesus being baptized was a reminder that He would one day receive the baptism of judgment for our own sins when He died on the cross (Matt. 20:22).

I think Harry Ironside expresses the idea correctly when he states: "He who was to take the sinner's place came to be baptized of John, that he might thereby be identified with sinners for whom he was to lay down his life."

You see, Jesus did have sin but it was not His own sin. It was the sins of the world that would one day be placed upon Him. This truth is given in such a passage as Isaiah 53:6 which says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (see also Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 10:11; II Cor. 5:21; and I Peter 3:18).

So Aaron and the priests receiving cleansing was a reminder of the willingness of Jesus Christ to identify with sinners by taking their sins upon Himself and providing lasting cleansing or forgiveness before God.

Typically speaking, it can also be true that the One who corresponds to the work of Moses (cleansing the earthly priests) could be Jesus Christ. In a practical sense we must remember that it is the Lord Jesus Christ who cleanses us from all our sins so that we can be born again. As believer priests (1 Pet. 2:9), we have been saved by what the Bible calls "the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). This means that Christ cleanses us from all our sins so that we can receive His new life or birth. Without His washing that relates to salvation we would have no hope. We would be like a dying tree which has no future. The Biblical imagery of washing speaks of cleansing (Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 36:25). We first of all need salvation's cleansing in order to give us forgiveness and acquittal in God's sight and a new birth. This is a once-and-for-all cleansing necessary to bring salvation and new life into our own personal lives. There is a cleansing that is necessary to provide us with salvation before God. However, there is a daily cleansing that is needed in the Christian life that leads to restored fellowship with God. In another sense, we need to be cleansed from our daily sins within our Christian life.



1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

We are dirty people that need to be cleansed from sin's defilement today. Have you taken a bath recently (John 13:1-10)? Have you allowed the Lord to cleanse you and restore your fellowship and communion with Him? Some Christians live like atheists. They act like God really can't be known and enter into their lives. They live from day to day not really praying to Him, living for Him, and serving Him. Friend, we need cleansing. The moment sin invades our heart and life we must confess that sin so we might receive restored fellowship with God. Keep short accounts with God! God will forgive your sin if you confess them to Him.

In 1842 the first bathtub was denounced as a "luxurious and democratic vanity". Boston made it unlawful to bathe, except on doctor's prescription. In 1843 Philadelphia made bathing illegal between November 1 and March 15. Of course, this is ridiculous. But how tragic it to realize that most Christians have adopted a similar schedule for spiritual cleansing. They don't spiritually bath themselves on a regular basis. They would rather put up with the stench of their unconfessed sins than come clean before God! Now friend, God wants you to come clean before Him today and every day. Don't fail to confess your sins and allow God to cleanse you. We need the daily cleansing. We must remember that we can never be fully consecrated or dedicated to God if we are not clean before the Lord. Clean before my Lord I stand! How wonderful it is!

Let us never forget that cleansing precedes consecration to God and His service. It can't be any other way. We must come to Him clean if we are ever going to be truly dedicated to His service or work and effectively used for God. The sacrifices that were offered demonstrated this. The priests recognized that the sacrifices were being judged in their place when they would put their hands upon the heads of the bullock and ram (Exodus 29:10, 19). The ram is repeatedly called "a ram of consecration" (Exodus 29:22, 31, 33) that was given as an atoning sacrifice that would "consecrate and sanctify" the priests (vs. 33). One again, there needs to be cleansing from sin before one can be consecrated, dedicated, and set apart for

God's use. This is the clear typical lesson being taught by the priestly sacrifices (Lev. 8:28).

Exodus 29:20

"Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about."

A very interesting procedure was carried out with the blood of the ram (see also Leviticus 8:22-24). In order to prove that a cleansed sinner was ready to dedicate their life to God, the blood of the ram was applied to three areas of the priest's body. The blood of cleansing was applied signifying that they were cleansed and dedicated to God. When it was applied to the ear it signified that they were ready to listen to God and obey Him. *Our ears should be yielded to God today.* We must turn a deaf ear on the world's madness, music, materialism, and mortifying allurements that are trying to deaden our spiritual lives (Rev. 2:7, 11, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Anointed ears will be quick to respond to God's voice as He gives direction through His Word. When it was applied to the thumb it signified that they were ready for action and service. *Our hands should be sanctified and ready to be used of God.* When the blood was applied to the toe it signified that the priests were ready to walk with God in a holy manner that was pleasing to Him. We are to have a sanctified or holy walk before God today. Take time to be holy! The world rushes on! Yes, the world is rushing on to its doom (1 John 2:17) but we are commanded to take the time to live holy, walk with God, and consecrate ourselves to Him in the midst of sinful world of degradation.

Dear friend, we can listen to God (ear), serve God (thumb) and walk with God (toe) only after we receive a cleansing from the Lord (1 John 1:7). It's amazing what a fresh cleansing can do for our lives. It can change our heart and lives and prepare us for consecrated service for Him. How wonderful it is to be clean and ready to serve! There is no greater joy than being clean and serving the Lord. Why don't you come before Him and receive your bath today. When you get your spiritual bath you will be ready to serve and follow the Lord. We will be ready to dedicate our lives to the Lord.

Jesus said in John 6:38

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”

The Son knew what the Father’s calling was for His life and He obeyed that calling. Jesus was fully dedicated to the Father’s will. He was willing to follow God’s calling and direction for His life.

Philippians 2:8

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Today all believer priests should also be sold out for God and dedicate themselves to His will for their lives.

Psalms 40:8

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

We should be ready to say, whatever, whenever, and wherever. Now this is dedication or consecration to God!

2. He must be capable.

After being bathed Aaron and his sons were stripped of their old clothing and then separately dressed and anointed by Moses. Moses prepared the priests for their service and made them capable of serving in the priestly ministry.

Exodus 29:5-9

“And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.”

When Moses clothed the priests and anointed them with oil we are reminded of *how God prepares us for His service*. If we are not prepared to serve by receiving God's help and power then we will not be able to effectively serve Him.

The old saying is still true:

"The will of God will never lead where the grace of God cannot keep us."

The only way we can be capable or have the power, ability, and efficiency to serve God is by receiving God's anointing. This anointing is the anointing for power that comes through the Holy Spirit. *If we are ever going to serve God effectively and consecrate ourselves to Him then we must receive the divine capability, power, and ability to serve Him*. This can only come through the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The ceremony with the anointing oil reminds us of this precious truth.

a. The consecration of oil

Exodus 29:7-9

"Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons."

This anointing service or service of consecration was initiated by Moses who poured anointing oil over Aaron's head and then sprinkled his sons (Ex. 29:21). As we have seen in an earlier study, oil in the Bible is a consistent type of the Holy Spirit (1 Samuel 10:1-10). This does not mean that whenever the word oil is used in the Bible that it represents the Holy Spirit. However, as we study the Tabernacle and its clear types one cannot miss the typical significance of the anointing oil that was poured upon the priests.

Oil was used to officially consecrate or dedicate Aaron and his sons to their priestly service and ministry. The Bible says that the oil was comparable to an anointed crown on the head of the high priest ("the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him" - Lev. 21:12). The

Bible also teaches that the oil ran down his beard to the hem of his garments.

Psalm 133:2

“It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.”

My friend, we need this fresh anointing today in our lives. We need it to permeate our lives and overtake us. It is the anointing of the Spirit's power so that we can be dedicated or consecrated to God's service. The entire ceremony with oil becomes a beautiful type of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

During His earthly ministry and days of humanity Jesus Christ submitted to the power and availability of the Holy Spirit anointing to empower Him for service.

Luke 4:18

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”

It was said of the Lord Jesus, “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him (John 3:34). Jesus possessed the full endowment of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit without measure or limit. This is because He perfectly availed Himself to the full person and ministry of the Holy Spirit upon His life.

Edwin Hatch wrote:

“Breathe on me, breath of God;  
Fill me with life anew,  
That I may love what thou dost love,  
And do what thou wouldst do.”

We need the Holy Spirit to do something different in our churches, lives, and service today.

A pastor once prayed:

"Do something for us today that isn't in the bulletin."

Only the Holy Spirit can make a difference in our hearts and lives. As we have seen, oil is a fitting symbol of the Holy Spirit operating in the lives of Christians. Now dear friend, we need the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit upon our lives today so that we can live for God effectively in a world that is full of sin, self, and Satan. It was said of Christ at another place that "Thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above they fellows (Heb. 1:9). We have already seen that Jesus received the Holy Spirit at His baptism (Matt. 4:16-17). Today in the New Testament era every believer priest receives the presence and power of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (Rom. 8:9-10; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:30) which in return anoints him or empowers him for service. *The reception of the Holy Spirit into our lives is not a post conversion experience.* We receive His presence and power for living the moment we are saved. My friend, we need the powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit's ministry upon our lives today. Like the oil that ran down the beard of Aaron and all over his garments (Ps. 133:2), so we need the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Without His empowering ministry we cannot be consecrated to God's service. We cannot serve Him effectively and victoriously. We cannot move out with God's true blessing and power.

Ephesians 5:18

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

When the Holy Spirit fills our lives we receive His anointing or power for service and every day living. To be filled with the Spirit means to be controlled by Him. It means to be taken over by His life and power. How wonderful it is to be controlled by God's Spirit instead of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our three arch enemies are still out to get us and we need God's fresh anointing upon our lives today to counteract their influence and force. The Spirit's control will replace sin's control. His power is greater than the power of all your sin. His power is greater than the power of Satan. How wonderful and glorious this is.

Dwight Lyman Moody said:

“God commands us to be filled with the Spirit, and if we are not filled, it is because we are living beneath our privileges.”

A city dweller moved to a farm and bought a cow. Shortly after he did, the cow went dry. When he reported this fact to a neighbor farmer, the farmer expressed surprise. The city man said he was surprised too. "I can't understand it either, for if ever a person was considerate of an animal, I was of that cow. If I didn't need any milk, I didn't milk her. If I only needed a quart, I only took a quart." The farmer tried to explain that the only way to keep milk flowing is not to take as little as possible from the cow, but to take as much as possible. Is that not also true of the Christian life? Those who only turn to God only in the time of need miss the real joy that flows from a daily infilling of His Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit's filling ministry in our daily lives so that we can live effectively for the Lord.

We need the anointing of the Holy Spirit's power upon our lives if we are going to make an impact on this world. We need the anointing of the Spirit's power in our lives today if we are going to live free from the power of sin and Satan. There is a way out! There is a way to freedom and release. The way is the way of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

Romans 8:4

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

My friend, who are you walking after today? If you are walking after the dictates of your flesh then you are going to live in constant defeat. You need the Spirit's power to be unleashed in your life today. The Holy Spirit resides within you to offer you a new dynamic and power for living. You don't have to live the way that you used to live. God has made a way for you to live different through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will change our actions, attitudes, affections, attire, and agenda in life.

Oswald Chambers said:

“The Holy Spirit cannot be located as a guest in a house. He invades everything.”

When we allow the Holy Spirit to invade our life and work, there is always a want – a want for more holiness, more grace, more victory, and more of Jesus.

This goes back a few years as you car buffs will realize. Several years ago a daughter's station wagon coughed and choked all the way to the Christian bookstore in the mall. While she stood at the bookstore counter, the daughter moaned, "I'm not sure we can make it home in the station wagon. If only dad had driven the station wagon and left the Dodge Spirit for us!" Of course, the Dodge Spirit was the name of a popular car. At the very moment the daughter said this, she glanced outside the store and happened to see her dad driving by in the Dodge Spirit to a restaurant next door. She quickly ran outside crying, "Daddy! Daddy! Help! We need the Spirit." My friend, we need the help of the Holy Spirit today. Our lives without the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit are like a broken down car. We need His avail ourselves to His power so that we can live like a child of the King. We need His power for victory over lust, pride, and everything that the devil is throwing at us. We need His power for service and witness. We need His fruit being manifested in our lives so that we can live a spiritual life within our homes and on the job. In general, we need His power to be dedicated or consecrated to God.

“Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,  
By the pow’r of grace divine;  
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,  
And my will be lost in Thine.”

#### b. The fragrance of oil

It’s interesting that the anointing oil was made of a specific formula that had a sweet fragrance which permeated the person over which it was poured.

Exodus 30:22-28 states:



“Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot.”

This represents a beautiful picture or type of Jesus Christ whose life was a sweet fragrance before God and mankind (Heb. 7:26). Also, as believer priests (1 Pet. 2:9) who are anointed with the Spirit’s power, we too can emit a sweet fragrance to both God and the world when they see the consecration and dedication of our lives to Him.

Acts 4:13

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”

By the Holy Spirit’s power operating in our lives others will notice that we are followers and imitators of Jesus Christ. As we move throughout society by the Spirit’s power we can leave behind the lovely fragrance of a consecrated and dedicated life to God. Others can see that something is different in us and that we are God’s people who have a different value system and way of living which does not mimic the world and all of its hellish and heathen practices. Have you been leaving behind the lovely scent of a changed and transformed life? Do other see your consecration and dedication to God by the way that you live, act, and what you say?

c. The misuse of the oil

Exodus 30:32-33

“Upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy

unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.”

There were some prohibitions concerning the use of the anointing oil. The oil was never to be poured upon the flesh and it was to be made of the right ingredients. It was only to be used for the special anointing service. It was not to be used for any other purpose. It was not to be sold to a “stranger” (heathen Gentile) without God’s sore displeasure and judgment. This is very up-to-date for our times. The Word of God never becomes outdated, outmoded or archaic as people say today. When we think of the true anointing ministry of the Holy Spirit we must remember that Christians cannot produce the results of the Holy Spirit’s anointing by their own fleshly programs, practices, and pursuits. The Word of God reminds us of this right here when it talks about the proper use of the oil. *We must never try to duplicate the work of the Spirit through unscriptural methods and ways.*

The late Dr. A. W. Tozer, author and pastor once said:  
“If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference.”

I agree with this for much of what is passing as the presence and power of the Holy Spirit today is nothing more than the display of man’s feelings and his own fleshly pursuits. When a man gets up in a service and barks or howls like a dog, when he jumps up and down on the pew and rolls around on the floor like a snake, you can be sure that it’s not the movement of the Holy Spirit upon his life. It’s the movement of his own flesh (“upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured”). God is a God of order (1 Cor. 14:40) - not chaos. I once witnessed a man using long extended battery cables and he was actually hooking people up to a car battery. The shock would come from the battery, pass through the cables, and then into the bodies of the people. The preacher said that this was the movement and power of the Holy Spirit being manifesting throughout their bodies. Now friend, the Holy Spirit is not in the battery business! He is not revealing His power and person through the silly means and fleshly antics of man today (“upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured”).

Too many are trying to duplicate the anointing of the Holy Spirit in many different, unscriptural, and silly ways. But God has His own way and movement of the Holy Spirit today and it's not what we see taking place in the modern-day Charismatic movement which equates the moving of the Holy Spirit with speaking in some kind of gibberish sounds, jiving to jazz music in the church while dancing around, climbing tent poles, and the TV glamorization of people falling backward when a man blows His breath on them. My friend, this is not the movement of the Holy Spirit. It's the movement of man! It's the movement of the flesh ("upon man's flesh shall it not be poured"). Listen, the Holy Spirit's anointing can only come when we walk by His inward power and allow Him to take control of our lives on a daily basis. The anointing has nothing to do with the silly movements of man who is trying to create a false anointing experience that has no Biblical basis. Let us walk in the Spirit today and everyday. We don't dance to rock music in the Spirit, laugh in the Spirit, or become slain by the Spirit. These are all fleshly pursuits that are being promoted today. The church needs to stop trying to imitate the ministry of the Holy Spirit today though secular means. It is hurting the testimony of God's Church.

### 3. He must be committed.

Aaron and his sons repeated the ceremony of consecration for seven days. This was a real commitment to God's plan for consecration.

Exodus 29:35-37

"And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy."

Since seven is the number of completion the keeping of the ceremony for seven days speaks of a complete commitment of the priests to God's plan of consecration for their lives. They were willing to commit themselves wholeheartedly and unreservedly to God's

plan. Their commitment to this plan demonstrated their resolve to be fully consecrated to God.

Jesus, as our sacrificial priest, offered Himself upon the cross. He was completely committed to the work that the Father had sent Him to do. He was will to be totally committed to the Father's plan for His life. In fact, when He was on the cross He cried out, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Jesus was fully committed to the end and finished the work of redemption that the Father had planned for the human race.

As believer priests today we are to be completely committed to the work that God has called us to in order to demonstrate our willingness and desire to be fully consecrated to God.

Romans 12:1 says:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

We are to present our bodies once and for all to God and place them at His disposal. This is a wonderful truth that needs to impact your life today. This is complete commitment demonstrating a person's desire to be fully consecrated to God. It is placing ourselves at God's disposal. We present ourselves to God once and for all and say, "Here I am Lord, use me." The Levitical sacrifice was killed upon the altar. However, God's people are to be "living" sacrifices which means they should always be ready to be used of God and for His glory. When we present our bodies to God and for His use they will be a "holy" presentation. This means we *set our bodies apart for His own righteous and pure purposes*. We will present them to God so that they might only be used for His godly purposes. When we do this our bodies will also be "acceptable" to God. In other words, God is pleased with them for we are using them for His glory and service. Furthermore, when we fully dedicate or use our bodies for God it becomes our reasonable service or act of worship before God. It is our reasonable or rational service in this sense. If the Son of God died for me and saved my soul from an everlasting burning hell, then the least I can do is live for Him.

This verse speaks of complete commitment to God. The priests kept the ceremony of consecration for seven days to demonstrate their complete commitment to God's plan of consecration for their lives. As believer priests today we too must be willing to stay committed to God's plan and purpose for our lives. If we are every going to be consecrated and dedicated to God we must be willing to surrender to God and present our bodies to Him fully and without reservation. And we should do it in view "of the mercies of God" (Rom. 12:1).

C. T. Studd said:

"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him."

Isaac Watts' great hymn says the same thing:

"Love so amazing, so divine, demands my heart, my life, my all."

We should sing:

"Only one life to offer, Take it, dear Lord, I pray;  
Nothing from Thee withholding, Thy will I now obey;  
Thou who hast freely given, Thine all in all for me,  
Claim this life for Thine own, to be used my Savior,  
Every moment for Thee."

#### e. The conduct of the priesthood

One midsummer evening a Christian entered a bee-garden to observe the habits of those fascinating little insects. He noticed that a continuous hissing sound seemed to flow from the hives in a wavelike rhythm. The old beekeeper whispered, "They are fanner bees. They keep the hive sweet and fresh. If you could see them, you'd notice that they stay near the center of the colony and their wings are moving so rapidly that they appear almost like a gray mist. They're forcing the bad air out while the pure air is being drawn in. You can actually feel the gentle breeze produced by those numerous tiny bee wings." The keeper then said to his interested guest, "Those fanner bees are pushing out bad air while at the same time bringing in fresh air. Do you know that Christians are to act the same way in their daily lives. They should push out the bad and bring in the good."

This is good advice to follow. God expects us to push out the old and bring in the new so that our conduct in this world is becoming and acceptable in His sight. Proper conduct in our Christian life helps us to maintain a proper testimony before our families and a watching world. 1 Timothy 4:12 says that we should be “an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Timothy was instructed to not be intimidated by his relative youthfulness or what others might think of it. Instead he was to demonstrate his Christian maturity by living a godly life that would become a pattern for other Christians to follow. The word “example” (tuπος) means a type, model, or example of what it means to be a Christian. Christians are to be an example or testimony in their “word” (in their speech – what they say), in their “conversation” (in their living – how they live), in their “charity” (in their love – what they love), in their “spirit” (in what they are – what kind of inner attitude, disposition, and motivation they possess), in their “faith” (in their trust in God and commitment to God - who they trust and commit to in life), and in their “purity” (in their holiness – what they look like).

The study of the conduct of the priests will remind us how God wants every believer priest today (1 Pet. 2:9) to live in a fashion that is pleasing and honoring to Him. Our conduct and deportment in life is very important. The world is watching us and seeing if they want to become a Christian. They are seeing if we live different, sound different, look different, and act different. What do others see when they look at you? Do they see an example of how a Christian is to live, act, and conduct themselves? What kind of example have you been in your Christian life this past week? Our conduct and testimony as a Christian can have a positive impact on the lives of others. However, the way we live can also have a negative impact on the lives of others if we fail to set forth an example that is holy and in keeping with God’s truth. As New Testament priests we must understand the importance of right conduct and living before God and others.

In order for the priests to be examples before their fellow Israelites certain restrictions were placed upon them so that they might

possess a good testimony before the nation. The priests were seen to be chief men among the brethren (Leviticus 21:4) and they were to set the example, pattern, or testimony that God required for His servants and service. Their manner of conduct was very important.

There are four truths related to a believers conduct.

### 1. Conduct that disqualifies (Lev. 21:1-15)

If a priest disobeyed the divine regulations of his office he was immediately dismissed from service in the Tabernacle. Because of their priestly position they were denied a number of privileges.

#### a. Funeral Rights

Leviticus 21:1-4

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people: But for his kin, that is near unto him, that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother, And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no husband; for her may he be defiled. But he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself.”

The priests were not permitted to ceremonially defile themselves by taking part in any funeral rites except those legally permitted by God. God taught that touching and associating with dead people was a form of ceremonial defilement (Lev. 22:4). This may seem strange to us today but we must once again understand that God created many rules under the Mosaic Law which were designed to teach the people their need to live clean and holy before Him (Lev. 20:24-26). He wanted His people to possess a marked difference from the heathen people that surrounded them (“which have separated you from other people” - Lev. 20:24). The laws were designed to *illustrate* God’s desire for holy and consecrated living. They became *teaching tools* for them to help them see that God is a holy God and that He requires them to be set apart and different from the heathen nations that surrounded them.

A great deal of time would be spent away from ministry if the priests officiated at the funerals of those who died in the wilderness. Furthermore, if a priest came in contact with a dead body he was unclean for seven days (Numb. 19:11-14). The only ceremonial defilement that the regular priests could experience was when they attended the funerals of their mothers, fathers, sons, unmarried daughters, and wives (Lev. 21:2-3). However, the high priest was not permitted to defile himself by attending even the funeral of his father or mother.

Leviticus 21:10-11

“And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes; Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother.”

In other words, the high priest was not permitted to interrupt his ministry even to attend the funeral of his father or mother. God did not want him defiled in any fashion. Too much was at stake. The high priest needed to remain pure for he was the leading spiritual figure of the people. This command to not attend the funeral of a dead family member may seem rather harsh and heartless for God to command but it must be remembered that the high priest was totally separate to do the things of God by the anointing oil poured on him (Lev. 21:10). By this law God taught the importance of the purity of those who are leaders. Of course, in a typical fashion this points to Jesus Christ who was absolutely pure, separate, and undefiled from sinners.

Hebrews 7:26 says:

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”

All of this study concerning the priest's need for purity typically portrays the coming great High Priest – Jesus Christ. Jesus as our great High Priest was never corrupted or defiled in any way. He lived a pure life and offered Himself to God as a pure sacrifice upon the cross (Heb. 9:14 – “offered himself without spot to God”) so that He could be the perfect and only sacrifice that could “put away our sin” (Heb. 9:6). The perfection of the priests was a type of the Lord Jesus



Christ who had not sin, blemish, or spot. Jesus was the “lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19).

As we think of the funeral rights there is also a practical lesson in all of this for each one of us as believer priests. It’s a lesson that Jesus taught while He was here on earth.

Matthew 8:21-22

“And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.”

What Jesus said in this passage correlates to the priests need to remove themselves from their dead family members refusing to defile themselves. This again seems rather harsh and heartless but we must understand what Jesus is communicating to this would-be disciple. Although Jesus desired to have disciples that would follow Him and work in His spiritual harvest fields, He wanted only those who were properly motivated. Jesus knew the hearts of these two disciples. One disciple wanted to follow Him to achieve his own fame and status in society (Matt. 8:19-20). Jesus reminded the first man that following Him involved lowliness, hardship, and self-denial (see Matt. 16:24-25). Being a disciple of Jesus Christ does not involve fame and fortune. The wealth and health movement of today should reread what Jesus said! They should reread the contract for discipleship. Jesus spoke of a requirement for discipleship that the first man would never want to follow. This proved that he was not a genuine disciple that wanted to really follow Christ.

The second man wanted to go home and bury his father. Whether or not the father had already died makes little difference. The basic trouble was expressed in the contradictory words: “Lord ... me first.” He put self ahead of Christ. I don’t personally believe that this man’s father was dead or even at the point of death. This would-be disciple was simply saying he wanted to return home and wait until his father died. Then he would return and follow Jesus. His request demonstrated how he felt about discipleship or following Christ. He viewed discipleship as something he could pick up or lay down at will. He put family and material concerns ahead of Jesus, for he apparently wanted to receive the estate when his father died. Jesus

taught that there is a cost in discipleship. If a person really wants to follow Him that person must be willing to put Jesus Christ first. He must be willing to sacrifice his life totally to Christ's will and purpose instead of worrying about fame, family, and fortune.

The lessons are these. First, the time for discipleship is right now – not later. Many people will say, “I have some other things I want to do before I really get seriously about living for Jesus Christ. I want to have my fling and do my thing.” If you are saying this then you are just like this man. You are also deceived or duped by the devil. When you put off turning your life over to Jesus Christ you are taking the bait of Satan who is trying to keep you from a lifelong commitment to Christ. Second, if you really want to become a dedicated follower of Christ you must be willing to forsake fame, family, and fortune. You must be willing to say, “Lord Jesus, I'll serve You no matter what my family thinks, no matter what my fame or fortune will be. I'll serve You just because I love You and want to please You more than anything else in all the world. Dear friend, are you ready to become a follower of Jesus Christ today? Are you ready to stop playing around with the world? Are you ready to stop worrying what others will think about you if you follow Jesus Christ? Are you ready to place yourself totally and unreservedly under the authority of Jesus Christ? Are you ready to make Him Lord of your life? Are you ready to commit yourself to Him? Are you ready to abandon your selfish living and take up the cross of sacrifice and surrender for Him? It's time to follow Jesus.

Luke 14:26-27

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

Today the church wants to market the cross instead of taking up the cross! Many today want to feel comfortable living their own life in the way they want to live it. And they go to churches that make them feel comfortable in their sins. They don't want to surrender and sacrifice their lives for Jesus Christ by giving up their petty sins and personal goals in life. Instead of a cross they want the crowd. Instead of a cross they want to be cowards!

As we think of funeral rites we must also point out that the priests were also prohibited from mourning in the customs of the heathen nations surrounding Israel. They were not to mimic their superstitious practices or ceremonies of mourning over dead people which involved shaving their heads, beards, eyebrows (Lev. 19:27; Deut. 14:1) and making cuts in their flesh (Lev. 19:28). It's certainly not wrong to mourn over the death of a loved one. Even Jesus did this over the death of Lazarus (John 11:33-36). However, when a priest would mourn in the same manner that the heathen mourned they would dishonor God, profane His name, and the priesthood position.

I think there is an important and valuable lesson for us today as believer priests. We should not try to mimic the methods and mannerisms of the heathen or unsaved people who live around us in society. Many of their methods and mannerisms are rooted in the world system that is against God. Their lifestyle is fueled by sin and Satan instead of the Savior. God does not want us to conform to their patterns of living and lifestyle.

Romans 12:2

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

The old verse in Jeremiah 10:2 is still applicable to our life today which says, “Learn not the way of the heathen.” Today the church wants to live like the heathen. They want to listen to their same type of music. They want to dress like them – in a provocative way. They want to go to all the same places and do all the same things as the heathen do. Christians are no longer different than non-Christians. When we seek to conform our lives to the standards of the heathen people living around us we will find ourselves in the place of rebellion and lose our testimony for Jesus Christ. And let me say this today. A testimony is a terrible thing to waste!

#### b. Family relationships

God gave instructions regarding the family relationships of the priests. He set down some very clear guidelines for them to follow.

## 1. Their wife.

It was also mandatory for the priests to make wise choices of marriage partners. They were prohibited from marrying “an harlot (prostitute), or profane (a disgraceful non spiritual woman – one outside of Israel), neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband” (a divorcee) – Leviticus 21:7. The high priest had even greater restrictions (“a widow” - Lev. 21:14). The wife was to be a virgin woman (Lev. 21:13). Her virginity was a safeguard to assure that her first child (the next potential high priest) was really his own, and so of priestly lineage.

We find that the wife of the priest had to have a good testimony among the people so that she would not bring reproach on their husband’s ministry (Lev. 21:8). This is why a wife was not to be divorced. Dear friend, God’s ideal plan for marriage has not changed throughout the changing dispensations. God still hates divorce (“he hateth putting away” – Malachi 2:16). Now, God does not say that He hates the divorcee! Nor does God say He can’t use divorced people. What God says is that He hates divorce! Let’s hear His voice today! The divorce epidemic in the church needs to stop! Many today want to live like the heathen which are all around them thinking they can divorce their marriage partner for another. God’s blueprint and best for marriage is that marriage is for keeps. God has not changed His word on marriage.

Today believer priests should be holy in their marital relationships. God wants us to stay married to only one marriage partner throughout our journey on earth. Jesus clarifies this in Matthew 19:4-6.

“And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Paul the apostle gave marital instructions to the spiritual leaders of the local assemblies in the New Testament. They were to be “the

husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2, 12; 1:6). In short, every leader connected with church ministry was to have only one wife. He was not to be divorced. God has a high and holy calling for those who engage in ministry. They are not to be divorced. They are to have a good testimony of faithfulness to their marriage commitment and fidelity in their marriage relationship. You had better find the right one and then stick with them. This is God’s way for marriage. It’s not Hollywood’s way but it still is God’s way! Marriage is to be lived out in a way that will bring glory and honor to God. This can only be accomplished if husbands and wives will fulfill their rightful roles in the marriage relationship.

## 2. Their children.

The priests also had the responsibility to see that their children married according to the law.

Leviticus 21:15

“Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the Lord do sanctify him.”

This verse teaches that the priest’s posterity or offspring had to be pure. This could mean several things. First, the high priest could disgrace his “seed” or offspring (new born son) by not marrying a virgin. In doing this he may give birth to a son that is not his own and in the priestly line. So the high priest needed to be sure that he married a woman without any previous sexual experience. In doing this the high priest would ensure that his son was truly his own son and in line for the priestly office. The birth of a boy outside the priestly line would be a disgrace to the nation and priesthood position. Second, it’s also true that the high priest had to be sure that his grown “seed” or son marry properly and conduct himself in a sexually clean manner or else he would allow his son to be profaned or disgraced among the people and disqualified from the priesthood.

If the high priest did not see that his son marry and act according to God’s holy law then the son could not serve in the position of the priest for he would be defiled. A terrible thing occurred in the history of the priesthood. The high priest Eli allowed his two sons Hophnie and Phinehas to eat the choice cuts of the sacrificial meat that

belonged to God (1 Sam. 2:12-17) and also commit adultery at the door of the Tabernacle (1 Samuel 2:22) causing the people to lose respect for the priest and the Tabernacle (“for men abhorred the offering of the LORD” - 1 Sam 2:17).

The priests were to make sure that their children lived right and married properly.

Leviticus 21:9

“And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.”

Children who live lives of rebellion of disgrace their fathers! In the New Testament Paul instructed the spiritual leaders to oversee the behavior of their families. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 says that the leaders were to be “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?).” Children in Christian homes are expected to live in obedience to their parent, not disgracing them by rebelling against their leadership and authority (Eph. 6:1-3 – “children obey your parent in the Lord: for this is right”). Young people, you are to obey your parents for it’s the right thing to do! This is what God wants you to do and God is to be the Lord of your life. The enduring principle and lesson for us today is this. God expects us to train our children in such a way that they will learn to love the Lord, obey His Word, and serve Him. We don’t want our seed to disgrace us when we get older. Eli did not do this and he suffered the heartache of children who turned away from God and who went their own sinful way in life.

“A careful man I ought to be,  
A little fellow follows me.  
I do not dare to go astray  
For fear he’ll go the selfsame way.  
I cannot once escape his eyes,  
What e’re he sees me do he tries.  
Like me he says he’s going to be –  
The little chap that follows me.  
He thinks that I am good and fine,  
Believes in every good word of mine.

The base in me he must not see –  
The little chap who follows me.  
I must remember as I go,  
Thru summer's sun and winter's snow  
I'm building for the years to be –  
That little chap who follows me.”

## 2. Conduct that is deficient (Leviticus 21:16-24)

The priests had to be physically fit, manifesting no deformities or blemishes, in order to qualify for sacrificial service in the Tabernacle. If they tried to serve with blemishes their conduct would be deficient or inadequate and unacceptable to God.

### Leviticus 21:16-24

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish (physical blemish somewhere on his body), let him not approach to offer the bread of his God . For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach (the service of the Lord): a blind man, or a lame (crippled or physically disabled), or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous (any deformity of any kind), Or a man that is brokenfooted (crippled foot), or brokenhanded (crippled hand), Or crookbackt (hunchback), or a dwarf (dwarfism or midgets), or that hath a blemish in his eye (defective eyes or vision), or be scurvy (eczema - an inflammation and itching of the skin), or scabbed (festering and running sores), or hath his stones broken (damaged testicles); No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire (he could not serve in any of the sacrificial offerings): he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God (they could not serve even in the meal offerings). He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy (his share of the peace offering), and of the holy (food that was their share from the other sacrificial offerings). Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar (he could not sacrifice), because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them. And Moses told it unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel.”

The potential priests who were commissioned to sacrifice were rejected for blemished bodies, blindness, physically disabled, a flat nose, deformed limbs, a broken foot of hand, a hunchback, dwarfism, defective eyes, eczema, scabs, or being a eunuch. All these physical abnormalities were considered to be a blemish upon the man's life keeping him from serving as a sacrificial priest. It's not that God hated any of these people. God was simply teaching a practical lesson by giving these conditional laws. God was teaching that His servants were to be holy and clean when serving Him. They were not to be blemished by sin and uncleanness in any way. These laws served as symbols and teaching tools which presented the truth that God's people must be clean for God's service. The ceremonial wholeness through physical wholeness and normality under the law served as a constant reminder of being clean and right before the Lord. As we have already seen, some Christians have moral and ethical blemishes from their past that disqualifies them from serving in an official leadership position in the church (1 Tim. 3:2, 12; 1:6). However, in a more general application we must remember that God demands purity when serving Him. Do you have any known blemishes in your life today that are keeping you from serving the Lord? What is standing in the way of your service and commitment to God? What is that sin? God is trying to put His finger on that sin so that you will see it and abandon it. What is that hidden love of the world that is keeping you from selling out for Jesus Christ? God is looking for clean vessels today. He is looking for vessels fit for the Master's use!

2 Timothy 2:21

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

"Filled to overflowing,  
Hearts aglow and showing.  
Christ to those who do not know Him;  
Sanctified holy, Yielded to Him only,  
Vessels for the Master's use."



### 3. Conduct that defiles (Lev. 22:1-16)

The priests that were physically defiled with sickness were instructed to “separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel” (the sacrificial gifts that the children of Israel would bring to be sacrificed – Lev. 22:1-2). They were commanded to not participate with any holy sacrificial offerings “having his uncleanness upon him” (Lev. 22:3) without suffering exclusion from the nation. Several diseases are listed which would ceremonially defile a priest and keep him from serving in the Tabernacle.

#### Leviticus 22:4-5

“What man soever of the seed of Aaron is a leper (leprosy), or hath a running issue (open wound, running sore such as gonorrhoea); he shall not eat of the holy things, until he be clean. And whoso toucheth any thing that is unclean by the dead (coming in contact with something defiled by a dead body), or a man whose seed goeth from him (bodily emissions). Or whosoever toucheth any creeping thing (unclean animals), whereby he may be made unclean, or a man of whom he may take uncleanness (an unclean person), whatsoever uncleanness he hath.”

#### Leviticus 22:8 also says:

“That which dieth of itself, or is torn with beasts, he shall not eat to defile himself therewith: I am the Lord.”

These diseases or contact with those things which were deemed unclean would ceremonially defile a priest. Therefore God had to put in place a system for cleansing. An elaborate system was devised with contained many detailed rules for cleansing and keeping oneself pure from defilement (Lev. 22:6-16). If a priest defiled himself He was required to wash completely and be pronounced cleansed, then wait unto after sunset, before being permitted to eat in the Tabernacle offerings (Lev. 22:6-7). Why? It's because God is concerned that His people remain clean in His work (“unless he wash his flesh with water” – Lev. 21:6). God was also concerned about their well being (Lev. 21:9). Let us learn the lesson well as believer priests today. Through daily communication with the world we can become contaminated and ineffective in God's service. Defilement makes us dirty and defiles us. It takes away our effectiveness for God and

brings God's chastening hand upon our lives (Heb. 12:6). Today we don't have to go through an elaborate system of rituals to cleanse our lives. We don't need to wash in water (vs. 6) wait until evening (vs. 6) to be cleansed. We can be cleansed right now if we confess our sins to God (1 John 1:9). This is the promise of God!

The priests were not to share the Tabernacle food, which came from the sacrifices, with just anyone.

Leviticus 22:10-13

"There shall no stranger (some person or laymen not of the priesthood) eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest (traveler lodging with a priest), or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing. But if the priest buy any soul with his money (purchased slaves), he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat. If the priest's daughter also be married unto a stranger (someone outside the priesthood family), she may not eat of an offering of the holy things. But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof."

God wanted to be sure that only those who were qualified ate of the sacrificial offerings would partook of them. His holiness required this. He did not want others to eat of the sanctuary food or sacrifices that were not qualified. This would become a breach or infraction of God's holiness. It would show careless, disregard, and irreverence for God's holy way.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:6:

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

Under the Mosaic Law dogs and swine were unclean animals and here the terms are used to depict wicked people. When we meet ungodly people who treat divine truths with utter contempt and respond to our preaching of the claims of Christ with abuse and violence, we are not obligated to continue to share the gospel with them. The point is this. As the priests were not to share the holy

sacred things (sacrificial foods) with those outside their house so we today are not to share the holy truth of God's Word with those who want to make a mockery out of it and trample on it. Sometimes we must know when to stop evangelizing!

Many today in this pragmatic marketing generation are trying to cast pearls before people who are not interested in the Gospel. They are playing the devil's music in church and they are doing it to please the dogs and swine instead of the Lord! How utterly unholy and irreverent it is to God's Word and His holy character.

Leviticus 22:14

"And if a man eat of the holy thing unwittingly, then he shall put the fifth part thereof unto it, and shall give it unto the priest with the holy thing."

If any person that was forbidden to eat of the sacrifices ate out of *ignorance* then he had to restore the portion eaten plus 20 percent of its value. Why did God give all of these stringent regulations for the priests and people concerning eating? It was to make them conscious of the importance that He placed on His sanctuary and its holy function. God wanted to teach the people how to honor His holiness as they served Him! This is a very important lesson that we need to learn today.

Leviticus 22:15-16

"And they shall not profane (defile, desecrate, pollute) the holy things of the children of Israel (the sacrificial offerings that were eaten), which they offer unto the Lord; Or suffer them to bear the iniquity of trespass, when they eat their holy things: for I the Lord do sanctify them."

We need to remind ourselves today as believer priests that God expects us to live in a way that honors His holiness. We don't want to "profane" or disgrace the Lord in our own personal lives and in the place that He has given us to worship today. The meetings today in our churches or assemblies should promote reverence and respect so we don't "profane the holy things" related to God's Word and His own personal character. I'm afraid that when we come to church with bad attitudes, worldly music, and rebellious hearts that we profane

His meeting house. We bring disgrace upon his house. Today we bring disgrace upon God's truth and His holy character when we act like the world, look like the world, and sound like the world in our meetings and daily living. "They shall not profane the holy things." (vs. 15). We disgrace God's Word and name when we live the life of the drunkard, the smoker, the gossip, the backbiter, the liar, the curser, the pornographer, and the compromiser who gives in to the world.

#### 4. Conduct that calls for discretion (Lev. 22:17-33)

Finally, the priests were to use discretion in the types of sacrifices which they gave. We have already studied about the different types of sacrifices. One thing stands out with all of them. They had to be pure and clean sacrifices. There could be no blemishes in them for this would deem them unholy in God's use.

Leviticus 22:20

"But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you."

Leviticus 22:22

"Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the Lord."

Leviticus 22:24

"Ye shall not offer unto the Lord that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; neither shall ye make any offering thereof in your land."

As believer priests today we must use discretion as we worship and give our sacrifices to God. We are commanded to "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). When something is polluted by the world's lust, flesh, and pride it can no longer be a spiritual sacrifice acceptable unto God! When something sounds like the world it is the world! It's not worship. When something caters to the flesh then it's the world. Peter identifies and connects right worship with "spiritual sacrifices" (1 Pet. 2:5) that are sent up to God because they come from the part of man's existence that houses

the new nature and which is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, spiritual sacrifices are non-carnal and they “are acceptable to God” (1 Pet. 2:5). They do not come from the flesh and therefore God accepts them as being holy and worthy of His praise.

Much of what is called praise and worship today is man-centered and fleshly oriented. When a man or woman is shaking their hips back and forth on stage, and trying to pump people up with a fleshly rock sound that the devil uses for sex, drugs, and rebellion, we can conclude that these expressions or actions are no longer a spiritual sacrifice. They become a perverted sacrifice. When the perverted sounds of a rock culture are heard within the music then the music becomes fleshly in its design and purpose. When the world gets into our worship, whether it’s through pride, pomp, prestige, a party spirit, or through personal gain, our sacrifices become polluted. Let’s face the music today. Let’s face our worship today. Let’s take a deep look at the kind of worship we are sending up to God today as believer priests. God is looking for worship that is holy and which does not disgrace the name of Christ and Christianity.

**Why should we seek to live holy?** God gives us the answer in the closing verses of Leviticus 22.

1. Because God is preeminent (“I am the LORD” – vs. 31).

Since God is in charge and sets the rules we should surrender our lives to Him! God is on the throne and we should bow before His rule and authority over our lives.

2. Because God planned our holiness (“I am the LORD which hallow you” – vs. 32).

God wants us to be holy for He is holy (1Peter 1:15-16). God wants us to reflect His holy living and methods.

3. Because God purchased us (“That brought you out of the land of Egypt” – vs. 33).

God has paid a purchasing or redemption price for us when He left Jesus die on the cross for us. Through Christ’s blood sacrifice He

purchased us from our slavery to sin and sin's condemnation (1 Cor. 6:20 – "Ye are bought with a price").

4. Because God privileged us ("to be your God" – vs. 33).

God has given us the great unfathomable privilege of becoming our God! How wonderful! God wants to be our God. He wants to lead our lives, protect our lives, control our lives, and free our lives. Since He is our God we should want to serve Him and live for Him today.

### John Wesley's Rule for Christian Living

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as You can!

f. The Commission of the priesthood (the Day of Atonement)

On one occasion, President Harry Truman was asked to speak at a fund-raising project to help the children of a White House guard, who was slain in the line of duty, while protecting the president. With great feeling President Harry Truman said, "You can't imagine just how a man feels when someone else dies for him." Well, I think I can. There was another man, the man Christ Jesus, who died for me. He gave His life upon Calvary's cross so that I might live forever in God's presence.

In our final study of the Tabernacle we want to look at the priestly work on the day of atonement. The high priest was given the commission or charge to present the atoning sacrifice in the holy of holies once a year. The high priest was given the authority to function as the sole representative for the entire nation and offer a yearly blood sacrifice. This was the most important sacrifice for it covered the sins of the people for another year. So the commission to function as the high priest and present the annual blood sacrifice was the

highest calling and commission that anyone could receive within the nation of Israel. In this point we want to investigate the meaning of the atonement and the procedure that the high priest went through on the day of atonement as he fulfilled his highest commission. Studying the day of atonement will be a fitting end to this study on the Tabernacle.

There are four points related to the priestly work of atonement.

### 1. The Meaning of atonement

Leviticus 16:17

“And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.”

Leviticus 16:30

“For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.”

Leviticus 16:34

“And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the Lord commanded Moses.”

The meaning of the word “atonement” (kaphar) as it appears in the Old Testament means literally “to cover.” It points to the truth that the people’s sins for another year were covered and passed over by God. God atoned for their sins. God covered their sins and in doing so provided every Old Testament saint with ceremonial and ritual forgiveness on a yearly basis. This means God would not hold the people accountable for their sins and would not judge the people for breaking His holy law. This is why the atoning sacrifice on the day of atonement was so important.

Under the old covenant (Mosaic Covenant) sin was never actually “put away.” Sin could not be taken away until Christ died on the cross and opened up the fountain of His New Covenant blood sacrifice

which would actually provide legal and eternal forgiveness in God's sight. In short, under the New Covenant sins would be taken away!

Hebrews 10:16-17

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Under the Mosaic Covenant the people received ritual forgiveness through animal sacrifices that covered their sins for another year. But the book of Hebrews states that the people were reminded of their sins every year and the need for another atoning (covering) sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:3-4

"But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

We must remember that the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were pictures, portraits, personal object lessons to teach about the true coming sacrifice and Savior Jesus Christ. Since there was a need for a blood sacrifice every year the people were reminded about their sins. They could never rest in the fact that all of their sins were erased before God and that they were accepted in His presence. This is why there was a veil and unending sacrifices on the day of atonement. The sin question was never fully and finally settled until Jesus came and took all of those sins away which were previously covered in the Old Testament.

Romans 3:25

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (satisfying sacrifice for our sins) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

When the Bible speaks of "the remission of sins that are past" it's referring to Old Testament saints and how their sins were only covered and in need of forgiveness. God in Old Testament times, through animal sacrifices, held back His judgment through what the Bible calls "the forbearance of God." Yes, God was forbearing. God held back His judgment! Instead of judging the people for their sins



God covered their sins through yearly sacrifices and provided a way for them to be forgiven and saved until Christ would come and die upon the cross to free them from their sins forever.

It should be noted that there were hundreds of sacrifices that were offered by Israel throughout the year but these offerings appropriated the efficacy (saving value) that stemmed from the atoning sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. In other words, the most important offering was the offering made on the Day of Atonement for it was the offering God required to accomplish the actual work of atonement or covering of sin for another year. The wonderful thing is this. In His mercy, God “covered” the sins of the Old Testament believers through a blood sacrifice until Christ would come and die on the cross and take away their sins and provide for them the actual forgiveness and acquittal in His sight through Christ’s sacrifice. The sacrifice of Christ would open the way of access into God’s presence and give all men final and eternal acceptance in His presence.

Hebrews 9:8

“The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.”  
But here is the good news!

Hebrews 10:19

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

The Old Testament saints had indirect access to God through a priest and animal sacrifice. The barrier of a curtain or veil taught that access into God’s presence could never be fully realized and obtained under the present sacrificial system. Our access is different in that Christ, as our high priest and sacrifice, is seated at the right hand of God. His resurrected life in Glory proves that the Father has accepted His blood sacrifice on our behalf and that now we can be brought into the very presence of God, fully accepted and forever acquitted in God’s sight. Through the New covenant sacrifice of Jesus Christ our sins can be actually taken away so that we can be finally accepted in God’s presence. This means we receive actual acquittal and forgiveness in the very presence of God and that God accepts us forever. Under the Mosaic Covenant the sin question was never

settled. Under the New Covenant the sin question is settled forever. I can say today with one hundred percent assurance that my sins are not covered - they're gone! Jesus Christ has freed me from the penalty of these sins forever. How wonderful this it to know and accept. I'm forgiven, free, and forever accepted in the presence of God.

“You ask me why I'm happy so I'll just tell you why,  
Because my sins are gone;  
And when I meet the scoffers who ask me where they are,  
I say, "My sins are gone.”

They're underneath the blood on the cross of Calvary,  
As far removed as darkness is from dawn;  
In the sea of God's forgetfulness, that's good enough for me,  
Praise God, my sins are gone!”

## 2. The message of atonement

The high priest offered an atoning sacrifice every year. The Scriptures make this very clear. The message conveyed by the atoning sacrifices of the Old Testament was one of repetition.

Leviticus 16:34

“And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the Lord commanded Moses.”

Hebrews 9:25 says “the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others (other animal sacrifices). The Bible teaches that the high priest could enter into this room only once a year (“once every year” – Heb. 9:7) to do his sacrificial service upon the mercy seat.

This does not contradict what the Bible says in the Old Testament regarding his repeated entrance into the Holy of Holies on the day of atonement. Hebrews is teaching that the high priest entered the Holy of Holies on one day out of the year. This is true even though he entered several times on this single day. The term “errors” (Hebrews

9:7) actually means “no knowledge” and refers to the sins of ignorance that the people committed. A difference was made between sins committed presumptuously and out of ignorance (Numb. 15:22-31). Atonement was also needed for sins done out of ignorance since we sin ignorantly and are in need of divine forgiveness because of ignorant sins. When Jesus died on the cross He died for all of our sins even those we would commit out of ignorance. Our savior paid for all of our sins when He died yonder upon Calvary – even our ignorant ones. Jesus paid the penalty for all our sins.

You will also notice that the priest had to offer for himself (“which he offered for himself” – vs. 7) since he too was a sinner by choice and ignorance. Of course, Jesus did not die for His own sins on the cross for He had no sins. Jesus was the sinless One. However, on the cross Jesus did take the penalty and judgment for the sins of the world upon Himself. He became a sin offering on the cross so that we “might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

Since these were atoning sacrifices they were repeated sacrifices. They were repeated every year so that another set of sins which were committed throughout the previous year could be covered. Of course, the repetition of the atoning sacrifices every year did not convey the truth that Christ would repeat His sacrifice many times on the cross. The Bible states that Jesus Christ would die only once to take away sins in contrast to the yearly atoning sacrifices of the Old Testament which only covered the sins of the people every year. In contrast to these repeated sacrifices Christ died only once!

Hebrews 9:12

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

Hebrews 9:25-26

“Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Christ, through means of the shedding of His precious blood, died on the cross only once and then entered Heaven. Christ entered Heaven to represent us as our great High Priest, the One who has paid for sin's penalty in full and who has granted us eternal acceptance in God's presence. Don't miss the main point. Christ died only once, He shed His blood only once, He died to save us only once. Once for all Christ rescued me!

“Once for all, O sinner, receive it,  
Once for all, O brother, believe it;  
Cling to the Cross, the burden will fall,  
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.”

There is no such thing in Scripture as the Roman Catholic Mass. The name “mass” means a continual sacrifice and repetition of Christ's sacrifice. Romanism believes that Christ's death is reenacted and reoffered as the bread and wine are passed. This simply goes against the very clear teaching of Scripture. I'm not saved by eating Jesus and drinking down His blood. I'm saved by believing in His finished work on the cross. Jesus died for me once to save me once and for all and forever!

The sacrifices of the Old Testament remind us of the coming One who would die on the cross and become the final sacrifice for sins. The Old Testament blood sacrifices pointed to the person (Jesus Christ) and the procedure (a blood sacrifice was needed) but not the permanence of Christ's sacrifice. The New Testament reveals the permanence of Christ's sacrifice on the cross in contrast to the old sacrifices. The Old Testament atoning sacrifices were prophetic object lessons designed to teach

Theologians speak of Christ's death as the atonement in their theology books but the New Testament never speaks of Christ's death in this way. Why? It's because in the strictest sense Christ's death is not atonement (a covering). It's actually a death that takes away sin and provides every Gospel believer with complete and final forgiveness in God's sight.

### 3. The manner of the atonement

In this point we want to study the manner or procedure that the priest went through on the Day of Atonement which is known by Jews as Yom Kippur. We will look at the procedure presented in Leviticus chapter sixteen. Here is an outline that may help us to see the procedure of the high priest on the Day of Atonement.

Before starting this chapter something must be clarified. Verses 1-10 provide a general overview of what the high priest did on the Day of Atonement. They are setting the background for what God required and took place on the Day of Atonement. The remaining verses (11-34) explain the actual events as they occurred on the Day of Atonement and fill in other details. We must keep this in mind as we briefly work through the next verses. There is a gradual unfolding and explanation of events throughout the chapter. We are given a preview (1-10) and then the details are filled in later (vv. 11-34).

#### a. Remember (Leviticus 16:1-2).

Leviticus 16:1-2

“And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died; And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.”

Nadab and Abihu forms the backdrop for these instructions. A fate similar to theirs would befall the high priest if he entered the Most Holy Place (literally “holy” – referring to the Holy of Holies) on any day other than the Day of Atonement. The priest needed to remember what happened to these two men. God struck them down. They both suffered death. The presence of God that appeared in the glory cloud above the mercy seat made sure that nobody could enter His presence in a forbidden manner or unholy fashion without paying the price.

#### b. Requirements (Leviticus 16:3-10)

The requirement of God for the high priest was very clear. The priest had to be sure that he was first personally cleansed and ready to serve through the wearing of different garments, the washing of the body, and the worthy sacrifices presented to God.

### 1. The wearing of different garments (Lev. 16:4a)

Leviticus 16:4

“He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.”

There was *the wearing of special clothes*. The high priest would also wear a special uniform, not the ornate garments that he usually wore to carry out his regular duties. This uniform consisted of four white garments. This dress was even simpler than that worn by the other priests (Exodus 39:27–29). The symbolism of his white dress would speak of his purity or cleansing (Exodus 28:39-43; Rev. 19:8) in his preparation for God’s special service.

### 2. The washing of the body (Lev. 16:4b)

There was also the *washing of the body*. The ceremony of washing at the laver (“wash his flesh in water”) also speaks of cleansing before service. Before offering any sacrifices the priest had to present himself as cleansed, righteous, and ready to serve. Of course, Jesus Christ is the pure and righteous mediator (Heb. 7:26-27) who serves as our High Priest today.

### 3. The worthy sacrifices presented to God (Lev. 16:3, 5-10).

Leviticus 16:3

“Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.”

The priest would first offer a *worthy sacrifice* for himself and family on this day. In other words, this was a sacrifice that was suitable, excellent and appropriate to offer to God. It was what God required.

There were actually many offerings given on the Day of Atonement. On this day the high priest would carry the blood of a young bull or steer into the holy of holies (vs. 27) that was first offered on the brazen altar as a sin offering and the blood of a ram that was offered on the brass altar as a burnt offering. The sacrificial offerings he made for cleansing were very important. By way of preliminaries, he brought the blood of a bullock and a ram into the holy of holies, which he would offer for himself and for his family as we will see in the following verses (vv. 6, 11).

#### Leviticus 16:5

“And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.”

The sacrificial ram was already addressed (vs. 3). This verse reiterates the importance of the ram sacrifice one more time and then no longer mentions the ram sacrifice. However, this verse adds two goats to the atonement picture. The explanation of the goats will be given in the verses which follow.

#### Leviticus 16:6

“And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.”

This verse now comes back to the “bullock” (young steer) that was mentioned in verse three. It once again explains the purpose for the bullock offering. It was offered on the brazen altar as a sin offering and then the blood was brought into the holy of holies to make “atonement” for both the priest (“himself”) and “his house.” The priest and his family came first on the Day of Atonement. This sacrificial act will be explained in even more detail in the following verses (vv. 11-15) when the high priest is seen to actually enter the holy of holies.

#### Leviticus 16:7-10

“And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to

make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.”

Two goats were needed to bring atonement to the nation. One goat would be chosen by lot to become the sacrificial goat (“sin offering” – vs. 9). The goat would be sacrificed on the brazen altar and his blood would be brought into the holy of holies and sprinkled on the mercy seat (vs. 27). The other goat would become the “scapegoat” (vs. 10). The word translated “scapegoat” is Azazel, meaning “goat of departure.” This goat would be presented “alive” and then left go in the wilderness. It too was necessary for atonement. The explanation of what this goat stands for will be given later as the atonement drama unfolds. These verses dealing with the goats are a preview of the procedure that would be followed and explained later. In fact, everything in the first ten verses is a prior explanation of

### c. Rituals (Leviticus 16:11-34)

In the remaining verses of this chapter we see the rituals being carried out. What was previously introduced to us (vv. 1-10) is now put into action. The high priest is seen to actually enter the holy of holies to accomplish his sacrificial work on his own behalf, his family, and the entire nation. We now come to the ritual that was carried out on the Day of Atonement.

#### 1. Sacrificial rituals (vv. 11-19)

The rituals of sacrifice on the Day of Atonement were given for various people and reasons as we are about to see.

##### a. Sacrifice for himself and household (vs. 11)

Leviticus 16:11

“And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself.”

The high priest would kill the young steer at the brazen altar. He would then take a bowl of the blood and bring the blood into the holy



of holies to make an atonement for himself and his household (vv. 6, 17). This is what the New Testament teaches.

Hebrews 5:3

“And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.”

Hebrews 9:7

“But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.”

Leviticus 16:12-13

“And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.”

Before any blood could be brought into the holy of holies the cloud of God’s presence above the mercy seat needed to be covered so that the high priest would not die (“that he die not”). No man in his humanity can look upon the glory of God and live (Ex. 33:20). Therefore, the high priest would take a censer of burning coals from off the brazen altar and “sweet incense” (vs. 13) and carry these two items into the Holy of Holies. There he poured the incense over the live coals, causing a cloud of incense to cover the mercy seat (vv. 12, 13). The important point is this. Sacrificial blood had to be offered before the presence of God in the Holy of Holies for that blood to be atoning and efficacious (effective) in God’s sight. The blood had to be offered in God’s presence to indicate His personal acceptance of the blood.

\* This would be the first time he entered the Holy of Holies on the Day Atonement.

Leviticus 16:14

“And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.”

The high priest would then leave the holy of holies and return to the altar of burnt offering for some blood of the bull. He would then take the blood inside the Holy of Holies and sprinkle it on top of the mercy seat and in front of it seven times (v. 14) which is the number of completion. As we have already seen this atonement sacrifice was for himself and family (vs. 6, 11, 17).

\* This would be his second entrance into the Holy of Holies.

#### b. Sacrifice for the nation.

Leviticus 16:15

“Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

Next, the high priest left the Holy of Holies and went to the brazen altar to kill the goat that was chosen for a sin offering (vs. 8). He then took the goat’s blood inside the Holy of Holies (vs. 27) and sprinkled as he did the blood of the bull, before and on the mercy seat. This time it was “for the people” or the nation (vs. 15, 34).

\* This would be his third and final entrance into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement.

First, he entered with the censor and sweet incense (vv 12-13). Second, he reentered with the blood of the bullock for himself and house (vs. 14). Third, he made a final entrance with the blood of the goat for the entire nation (vs. 15). According to the Jewish Talmud, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies after the evening sacrifice to bring out the censor. This is not confirmed by Scripture. He may have brought the censor out after the final sacrifice. We know from Scripture that the high priest entered the Holy of Holies at least three times on the Day of Atonement.

#### c. Sacrifice for the Tabernacle (vv. 16-19)

Leviticus 16:16 state:

“And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.”

While he was in the Holy of Holies the priest also made a ritual atonement for the Holy of Holies. This is because Israel’s sins of impurity were seen to be attached to the Holy of Holies (“because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel”) and for this reason the articles in the Tabernacle were to be cleansed. The ritual of atoning blood was seen to remove the pollution. Sin pollutes everything! Therefore, God wanted the Tabernacle to be cleansed of impurity. This is explained in even more detail in the following verses.

Leviticus 16:17-19

“And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.”

In verse seventeen instructions are given regarding the high priest and his entrance into the Holy of Holies. When he entered the Holy of Holies to present the blood sacrifices he was to be the only one in the Tabernacle tent structure. This is a vivid reminder of how Christ suffered and died for us alone. Alone, alone, He bore it all alone! Yes, He did!

Matthew 27:45

“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.”

This was the time when our blessed Lord carried the weight and judgment of our sin upon Himself. He was separated from the world

and separated from the Father. He was all alone taking the weight and judgment of our sins upon Himself.

The hymnwriter has expressed it thus:

“My sins were laid on Jesus,  
The spotless Lamb of God;  
He bore them all and freed me  
From the accursed load.  
My guilt was borne by Jesus;  
He cleansed the crimson stains  
In His own blood most precious  
And not a spot remains.”

Verses eighteen and nineteen once again explain the ritual atonement of the Tabernacle. The Bible says that the high priest would “go out” (vs. 18) of the Holy of Holies once again “unto the altar that is before the Lord (vs. 18 – either the altar of incense or brazen altar), and make an atonement for it.” The blood of both the bullock and goat was put on the horns of this altar and then sprinkled seven times on the altar itself (verse 19) to complete the ritual atonement (“and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel” – vs. 19b).

We know that in Exodus 30:10 that there was an atonement and cleansing procedure for the altar of incense.

“And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord.”

Is this the same altar being mentioned in Leviticus 16:18? We don't know. Some suggest that the High Priest made a ritual atonement and cleaning for the brazen altar also and that the altar being referenced in Leviticus 16:18 is the brazen altar. The brazen altar was specifically said to be “before the LORD” (Lev. 1:3, 5) and it may be that this is the altar being spoken of in the Leviticus passage. If this refers to the altar of incense God was saying that anything that was associated with God's presence (the Holy of Holies and the altar

of incense) was to be purified by blood atonement. Probably both altars were cleansed as the priest made his way out of the Holy of Holies. Exodus 30:10 mentions the altar of incense where Leviticus 16:18 mentions the brazen altar. The Bible seems to teach that the entire Tabernacle was cleansed.

Leviticus 16:33

And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.”

## 2. Sending rituals (vv. 20-22)

Leviticus 16:20-22

“And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”

The scapegoat was mentioned already (vs. 10). However, the details and exact procedure are now given in the following verses. After the Tabernacle was ritually cleansed the high priest would move out into the main courtyard of the Tabernacle and lay his hands on the head of “the live goat” (vs. 21) confessing the sins of the people and ritually “putting them upon the head of the goat” (vs. 18). *Aaron laying his hands on the head of the live goat pictures the placing of the sins of Israel on the goat.* The goat was seen to take upon himself the sins of the people. A chosen man (“fit man”) then would led the goat into an uninhabited part of the wilderness and let the goat go free to roam in the wilderness. This action was designed to pictorially represent the goat taking away their sins (“bear upon him all their iniquities” – vs. 22). It illustrated the forgiveness that the people received through atonement.

Now remember this. There were two goats. One was sacrificed (vs. 15, 27) and the other was left “alive” to take away the sins of the people (vv. 10, 21-22). This action is very typical of Jesus Christ. In the broad scheme of typical teaching we know that Christ not only had to die upon the cross as our sacrifice to take away our sin (Heb. 9:26) and sins (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) but He also had to rise from the dead to ensure our release from sins.

1 Corinthians 15:17

“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

The live goat reminds us of the importance of Christ’s resurrection to validate (substantiate, confirm) the removal of our sins. In other words, the thing that made Christ’s death efficacious (effective) is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Christ had not risen from the dead there would be no proof that the Father accepted His sacrifice and no way for Christ to validate His claims of deity and His ability to take away our sins. Therefore, the resurrection was absolutely necessary and is an integral part of the Gospel message (1 Cor. 15:3-4). We have no forgiveness without the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are hopelessly lost and headed toward hell. Jesus Christ had to be raised to make our forgiveness valid and sure.

The first goat typically portrays the ground of our forgiveness through Christ’s sacrifice (1 John 1:7). The second goat portrays the proof of our forgiveness by reminding us that the resurrection of Christ was necessary to validate and confirm our forgiveness before God. The scapegoat was sent off into the wilderness bearing “all their transgressions” (vs. 21). The goat in the wilderness typically portrays how Christ took all of our sins away from us and vows to remember them no more. It teaches the practical truth of forgiveness. This goat was called the “scapegoat” or escape goat (vv. 8, 10). My friend, Jesus became our scapegoat who took away our sins into the wilderness of God’s forgetfulness. Through His death and resurrection I can be forgiven.

The goat was left to wander in the wilderness. In one sense, our sins were transferred out into the wilderness of God’s forgiveness and forgetfulness. Our sins are gone!

“Gone, gone, gone  
Yes my sins are gone.  
Now my soul is free  
And in my hearts a song”

Dwight Moody's father died when Dwight was only four. A month later Mrs. Moody gave birth to twins; she now had nine mouths to feed and no income. Merciless creditors dogged the widow claiming everything they could get their hands on. As if Mrs. Moody didn't have enough troubles, her eldest boy later ran away from home. Certain that her son would return, Mrs. Moody placed a light for him in the window each night. Young Dwight was inspired by her faith and prayers. He wrote: "I can remember how eagerly she used to look for tidings of that boy; how she used to send us to the post office to see if there was a letter from him--some night when the wind was very high, and the house would tremble at every gust, the voice of my mother was raised in prayer for that wanderer."

Her prayers were answered. Her prodigal son did eventually return. Dwight remembered: "While my mother was sitting at the door, a stranger was seen coming toward the house, and when he came to the door he stopped. My mother didn't know her boy. He stood there with folded arms and a great beard flowing down his breast, his tears trickling down his face. When my mother saw those tears she cried, 'Oh, it's my lost son!' and entreated him to come in. But he stood still! 'No mother,' he answered, 'I will not come in until I hear first that you have forgiven me.'" Mrs. Moody was only too willing to forgive. She rushed to the door, threw her arms around him, and there the prodigal found forgiveness. The same was true of all of us when we came to God for forgiveness. The heavenly Father threw His arms around us and forgave us of all our sins (Luke 5:20-32).

### 3. Supplemental rituals (Leviticus 16:23-34)

The supplemental or additional rituals are actually the closing rituals on the Day of Atonement. They are mentioned in the following verses. We will highlight these verses to bring out our main points.

After the procedure with the goat, the priest would move back into the tabernacle (tent structure) of the holy place and remove his linen or

white garments (vs. 23), wash himself in the holy place (vs. 24a), put on his regular garments (vs. 24b) and then “come forth” out of the holy place to the outside court yard where the brazen altar was. Here he would offer a burn-offering for himself and the people (vs. 24b). Apparently this was done at the brazen altar for the fat was then burned on the altar (vs. 25). Apparently these supplemental sacrifices and others stated in Numbers 29:7-11 were offered next in the Day of Atonement ceremonies.

The man who had released the scapegoat in the wilderness also had “to wash his clothes, and bath his flesh in water” (vs. 26) before returning to camp. Afterward the bodies of the bullock (young steer) and goat whose blood was sacrifices were carried outside the camp of Israel and burned.

Leviticus 16:27

“And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.”

Outside the camp means that the sacrifices were taken outside the outer fence that enclosed the tabernacle court and even outside the entire camp of Israel. This is a very important type of Jesus Christ who was judged on our behalf outside Jerusalem.

Hebrews 13:10-14

“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

This verse is picking up on the Old Testament procedure that we have just studied. The bodies of the atonement animals were taken outside the camp to be burned. My friend, outside Jerusalem on a hill called Mount Calvary Jesus was judged on our behalf. Fire is a type of judgment. Let us never forget that Jesus Christ took our judgment



upon Himself. He bore our hell so we don't have to go to hell. Our altar today is the cross of Christ who bore God's wrath and judgment on our behalf. He was our substitute who died outside Jerusalem. I still believe in the hill called Mount Calvary! It was on a hill called Mount Calvary outside of Jerusalem that Jesus died for you and me.

The person who burned the animals outside the camp would then wash before reentering the camp once again (vs. 28). This would complete the ceremony of the Day of Atonement typically reminding us today that Jesus Christ suffered outside the gate of Jerusalem (Heb. 13:11-12). The whole Day of Atonement ceremony was designed to be a statute (vv. 29-30) and a Sabbath day of rest (vv. 31-34) for the children of Israel.

The statute and Sabbath ceremonies were to be accompanied by genuine penitence or sorrow over their sin ("ye shall afflict your souls" – vv. 29, 31). Their hearts were to be broken and full of mourning when they realized how sinful they were and how gracious God was in providing an atoning sacrifice for them. Dear friend, when was the last time you mourned over the death of Jesus Christ? When was the last time in your devotional time of worship that tears rolled down your cheeks because of the Savior and what He has done for you? Let me tell you how to have revival. You will have revival when you remember the dreadful sinner that you were and how Jesus Christ took your place on the cross. It's good to "afflict our souls" once in a while as we remember the terrible price that was paid for our wicked and dastardly sins. It would do us good to mourn over the wicked sinners we were and the terrible price that Jesus had to pay in order to release us from sin's judgment.

Calvary was a terrible scene. It was a horrific scene of horror and hell as Jesus took the weight of our sins upon Himself. There was no greater price that could be paid. There was no greater expression of love that was made. There was no greater grace that could be displayed. Calvary covers it all.

#### 4. The mercy seat and atonement

Hebrews 9:6-7 explains:

“Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.”

The “first tabernacle” (vs. 6) is actually speaking about the first room (the holy place) where the priests would do the service of God every day. They lit the lamps on the lampstand every evening and trimmed the wicks each morning (Ex. 27:20-21; 30:7). They burned incense on the altar of incense every day (Ex. 30:7-8). They also replaced the 12 loaves of bread on the table every Sabbath (Lev. 24:5-9). All of this went on because their work was never finished. They were daily offering many sacrifices to the Lord on the brazen altar in the outer court. And along with these sacrifices went the work of burning incense and all the other duties of the tabernacle. They “went always” indicating that their work was never done. Their work was never finished. They were constantly moving. The very repetition of their work meant that it was never finished. There were always more sacrifices and work to do. The wonderful thing is this. When Christ died on the cross His work was finished. This is why He cried from the cross “It is finished” (John 19:30).

“Lifted up” was He to die;  
“It is finished,” was His cry;  
Now in Heaven exalted high.  
Hallelujah what a Saviour!”

The high priest could never say this since his work was never done. But when Jesus died on the cross it really was finished. Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice paid the full penalty for our sins, and God’s demand for justice was finally satisfied, when His Son died the sinner’s death. It truly was finished! Jesus finished the sacrificial system, He finished paying the penalty for our sins, He finished God’s plan for the salvation and redemption of mankind by providing the only way for sinful beings to be cleansed and brought into the presence of God. It’s finished! Jesus paid the full penalty, pleased God by satisfying His wrath and justice for sin, and provided complete pardon for mankind in God’s sight.

Hebrews 10:12

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

It truly is finished! Jesus offered His sacrifice and then sat down indicating that His work upon the cross was finished forever.

The “second” tabernacle (vs. 7) refers to the second room, which was the holy of holies. This room is explained in Hebrews 9:3-5:

“And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.”

We have talked about all of these items already in our study. The important item that is connected with the priestly function on the day of atonement is the “mercyseat” where the blood was sprinkled once a year. Please note that when the priest entered the most holy place he always entered with the blood of the sacrificial animal (“not without blood” – Hebrews 9:7). This is an important reminder of the blood that was sprinkled on the mercy seat. God has always painted a bloody picture in both Old and New Testaments. There was blood on the altar and blood on the cross! Salvation comes through the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:22

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

You can't have remission or forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood. Christ's shed blood which He shed on the cross of Christ (the New Testament mercy seat) becomes the basis of our salvation from hell and eternal life.

In the French Revolution, a young man was condemned to die by the guillotine, and was put in prison until his name would be called for execution. There were many who loved and cared for this young

man, but none more than his own father. When the time came and the names were called, the father, whose name was the same as his son's, went to the executioner's stand instead of his son. In this he revealed the ultimate of his love.

In a similar way, Christ showed the ultimate character of His love, when He died in the place of sinners. His death and the sacrificial shedding of His blood paid the price that God required so that sinners could be given eternal life.

The New Testament uses a word for “mercyseat” (hilasterion) which speaks of an appeasing or satisfying sacrifice to God. God looked at the blood which was sprinkled on the mercy seat and was satisfied. As a result He passed over their sins for another year. This is reminiscent of the Passover sacrifice that was sprinkled on the doorframes of the homes (Exodus 12:7).

Exodus 12:13

“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”

Atonement means that God covers the sins of the people and by doing so He can pass over these sins and not bring His judgment upon them. Through atonement God covers the sins of His people and passes over them, keeping His righteous judgment from falling upon them. This is what the mercyseat stood for in the Old Testament Tabernacle. It spoke of God appeasing His wrath and holiness through the blood sacrifice. This resulted in God passing over the sins of the people for another year.

I shall never forget my first year in Bible College at the Grand Rapids School of the Bible & Music. There were many adjustments and much growing up that I had to do. But it was during this first year that I would attend the church service where the late George Gardiner was preaching. This was the former church where the late M.R. Dehaan ministered. In those days the old Calvary Undenominational Church was not far from the school. Every time that I would walk in the front door of the church I would see the church sign. And the message on this sign became imbedded in my memory over these passing years.

It read, "When I see the Blood." The message on this sign became a constant reminder of how God passed over His people in the Old Testament and did not judge them. Their safety from God's judgment was all based upon the blood of the Lamb that was applied to the doorframes of their homes. However, it is also a reminder how God passes over every believer today who places faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ to provide for them a satisfying

Now the mercy seat is the place where the blood was sprinkled on the day of atonement. The mercy seat is presented in the New Testament as the cross of Christ which is the place where Jesus Christ shed His precious blood. As a result of the final mercy seat (the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross) we can escape God's wrath and judgment. Hallelujah what a Savior we have!

Romans 3:25

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (the mercy seat or satisfying and appeasing sacrifice of the New Testament) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

In other words, when Jesus died on the cross He became a "propitiation" or satisfying sacrifice which appeased the righteous judgment of God for sin. Jesus took our judgment for sin upon Himself and God the Father was satisfied with Christ's perfect sacrifice which paid for the penalty of our sins in full (Gal. 3:13). Jesus paid for the penalty of our sin and the Father accepts His sacrifice.

"Jesus paid it all;  
All to Him I owe:  
Sin had left a crimson stain;  
He washed it white as snow."

Now comes our faith in the mercy seat. God does give us responsibility. We need to place "faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:25) or faith in Christ's sacrificial death upon the cross. This means we place personal faith or trust in the truth that Jesus Christ has died on the cross, paying the penalty for our sins, and that He alone can save us from sin's penalty. The step of faith is when we move our own will

and take the initiative to reach out and rely upon Jesus Christ for our salvation from hell. The moment we place faith in Christ God appropriates or applies Christ's saving work to our lives. In other words, what Christ has done for us (dying on the cross to save us from hell) is directly applied to our lives and we are saved from God's wrath or judgment. *The blood of Christ actually takes away our sins and we find acquittal and release from sin's penalty.* The moment of faith is a moment of deliverance! In other words, when we place our faith in Christ (Gal. 3:26 – "faith in Christ Jesus") as our Savior, God applies the work of Christ to us, God releases us from our debt of judgment, God let's us go free! He saves us from judgment. Glory hallelujah Christ has set me free. Jesus is the mercy seat upon which the blood was sprinkled.

1 John 2:2

"And he is the propitiation (mercy seat or satisfying and appeasing sacrifice) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Once again we see that Christ's death becomes the sacrifice that God requires to satisfy His judgment for sin. First, Christ's death is an efficient sacrifice. In this verse we see that Christ's sacrifice (the mercy seat of the New Testament) becomes efficient (effective) in the lives of those who believe or take that step of faith to only trust in Christ for their salvation. Jesus paid for the penalty of our sins so we don't have to pay for it. Christ died in our place so we don't have to die and go to hell! When we place our faith in Christ's payment for our sin we are immediately released from the obligation to pay for our sins. How wonderful and glorious this is! Jesus paid the price for all those who believe. It becomes efficient and effective to those who believe.

Second, Christ's work is sufficient sacrifice. we also see that Christ's blood sacrifice provides a satisfying or appeasing sacrifice for the entire world of mankind. His death is sufficient in that it covered all mankind. This means that when Jesus died on the cross He paid sin's penalty for every man in the world. I depart from traditional Calvinism on this point. I believe the Bible teaches that God loves everybody, that Jesus died for everybody, and that everybody can be saved since the death of Jesus Christ was a satisfying sacrifice

provided for the entire world of mankind (“but also for the sins of the whole world”). In other words, Jesus died bearing the penalty for the sins of the entire world of mankind. You may say, “This does not fit into my theology.” This may be true but it does fit into the Bible! Here is an easy way to remember these truths. Christ’s death is sufficient to save all but efficient to save those who believe.

Speaking to his physician, John cried in great perplexity, "I might not live a week!" "Of course you may not, John, but very likely you will, and the medicine will be in the house; it will keep; and if you find yourself getting worse, you could take some. I shall not charge anything for it. If you should feel worse tomorrow you might begin even then." "Sir, I may be dead tomorrow!" "When would you propose to begin your medicine then, John?" "Well, sir, I hoped you would tell me to begin today." "Begin today, by all means," consented the doctor, kindly. "I am glad to see you realize how foolish it is to put off taking this medicine." And then the physician, reflecting upon their past conversations about spiritual matters, inquired, "But are you not being just as foolish when you put off taking the medicine which the Great Physician has provided for your sin-sick soul? I plead with you, John; don't put it off! Reach out and take the salvation that Jesus Christ offers to you today."

Dear friend, are you saved? Have you had your sins forgiven so that you can be freed from the judgment of hell? As I close this lengthy study on the Tabernacle I want you to know the One to whom all the sacrifices pointed. His name is Jesus. I want you to come to Him by faith and receive Him as your Savior.

John 1:12

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

What a privilege! What an invitation! What a never-ending story! Dear friend, there is a Savior who lights the way. There is a Savior that came to rescue us from hell. There is a Savior who wants to save your soul today. Jesus Christ is the only Savior and only way (John 14:6). Oh friend, do you know Him? Is He your savior? If not, why don't you trust in Him today? Come to Him today. Jesus promised that “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”