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The Awesome Holiness of God

Understanding Christ and His Church through the Tabernacle and the Offerings

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Myrrh Tree

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Chapter One

APPROACHING THE TABERNACLE

The complete and perfect solution to all of the difficulties and challenges facing the church in the world today can be found by simply studying and believing God's Holy Word! But men forget this indelible truth.

The great Bible teacher, Vernon McGee, who had a very effective radio ministry, pointed to this crisis about 40 years ago when, in his commentary on Romans, he said:

"How I wish that more men who claim to be evangelical really believed the Word of God – that it *is* the Word of God, that it is God speaking...In my opinion, the greatest sin in the church of Jesus Christ in this generation is ignorance of the Word of God."

Today a believer who knows the word of God and refers to it often is sometimes marked out as a troublemaker or a Pharisee or a legalist or, perhaps, an old-fashioned fundamentalist who doesn't know the true meaning of love. Few want to talk in depth about the glorious truths that the LORD has revealed for our benefit in His Word.

In a book published more than a hundred years ago, Dwight Moody said he had stopped going to parties or social gatherings made up of church members because "if you talk of a personal Christ, your company becomes offensive; they don't like it; they want you to talk about the world...When you speak of a risen Christ and a personal Savior, they don't like it." (*Secret Power*, Chapter 5).

Well, the Tabernacle of the Congregation speaks about the risen Christ! And it does so in remarkable detail. But few want to hear what the Father has told us about His Son through the wonderful structure known as the Tabernacle. Believers today would appear to have little or no knowledge of the Tabernacle or its significance. And yet it is one of the most rewarding studies that we can undertake in our walk with Christ.

This simple guide is designed to awaken in readers a renewed interest in the Tabernacle and its significance. The attached bibliography lists a number of excellent in-depth studies that will further enrich one's understanding of this remarkable subject (David Cloud's recent work, *A Portrait of Christ: The Tabernacle, the Priesthood, and the Offerings*, is recommended).

A huge part of God's Word is devoted to the Temple and to the central role that it played, and will continue to play, in the remarkable spiritual drama of the Jewish people. The main focus in the Book of Revelation, both geographically and spiritually, is on Jerusalem and its Temple, while a large part of the Book of Ezekiel is dedicated to describing the Millennial Temple that Christ himself will build on his triumphant return. And yet, historically, the Temple did not incorporate any significant element that was not already found in the Tabernacle.

The LORD gave the Israelites the Tabernacle in order to teach them about Himself and the glorious program of Redemption that He had prepared from the foundation of the world. ALL of this centers on His Son, Christ Jesus. To understand and relate to our Father, we must understand and relate to His Son. Until we do this we will miss most of what the Bible is telling us.

As Ironside stated: "It is of inestimable value to the soul to dwell upon God's estimate of His Son." (*The Levitical Offerings*, p.19)



The Tabernacle (tent and courtyard)

Some Christians believe that a study of the priestly functions described in the book of Leviticus is properly the preserve of scholars or 'advanced' Bible students, but this is not the case. Anyone who loves God's Word will be struck by the depth of truth contained in its pages. Many 'scholars' and 'experts' on the other hand have shown themselves to be largely unacquainted with the spiritual elegance of its teachings and the blueprint that it provides for a proper understanding of the New Testament and the church.

M R DeHaan, another Bible teacher with a much-loved radio ministry, put the matter like this:

""But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God..."
1 Corinthians 2:14. This explains why the Bible remains to a great degree a closed book to the most educated but unconverted man, while it is an open book to the most ignorant believers. This explains why a man may be educated and trained and hold all the theological degrees that all of the theological seminaries in the world can bestow upon him, and yet be utterly blind to the great spiritual revelations of the Word of God, while a poor, uneducated believer will see truths and revelations of infinite depth and glory in this Book of books."

– M.R. DeHaan, *The Tabernacle*, 1955

The Name of the Tabernacle

As a spiritual concept, the term *tabernacle* is immensely rich. It connotes something that is truly beautiful to man – home, shelter, security, habitation, protection, and a tranquil place to rest, set apart from the chaos of the world.

The Hebrew word for 'tabernacle' is *mishkan*, meaning habitation or dwelling place, especially a tent. The *mishkan* that the LORD asked the Israelites to build for the Ark of the Covenant is referred to in a number of ways in the Word of God. These include:

"Tabernacle of the congregation" – 133 times in the KJV

"Tabernacle of the LORD" – 12 times

"Tabernacle of witness" – 5 times

"Tabernacle of testimony" – 5 times

"Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation" – 4 times

"Tabernacle of the house of God" – 1 time

Sometimes the word "Tabernacle" refers both to the tent and to the courtyard that surrounds it, and sometimes to the tent only. Please bear this distinction in mind as we proceed.

The literal translation of the Hebrew words which the KJV renders "tabernacle of the congregation" is "**tent of meeting**." Even though it was the place where God dwelt among His people – the "Tabernacle of the LORD" and the "Tabernacle of the house of God" – the Bible refers to it overwhelmingly as the place where God met man.

Having said that, only designated members of the tribe of Levi could enter the courtyard, and a far smaller number, the sons of Aaron, could enter the Tabernacle tent. Members of the other tribes, if they could enter the courtyard at all, could come no nearer than the Brazen Altar which stood near the entrance to the courtyard. Thus, out of a total population or "congregation" of some two million people at the time of the Exodus, only a small proportion were able to enter the courtyard and approach the Tabernacle tent, while only a tiny handful could actually enter the tent itself.

The 'average' Israelite would only have known the Tabernacle from the outside. He would have been able to see the top half of the Tabernacle tent, draped with a sober covering of animal hide. The tent – which covered an area of just 15ft by 45ft – stood 15 feet high, while the surrounding bleached linen 'fence' was just 7½ feet high. The only colorful element was the linen 'gate', 30ft wide, which was embroidered with blue, purple and red stitching. It too was 7½ feet high.

The bleached linen fence – which enclosed a rectangular area of desert terrain 150ft by 75ft – comprised 20 pillars on each of the two longer sides, and 10 on each of the shorter sides. The only visible part of each pillar was a silver coated capital or knob ("chapter") just above the linen fence and, possibly, a small portion of the brass-coated pillar. Each of the pillars sat in a heavy brass socket set in the ground which was held in place by fixed cords, both inside and outside the courtyard.

Pillars of Cloud and Fire

If there was little to see from the outside, then in what sense was it a tabernacle *of the congregation* or *tent of meeting*? By what tangible means could the assembled tribes of Israel relate to it? The answer lies in a detail that many believers today seem to have forgotten. The living God manifested His presence to everyone through the pillar of cloud which towered above the Tabernacle by day and through the column of fire that rose above it by night. No matter where one was in the camp – an area that must have been three miles across, at least, to accommodate some two million souls – the cloud and fire, respectively, were always visible. They were a tangible ever-present consolation to every Israelite, from the smallest child to the oldest adult, since the cloud, which spread over the entire encampment, gave cover by day from the heat of the sun, while the fire gave a gentle light by night: "**He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.**" (Psalm 105:39)

All day, every day, and all night, every night, the LORD was making Himself known to His people from His habitation in the Tabernacle. And He did so continuously for forty years:

"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. (Exodus 13:21-22)

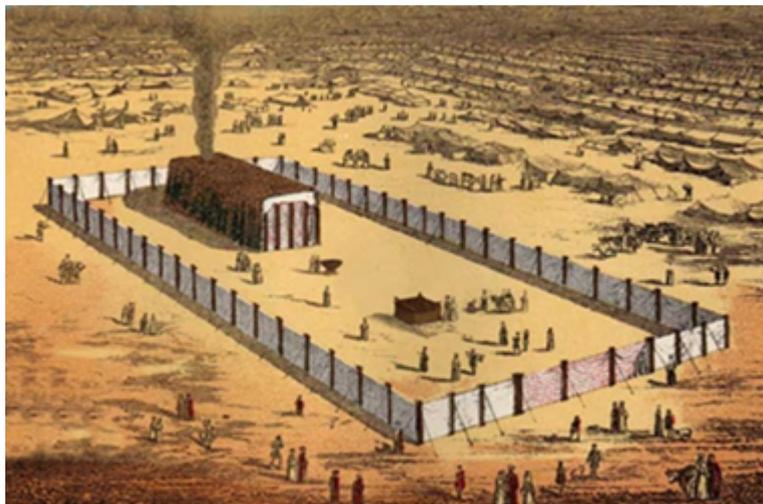


A pillar of fire covered the entire encampment by night.

It is important also to recognize that, even at this early stage in the revelation of His program of Redemption, the LORD had made provision for the edification of gentiles. The congregation included a "**mixed multitude**" (Exodus 12:38), that is non-Israelites – presumably Egyptians and Ethiopians in the main – who had been living in Egypt at the time of the Exodus and had decided to join the Jewish migration. Also, during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, enterprising members of surrounding gentile nations would likely have gone out to see the huge Israelite encampment and witness for themselves the canopy of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.

Isaiah tells us that exactly the same signs of divine protection will be visible in the Millennium, when Christ Jesus the Messiah reigns triumphantly in perfect righteousness in Jerusalem:

"When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." (Isaiah 4:4-6)



Numerical Meaning in the Tabernacle

As we consider the constituent elements of the Tabernacle, we need to bear in mind the numerical language that the LORD has used throughout His Holy Word. Numbers are used, not in a symbolic or numerological sense, but as a means of marking a characteristic or a property. Many great Bible scholars have drawn attention to this aspect of Scripture, including F W Grant and A J Pollock. It has nothing to do with codes or hidden meanings, but rather with the way Scripture employs numbers in a consistent manner in order to underline certain truths. For example, the number 7, which recurs so often in the Book of Revelation, signifies divine perfection, while the number 6 signifies man acting in his own strength. Thus the number '666' denotes man's wicked conviction that he can live without God and rely totally on his own resources.

The table below gives a short description of the significance of these numbers as God has employed them in His Word. Their relevance will become more apparent as we examine the structure of the Tabernacle and the remarkable program of Redemption that it embodies.

Number	Typical Significance in Scripture
One	supremacy, unity, self-sufficiency
Two	intensification, witnessing, testimony
Three	fullness, completeness, manifestation
Four	universal, inclusive, worldwide
Five	human responsibility, responsible action
Six	human limitation, the world under judgment
Seven	perfection, divine accomplishment, rest
Eight	new beginning, new era
Nine	[no generally accepted meaning]
Ten	perfected universality
Eleven	[no generally accepted meaning]
Twelve	manifest sovereignty, administration
Forty	testing, completed probation

Sources: *Bible Encyclopedia and Dictionary* by A R Fausset
The Numerical Structure of Scripture by F W Grant
The Tabernacle's Typical Teaching by A J Pollock

Please bear in mind also, as we study the Tabernacle, the living power and ongoing relevance of every verse in the Bible. Each is as filled with vitality today as when it was first written by the prophets. Alas, man in his foolishness has introduced many conventions that blind him to this truth. Even the terms Old and New Testament are a barrier to understanding God's Word in its totality. As Adolph Saphir remarked:

"The very names, Old and New Testament, I believe to be erroneous, and to have been productive of mischief. For what is meant by calling the writings of Moses and the Prophets "Old Testament"? Do they not set forth the covenant of grace? The doctrine of justification by faith: does not Paul in his Epistle to the Romans prove it from Genesis (case of Abraham) and from the Psalms (case of David, Psalm 32)? Where is the doctrine of substitution and the vicarious sufferings of the Messiah set forth more clearly than in Leviticus and in the 53rd of Isaiah? The term "Old Testament" leads people to fancy it is an antiquated book; whereas, in many respects, it is newer than the New Testament, referring more fully to the age of glory and blessedness on the earth which is still before us."

- *Christ and Israel*, Adolph Saphir, Chapter 8

Chapter Two

THE COURTYARD

The Tabernacle enclosure or courtyard was defined by a rectangular fence and gate, as follows:

- the fence consisted of 60 pillars.
- it enclosed an area 100 cubits (150ft) by 50 cubits (75ft).
- the 60 pillars were made of acacia wood overlaid with brass (See [Appendix A](#)).
- the pillars stood upright in brass sockets.
- each pillar was 5 cubits tall (7½ feet).
- the pillars were held upright by cords tied to brass pins fixed in the ground.
- all hooks and "fillets" (rings, clasps) were made of silver.
- each pillar was surmounted by a "chapiter" (crown, capital) of silver.
- 20 pillars stood to the north of the Tabernacle and 20 to the south.
- 10 pillars stood to the east and 10 to the west.
- the gate, which was east-facing, had 4 pillars and was 20 cubits (30 feet) wide.
- the gate consisted of a linen curtain with scarlet, purple and blue "needlework".
- the rest of the fence was covered with a curtain of fine-twined bleached white linen.
- the hanging along each side may have consisted of a continuous roll of fabric.

Nēchosheth

The Hebrew word *nēchosheth*, which the KJV translates as *brass*, may have been copper. Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc, but zinc is known to have been quite rare in ancient times. Bronze was another possibility. An alloy of copper and tin, it was much less ductile than copper and difficult to work without being recast. Every Israelite family would very likely have taken numerous items of copper kitchenware with them when they left Egypt. Archeological evidence shows that this metal was commonly used at the time. It was also of more practical value than bronze since it could be beaten into new shapes. It could also take a high polish and serve as a "looking glass" or mirror for cosmetic purposes (Exodus 38:8).

We also have another clue in Deuteronomy 8:9 which states, "**and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.**" Since brass is an alloy and cannot be mined, the metal in question was most probably copper.

For these and other reasons many scholars today believe that, in most instances (though not necessarily all) where the word *nēchosheth* is used in the Bible, it actually meant copper. However, to avoid confusion, we will continue to refer to this metal as "brass."

Metals

Three metals were used in the construction of the Tabernacle – gold, silver and brass (copper). As we have already seen, the number three denotes completeness, so we know that these metals between them conveyed a complete spiritual message. Bible scholars are generally agreed that

- gold signifies divinity or divine righteousness
- silver signifies atonement, redemption and sanctification
- brass signifies judgment and the consequences of sin.

Colors

The Tabernacle comprised two main color groups, namely, the three metallic colors – gold, silver and copper – and the four colors in the woven fabric – blue, purple, scarlet and white. As a set, these latter four denoted universality and therefore a spiritual truth that was applicable to the whole of mankind:

- Blue, the color of the sky, signifies the heavenly origin of Christ;
- Purple signifies the kingship of Christ;
- Scarlet signifies the shed blood of Christ;
- White signifies the perfect righteousness of Christ.

The other notable color was that of the outermost covering of the Tabernacle itself. Since this has been a matter of conjecture, we will discuss it separately (see Chapter Five).

While the word "white" is not found in Exodus, it is implied by the Hebrew word *byssus* meaning *fine linen*. Thus the term "fine twined linen" means a very pure, bleached white linen of the most expensive kind, which would normally have been available only to the Egyptian aristocracy. The Book of Revelation confirms the importance of linen as a symbol of perfect purity when it states:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Revelation 19:7-8)

The fence around the Courtyard, which consisted of pure white linen, declared that only a person clothed in righteousness could enter. The acacia pillars denoted our humanity, while the brass coating on each declared that the whole of humanity is under judgment before an awesomely holy God.

The fence would have formed a permanent barrier to lost souls were it not for the message of hope portrayed by the silver chapter or capital on top of each pillar. Silver denotes atonement and so points at all times to the shed blood of Christ.

The single entrance stood at the eastern end of the Courtyard. It comprised a gateway of four pillars, showing that it was accessible by all mankind (four being the number of universality). The curtain which draped the entrance was also made of "fine twined linen," but it was emboidered throughout with blue, purple and scarlet thread. These colors were an invitation to all to avail of the perfect work of Christ, to approach him in his deity, to submit to his sovereignty, to seek salvation in his shed blood, and to accept the gift of perfect righteousness which he alone could bestow.



Acacia tree (source of shittim wood)

The Tabernacle constituted a remarkable picture of Christ. Every detail of its construction and its various ceremonial activities proclaimed some aspect of his holiness, his purpose, and his perfect work. Through the Tabernacle and its prescribed ceremonial rites the Father was introducing mankind to His Son. In particular He was portraying His plan of Redemption, whereby fallen man could approach Him and be reconciled to Him.

By portraying His plan in this way, He was telling the world that there was no other path to salvation. If we refuse to approach Him in accordance with His holy will, keeping to the path that He has specified, we will never find Him.

Does this mean that all other religions are false and will never lead to God? Yes, that is exactly what it means. This is not something that men wish to hear, but it is the message of the Tabernacle.

The Law set a standard that no man – apart from Christ – could fulfill ("**...no man is justified by the law in the sight of God...**" – **Galatians 3:11**). The great hope in the Pentateuch lay, not in obedience to the Law, but in the promise of the Tabernacle, represented by the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place.

The Law, which was represented by the two stone tablets, confirmed with terrible force that man was under sentence of death and that there was absolutely nothing he could do to save himself. It allowed him to see that his condition was even worse than he had previously thought. But the tablets were under quarantine in the Ark, and the wrath of God, which they continuously authorized and invited, was held permanently in check by the Mercy Seat resting above them.

The two robes

The Tabernacle speaks about Christ in unexpected ways. Take, for example, the two robes which Christ wore briefly prior to his crucifixion:

"And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mark 15:16-18)

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him." (Matthew 27:27-31)

The Greek word for "purple" in Mark is *porphyra*, while the word for scarlet in Matthew is *kokkinos*. Despite the fact that two distinct colors are mentioned, some commentators, including Gill and Barnes, believed that, since the same sequence of events is being described in both Gospels, the same robe is being referred to each time. But the typology of the Tabernacle says otherwise. The four colors in the fabric of the Tabernacle are the same four colors that Christ 'wore' on the day of his crucifixion. In addition to his white linen robe, for which the soldiers on Calvary drew lots, he was stripped and dressed successively by the Praetorian soldiers in two different robes, one scarlet and one purple. The fourth color – blue – is the color of heaven, a cloudless or "naked" sky.

The Tabernacle and the Church

If the Tabernacle deals with the holiness of God, the fallenness of man, the pernicious effects of sin, the need for atonement, the death and resurrection of Christ, and the redemption of mankind, then it has a great deal to say about the church!

By comparing the attitude and practices of the professing church with the holy principles enshrined in the Tabernacle, we should be able to tell whether, and to what extent, it has kept to its ordained course.

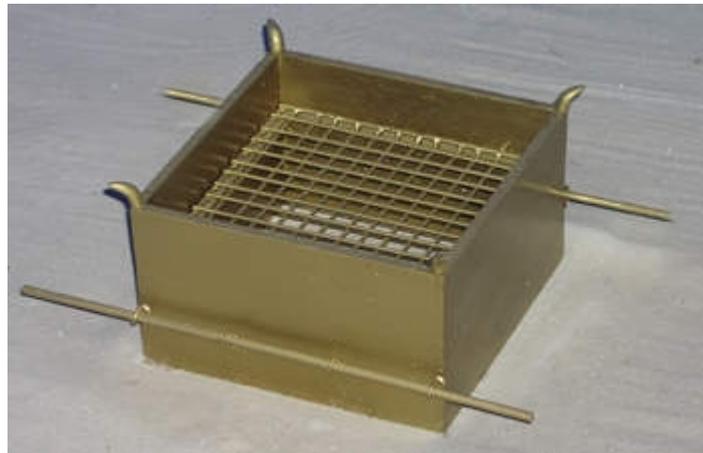
Chapter Three

THE BRAZEN ALTAR

All sacrifices in the LORD's program of Redemption took place at the Brazen Altar, which was located near the entrance to the Tabernacle Courtyard. There was no perpetual altar anywhere else on earth where man could come before God and receive atonement for his sins.

The altar comprised an open-ended rectangular acacia box coated with brass. It was 3 cubits (4½ ft) high, with a top surface of 5 x 5 cubits (7½ by 7½ ft). A brass grill was fixed inside the box, 2¼ ft below the surface, on which the sacrificial offerings were placed. A brass ring was attached to each of the four corners and the altar was conveyed from place to place by two staves overlaid with brass which ran through the rings. A horn of acacia wood, coated with brass, was attached to the top of each corner. A set of brazen utensils were made for use in the various ceremonial functions. These included firepans (to take coals from the fire), shovels (to scoop up the ashes), basins (to hold the blood), and fleshhooks (to take flesh to the altar).

The fire beneath the grill was lit initially from heaven and burnt perpetually. The burning embers were conveyed carefully from place to place whenever the Tabernacle was moved to a new location.



Model of the Brazen Altar

The Sacrificial Offerings

The person who brought an animal offering – whether goat, sheep or bullock – placed his hands on the head of the sacrificial animal, an act that expressed his submission to God. The person then killed the animal himself, while the priest collected the flow of blood in a basin and sprinkled it on the altar:

"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. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." (Leviticus 1:4-5)

This ceremony was a stark reminder to each participant that sin always resulted in death, and that atonement came only when a living substitute died in one's place:

**"...and without shedding of blood is no remission."
(Hebrews 9:22)**

**"...for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."
(Leviticus 17:11)**

We know that the blood of animals cannot take away sin – **"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."** (Hebrews 10:4) So how did the blood of the animals sacrificed under the Mosaic Law have an atoning effect? Each and every one of them pointed to the only sacrifice that *could* take away sin, namely the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. In accepting the animal sacrifice, the LORD was showing His willingness to forgive sin in anticipation of the sacrifice that His Son would one day make on Calvary. The **"sweet savour"** that the LORD received from the burnt offering was not that of the sacrificed animal but what it denoted, namely the perfect love and obedience expressed by His Son on Calvary:

**"And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour before the LORD"
(Exodus 29:25)**

**" 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."
(Ephesians 5:2)**

Christ was the only **"sweetsmelling savour"** at the Brazen Altar. The Father, whose view of earthly events is not bounded by time, could perceive the perfect love of His Son in the faith-filled sacrifice of every burnt offering. This is why the animal sacrifices will be reinstated in Jerusalem in the Millennium (per chapters 40-48 of Ezekiel). Of themselves they did not atone for sin in Mosaic times and will not do so in the future. Calvary alone achieved that. Instead the Millennial offerings will look back to Calvary, just as the Mosaic offerings looked forward to the one perfect sacrifice that would settle the sin question forever. Just as the Mosaic offerings anticipated Calvary, the Millennial offerings will commemorate it.

If that is so, then why were the Mosaic sacrifices introduced in the first place? The answer lies in faith. Through their faith, which they expressed through their obedience to the precepts of the sacrificial offering, the Israelites – both as individuals and as a nation – were committing themselves to the Redemptive program instituted by God. Just as we are saved today by our faith in what Christ achieved for us on Calvary, the Israelites of old were saved by their faith in the sacrifices that pointed to Calvary and which drew their efficacy, completely and entirely, from the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

We will discuss the details of the various offerings and their respective meanings in Chapter Fifteen.

The Grill on the Brazen Altar

The grill (or grate) inside the Brazen Altar (which may actually have been made of bronze rather than copper) extended from side to side, foursquare. This meant that nothing placed on it could escape the fire beneath.

The grill was fixed midway in the hollow of the altar: "**And thou shalt put it [the grill] under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net [grill] may be even to the midst of the altar.**" (Exodus 27:5) Since the altar was 4½ ft high (3 cubits), the grill was 2¼ ft (1½ cubits) above the ground, which meant it was at exactly the same elevation as the Mercy Seat. It is significant that both the place where the sin question was settled and the place where the merciful benefits of that settlement were dispensed were on the same level.

Since the Bible speaks of Christ being "lifted up" at his crucifixion, we might conjecture that his elevation on Calvary was the same, namely 2¼ ft above the ground: "**And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.**" (John 12:32)

This surprising concordance is made more unusual by the fact that the Table of Shewbread (which we will discuss later) was also 2¼ ft high.

The following chart shows the relationship:

Brazen Altar	Altar height = 3 cubits. The grill is in "the midst of the altar" = 1½ cubits.	"...and the height thereof shall be three cubits." (Exodus 27:1)
Mercy Seat	Sits on the Ark, which is 1½ cubits in height.	"...and a cubit and a half the height thereof" (Exodus 25:10)
Table of Shewbread	The "shewbread" of the 12 tribes sits on top of the table, which is 1½ cubits in height.	"and a cubit and a half the height thereof." (Exodus 25:23)

We can see in this chart a striking connection between the mercy of Christ (the Mercy Seat), the suffering of Christ (the grill of the Brazen Altar), and the beneficiaries of the sacrifice made by Christ – the 12 tribes of Israel and, by extension, the church.

Acacia (shittim) wood

Whether measured by weight or by volume, the material that was employed most in the making of the Tabernacle was acacia. In the spiritual typology of the Tabernacle, wood represented our humanity, but our humanity must be covered or protected in some way, otherwise it is consumed by fire.

The only exposed wood within the Courtyard was the wood burned at the Brazen Altar. This is the fate of all who reject the atonement that Christ offers each one of us.

Some argue that hell is not a real place, but the Tabernacle says otherwise.

If we look again at the meaning of the three metals used throughout the Tabernacle, we can see more clearly their deep spiritual significance. The brass shows man as he stands before God, protected only by the glorious fact that someone else – Christ our savior – has taken upon himself the fire of judgment that would otherwise consume us. When we come before the LORD and repent of our sins, we are born again, covered thereafter by the protective blood of Christ. The process of spiritual purification continues thereafter throughout our life. We are sanctified by prayer, worship, study, service, good works, and above all by perfect obedience to the will of God. This sanctification is represented by the silver used in the Tabernacle. Finally, after this life has ended, the saints receive in due course, at the first resurrection, their immortalized physical bodies, represented by the covering of gold.

There is no alternative means of salvation. Let no man deceive you with vain words: hell is real, the final destination for the children of disobedience:

**"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."
(Ephesians 5:6)**

This is exactly what happened to the 250 followers of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. When they rebelled against the priestly system of atonement that the LORD had instituted, they were consumed by fire from heaven:

"And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." (Numbers 16:35)

Let there be no doubt about the severity of this judgment! God will punish all who reject the way of salvation that He has graciously provided through the sacrifice of His Son. The Apostle Paul referred to this solemn reality when he said:

**"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness..."
(Romans 11:22)**

In order to ensure that the Israelites understood this fundamental truth, he instructed Moses to take the brazen censers that each of the rebels carried at the moment they were consumed and beat them into "**broad plates.**" These were then attached to the outer surface of the Brazen Altar as a "**memorial unto the children of Israel.**" (Numbers 16: 35-40)

By any reckoning this was an extraordinary act. The very place on earth where sin was expiated was now emblazoned with a startling reminder that sin *will* be judged! Unless men accept the one and only means of atonement that the LORD has provided, they will face the wrathful fire of His righteous judgment. The beaten censers pinned to the altar were a dramatic ongoing reminder of this!

The Horns of the Brazen Altar

The strength of an animal, such as a ram, he-goat or bull, was concentrated in his horns. Thus, in a Biblical context, the word "horn" designated a strong leader or a focal point of power and authority. The four acacia horns on the Brazen Altar, each of which was coated with brass, spoke of universal or worldwide judgment. The number four designated universality, while the brass represented the judgment of a righteous God upon the sins of all mankind.

Ultimately all nations, not just Israel, must come before the Brazen Altar. Since all are under condemnation, all must seek expiation for their sins and become reconciled to God. Thus the Brazen Altar is at once the most terrifying place in the universe, since it utterly consumes all who reject it, and yet, paradoxically, it is also the most wonderful since it frees each and every one of us from spiritual bondage.

With the totality of God's wrath focused on this one location, it is difficult to think of it as a place of mercy. Perhaps this is why the LORD added a highly unexpected blessing to the horns of the Brazen altar:

"He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die." (Exodus 21:12-14)

Before the cities of refuge were instituted, a person guilty of causing the accidental death of another person could flee to the Brazen Altar and take hold of its horns. This offered immediate protection from an angry pursuer until a fair hearing could be obtained. It continued to serve as a place of clemency in later times, even after the six cities of refuge were established. For example, when Adonijah appealed for mercy by clinging to the horns of the altar, he was pardoned by Solomon (1 Kings 1:50), but when Joab, who was guilty of murder, tried to secure clemency in the same way, he was executed.

Sin must be punished. There are no exceptions. Believers are redeemed, not because God decided arbitrarily to forgive them, but because Christ took upon himself the full punishment in our place.

The Brazen Altar is the most forbidding place in the Bible – along with Calvary, its antitype – since it spared no-one, not even the Son of God. However, in requiring such a place, the LORD marked it with a special token of His infinite mercy, the four horns of refuge.

Chapter Four

THE BRAZEN LAVER

The Brazen Altar dealt with sin. As a figure of the cross, in which the continual animal sacrifices typified the one and only perfect sacrifice, it secured the complete reconciliation of man with God. The animal sacrifices, in themselves, did nothing for sin except to defer the punishment which divine justice demanded. Each and every animal sacrifice pointed to Christ. The "sweet savor" that the Father received from these burnt offerings was, in reality, the sweet perfume of His Son's perfect obedience to His holy will. Humanly, we see these events in an historical context, but our Father sees and knows all things in a timeless manner: "**Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.**" (Acts 15:18)

The sin question is settled forever when we are born again. When that happens our sin is "covered" by the blood of Christ, who made atonement in our place. He paid or covered our sin debt for us. This concept of "covering" is found throughout the Tabernacle, where all acacia wood – representing our humanity – is covered by Christ in one of the three aspects of his work as Redeemer – the one who took on our humanity to dwell among us and save us from divine judgment (brass), the one who shed his blood and gave his life for us by dying in our place (silver), and the one in whom dwelt "**all the fulness of the godhead bodily**" (Colossians 2:9) (gold).

Thereafter, following justification by our faith in Christ, while we are still living here in our fallen, sin-damaged mind and body, the LORD requires that we undergo a continual cleansing from earthly defilement. This ongoing process is represented by the Brazen Laver.



The Brazen Laver

Every time they approached the Brazen Altar to make a burnt offering or entered the Tabernacle sanctuary, the priests had to wash their hands and feet, "**that they die not**" -

"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."

(Exodus 30:19-21)

Christ was making reference to this essential act when he washed the feet of the apostles at the Last Supper. Since their feet were in constant contact with the world, they were continually accumulating the stain of the world. This stain or defilement had to be removed – "**If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.**" (John 13:8). The priests of the Tabernacle had to wash their hands as well since they were in constant contact with death when handling the sacrifices at the Brazen Altar.

The modern church has virtually abandoned the Brazen Laver. The majority of professing Christians no longer see the need for an ongoing daily cleansing in the Word of God, with heartfelt repentant prayer and separation from the world.

The Brazen Laver was made entirely of brass, the quantity of which was not specified. Neither were its dimensions specified. The absence of any acacia wood is a reminder that, even after the sin question has been settled, man himself, in his humanity, can do nothing to remove his own daily defilement. This too is a work that Christ alone can perform – but which man must request. Just as Peter had to permit the cleansing of his feet by Christ, and the priests had to approach the Brazen Laver many times each day, the believer too must humbly submit himself to Christ every day and ask for this cleansing.

In specifying neither the quantity of brass required nor the size and shape of the laver, the believer is being invited to approach Christ each day as often as he chooses, without limit. The cleansing from defilement – which is contracted continuously through our daily contact with a sin-damaged world – is a never-ending task.

The Brazen Laver contained only water. Throughout Scripture, when used symbolically, water designates the Word, whether the written Word or the living Word. Christ declared that all who came to him would find a well of living water that never ran dry: "**...but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life**" (John 4:14). So, just as the Brazen Altar – a representation of Christ – used blood to cleanse us of our sin, the Brazen Laver – another representation of Christ – used water to cleanse us of our defilement: "**... as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.**" (Ephesians 5:25-26)

In a remarkable detail the Word of God tells us that the Brazen Laver was made entirely of cosmetic "**lookingglasses**" which were donated by the women:

**"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."
(Exodus 38:8)**

[This is further evidence that *nēchosheth* was copper since it is more reflective than either brass or bronze when brought to a high polish.]

The copper 'mirrors' reflected the pride of the world and the vanity of man. By using them to form the Brazen Laver the LORD was showing that, in order to approach Him, we must completely renounce our pride and turn our backs on the world. Our hearts must reflect Him and His glory, not the world or our own selves. We are made in the image and likeness of God and must therefore be perfect reflectors of the wonderful God whose image we are – "**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect**" (Matthew 5:48).

This may have been what Paul was referring to in his second letter to the Corinthians:

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

If so then the Laver was very likely a simple open-topped basin sitting on a stem or pedestal (*kên* in Hebrew, meaning a base or pedestal). The priests would remove some water with a jug or ladle and pour it over their hands and feet. In this way the purity of the water in the laver was unaffected. The "**glory**" to which Paul referred was not unlike the blue sky above, which was reflected continually in the waters of the laver. Every time the priests approached the laver and were about to cleanse themselves, they were reminded of the sapphire sky above and the glorious perfection of the wonderful God who made it.

The Book of Job even compares the sky to a "**molten looking glass**" –

**"Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?"
(Job 37:18)**

The same figure appears also in Exodus 24, a breathtaking passage of scripture, where Moses, the priests, and seventy of the Israelites were invited by "**the God of Israel**" to ascend the mount and meet personally with him:

**"Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness."
(Exodus 24:9-10)**

The floor beneath their feet was like sapphire, as blue in its purity as the sky above their heads.

The modern church has forgotten the need for perpetual self-cleansing. It has greatly underestimated the pernicious effects of defilement and the need for separation from the world. Believers are not being taught to rise each morning with an unshakeable desire to please God and to reflect as far as possible the perfection of His image in a fallen, sin-damaged world.



Modern Mount Sinai.
[Believed by many to be the Biblical Mount Sinai.]

Chapter Five

THE TABERNACLE TENT

The Tabernacle tent represents communion with the LORD. By the same token it also represents separation from the world. When he turned his back on the world and entered the Courtyard, the sinner submitted to the program of Redemption that the LORD had provided.

Today all believers are priests. There is no separate Levitical caste among born-again Christians. This means that we too must make daily use of the Brazen Laver.

Many believers today have made the mistake of seeking after signs and wonders and neglecting the Brazen Laver. Many believe also in a second baptism. They forget that the problem of sin was addressed once and for all at the Brazen Altar and that our cleansing thereafter is at the Brazen Laver.

As the Word of God makes perfectly plain, there is "**One Lord, one faith, one baptism**" (**Ephesians 4:5**). Anyone who seeks a second baptism has little understanding of the sufficiency and perfection of the first and only baptism, and may not even be saved.

This is a very serious matter, but one that professing Christians often choose to ignore. When the Apostle Paul met with this problem at Corinth, where many church members had a great desire for signs and wonders, he asked them to examine themselves and determine whether they really were saved:

**"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove [test]
your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that
Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? "
(2 Corinthians 13:5)**

Strong words!

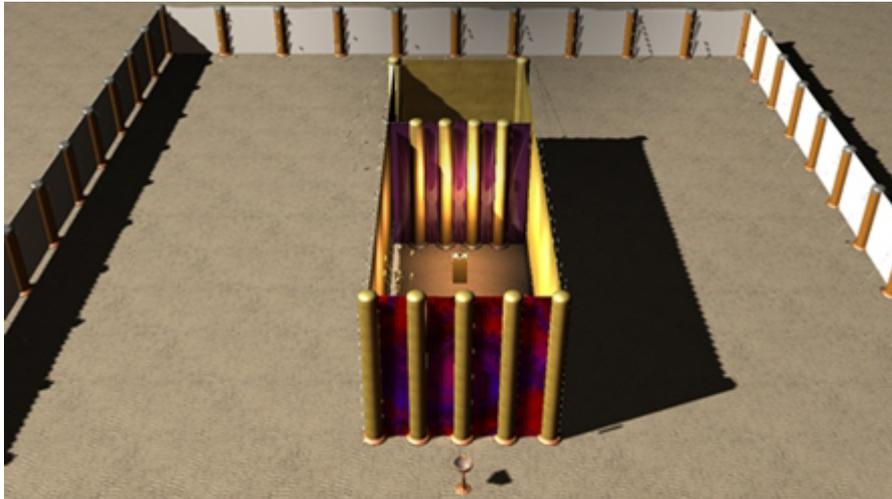
There is one Brazen Altar and one baptism! Doctrines which depart from this basic truth are in conflict with Scripture. They almost invariably excite a lust for signs and experiences, for miraculous demonstrations of God's power and a sense of His 'manifest presence'. While this may be satisfying to the flesh, it does real harm to one's relationship with God.

The just shall live by faith. Having been justified at the Brazen Altar, the believer now seeks to live thereafter in humble service and obedience to God. He seeks to please Him in every way he can, not by lusting after signs, but by waiting on the LORD and seeking His holy will. This is the true meaning of the Brazen Laver. It is the place where we must go every day – indeed many times a day – to cleanse ourselves of our defilements, submit ourselves to the living God, and ask Him to sanctify us for His holy purpose.

To sanctify means to separate from the world. Through the mercy of Christ and his sacrifice on Calvary, we went to the Brazen Altar once, but we go to the Brazen Laver as often as we can.

The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remind us, every few weeks or thereabouts, of the glorious work that Christ performed for us on Calvary. In that sense – and in that sense only – do we revisit the Brazen Altar. But there is no second baptism.

The Brazen Laver prepares us to enter into the tent of the Tabernacle. It clothes us momentarily in the perfection of Christ. In doing so it gives us something that we still lack in our non-glorified state and enables us to draw closer God. Over time, as we grow in Christ, we learn to appreciate more and more just how important the Brazen Laver is in our Christian walk. It reminds us daily that we have no strength of our own, that we possess absolutely nothing that we have not received and that, without the ever-present indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we would be lured by Satan from our appointed course.



Tabernacle (without its coverings) and Courtyard

Dimensions of the Tabernacle Tent

The tent of the Tabernacle was a simple rectangular structure, 15 feet high, with a flat roof. It comprised three walls of gold-coated acacia boards and four overlying roof coverings. It was 15 feet wide and 45 feet long [10 cubits x 30 cubits] and comprised two compartments. The first, the Sanctuary or Holy Place, was 15ft by 30ft [10 cubits x 20 cubits], while the inner sanctum or Most Holy Place was 15ft by 15ft [10 cubits x 10 cubits]. Since it was also 15ft high [10 cubits], the inner sanctum was a perfect cube.

The Word of God contains passages, other than those in the Pentateuch, that add to our understanding of the Tabernacle:

"Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it." (Zechariah 5:1-3)

The roll (or scroll) was seen by the prophet Zechariah in a vision. Inscribed thereon were two commandments that were representative of the Ten Commandments as a whole. As the passage states, the scroll was a curse on all who were unable to live perfectly in accordance with God's holy law. It is significant that the dimensions of the scroll were twenty cubits by ten, the same dimensions as the Holy Place. The Tabernacle is the only answer to the 'curse' of the law, but it is the all-sufficient answer. The Holy Place leads to the Most Holy Place where perfect mercy is found.

The entrance to the Sanctuary or Holy Place comprised five gold-coated acacia pillars and a curtain of fine-twined linen embroidered with purple, scarlet and blue thread (just like the curtain at the Courtyard entrance). Each of the five pillars sat in a brass socket. As we noted in Chapter One, the number five speaks of the need for responsible action on the part of man. Before he entered the Holy Place the priest had to ensure that he was fully prepared in accordance with God's law.

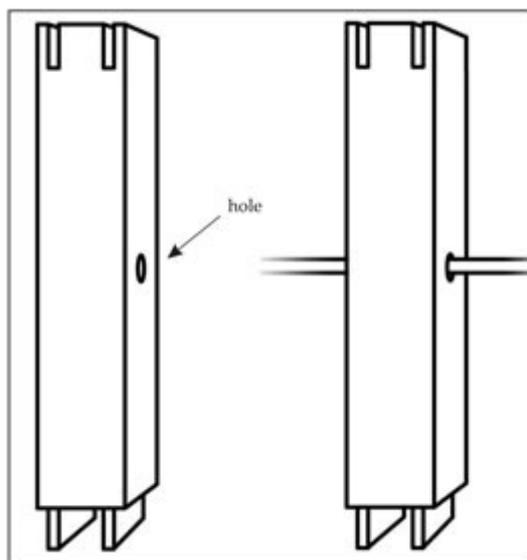
The entrance to the Most Holy Place, on the other hand, comprised four gold-coated acacia pillars and a heavy curtain or veil of fine-twined linen embroidered with purple, scarlet and blue thread, but which displayed in addition a number of cherubim in fine needlework with their wings extended. Seemingly these too were sewn in similar thread.

The rigid walls of the tent comprised 48 boards in total. Each of the boards was 15 feet long and 2¼ feet wide. It had two prongs or tenons at its base and sat firmly in a silver socket. Each silver socket weighed a talent or about 95lbs. If one adds to these the sockets used to support the four pillars at the entrance to the inner sanctum (the inner compartment or Most Holy Place), the Tabernacle frame had exactly 100 silver sockets ((48 x 2) + 4 = 100).



Side view of Tabernacle.

The boards of the Tabernacle were held firmly in place on either side by five gold-plated rods, 45ft long, running from end to end. Four of the rods were fixed firmly to the outside of the wall, two up and two down, while the middle one ran through a row of holes in the side of each board – **"And he made the middle bar to shoot through the boards from one end to the other."** (Exodus 36:33) [see chart]. This would suggest that the boards could have been as much as two inches thick, possibly more, and were unusually heavy. The ten rods, in conjunction with the tent pegs and ropes, plus the exceptional weight of each board, would have ensured that the frame was both robust and stable.



The middle rod ran through the upright boards, while the other four rods were fixed to the outside.

The five pillars at the outer entrance to the Sanctuary were supported by five *brass* sockets. This is significant since the other sockets in the tent structure – 100 in total – were made of silver. As we have already seen, brass indicates the absolute divine requirement that all sin be judged. The presence of brass at the threshold of the Sanctuary was a final reminder of this universal truth, perhaps even a warning. The number five, the number of responsibility, is also significant. Man must prepare himself fully in order to come before God since His awesome holiness demands it: **"O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth."** (Psalm 96:9)

The Coverings of the Tabernacle Tent

The Sanctuary or Holy Place (*qodesh*) contained three items of furniture whose typology we will discuss in later chapters. These were the Golden Lampstand on the lefthand side, the Golden Table of Shewbread on the righthand side, and the Golden Altar of Incense which stood next to the Veil of the Most Holy Place (*qodesh qodesh*).

The Tabernacle itself had four coverings which completely enveloped the entire structure and hung taut down the outside of the walls, possibly at a slight angle. They were also sufficiently long to cover the front entrance if required.



**Inside the Holy Place, facing the Most Holy Place
[Note that the Veil is drawn back in this image]**

The innermost of the four coverings consisted of fine twined linen embroidered with purple, scarlet and blue thread, and cherubim of fine needlework. Interestingly, since the four coverings hung outside the walls, a significant portion of the innermost covering was permanently hidden from view. This would seem to represent the innermost depths of God which, despite all that man is privileged to learn and know about Him, will remain forever inaccessible to our understanding.

This covering consisted on 10 curtains of equal size, with 50 loops along each edge so that corresponding loops could be coupled together with short cords made of plaited gold thread. Each curtain was 28 cubits (42 feet) long and 4 cubits (6 feet) wide. Thus in total, when coupled together, it comprised a single piece, 42ft by 60ft. These dimensions confirm that the covering was just long enough to cover the tent structure and did not quite touch the ground on either side. When set in place it ran along the roof and down the back wall on the outside ($45\text{ft} + 15\text{ft} = 60\text{ft}$), while the shorter dimension (42ft) ran up one side, across the roof, and down the other side ($15\text{ft} + 15\text{ft} + 15\text{ft} = 45\text{ft}$).

Everything about the Tabernacle says "just enough." There was no excess, no surplus, no redundancy. In giving His son, our Father gave everything that could be given for our salvation. He held nothing back. The "just enough" of the Tabernacle did not mean bare sufficiency, but the very opposite – that nothing was held back. All that God could give, He gave.

Men, in their fallen state, are incredibly selfish. They expect God to do more for them, when in reality He has done everything that can be done. Through His Son, He paid our entire sin debt for us. He left nothing undone. He could not have done more! Salvation is a free gift, perfect and eternal. There is not a single thing any man can do, either to earn it or to add to it. It is a gift so great that we can barely understand how wonderful it is. And yet, in our fallen state, men still spurn the gift, trying to earn their salvation through good works and sacramental rites. In doing so they have become enamored with their own strength and have rejected the sufficiency of what Christ achieved for them on Calvary. With their lips they claim to accept the cross, but in their hearts they have rejected it:

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18)

The next covering is made entirely of woven goat's hair. We tend to forget that the goat was a clean animal in God's eyes and just as suitable as a lamb for a sacrificial offering. Everyone knows that the sacrifice at Passover was a "lamb without blemish" but fail to note how Exodus defined a "lamb":

**"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year:
ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats"
(Exodus 12:5).**

Christ, at his first coming, was the Lamb, gentle and submissive, but at his second coming he will be capable of delivering the most powerful blow in the field of battle that mankind has ever known. Just like a young goat he will thunder through the ranks of the Enemy and utterly destroy them.

This is why Satan has tried to appropriate the goat as a demonic icon. It both mocks the Second Coming of Christ and puts Satan's "son," the Antichrist, in his place. This trick has been reinforced by a serious failure on the part of many Bible scholars to properly understand the sacrificial ceremony involving the two goats on the Day of Atonement or *Yom Kippur*. This was the most important ceremony in the annual calendar of the Israelites. The other Jewish Feasts were all joyous occasions, but not the Day of Atonement:

**"It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls,
by a statute for ever." (Leviticus 16:31)**

This was the only day in the year when the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies. Before doing so he had to atone for his own sins by the sacrificial offering of a bullock and a ram. When he had done this, one of two young goats was selected by lot and offered by the High Priest as a sacrifice for the sins of the children of Israel. Having completed that task he turned his attention to the second goat:

"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." (Leviticus 16:20-22)

The first goat, which the High Priest sacrificed on the Brazen Altar, was representative of Christ and his sacrifice on Calvary. The second goat, however, has puzzled many Bible scholars. Some have even speculated, blasphemously, that it represented Satan.

Believers need to understand that the second goat – the "scapegoat" – is *also* representative of Christ, but in an aspect of his work that is not sufficiently recognized within the church. The first goat (the equivalent of a lamb) represented the first gift of Calvary, where our sin debt was paid in full. The second, however, represented another remarkable gift that Christ *also* earned for believers on Calvary. By placing his hands on its head, the High Priest figuratively transferred all the iniquity of the people to the living goat. The goat was then led into the wilderness and released, never to be seen again. Through his death on Calvary Christ earned the right to remove their sin nature from the saints on the day they enter eternity.

Resurrection Day will be a very special day indeed! All who dwell thereafter with Christ will no longer have the *capacity* to sin. It will be taken from them and they will never see it again.

The sacrificed goat frees us fully and forever for our sin **debt**, while the scapegoat frees us fully and forever from our sin **nature**.

This explains the otherwise obscure meaning of Proverbs 27:26:

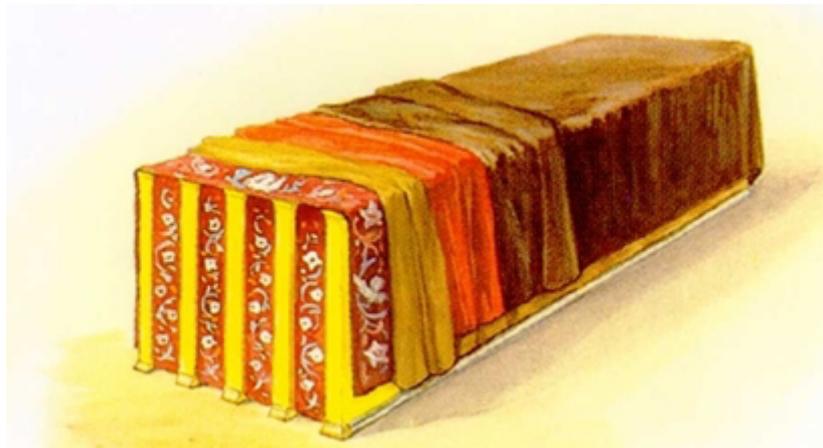
"The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field."

The lambs provide our cloak of righteousness before an awesomely holy God, while the goats allow us safely into the place (or field) of God, where our former sin nature can never again assert itself. The price has been paid. The Shepherd has brought us safely home

This great double blessing is also expressed in the second and third coverings of the Tabernacle. The second covering, as we have seen, consisted of woven goat's hair, which corresponded to the goat released on *Yom Kippur*, while the third covering, which consisted of rams' skin dyed red, corresponded to the goat sacrificed on *Yom Kippur*.

The dimensions specified for both the linen covering and the goats' hair covering were sufficient to envelop most of the Tabernacle structure. However the Bible did not specify dimensions for either the rams' skin covering or the outermost covering, which was made of animal hide. This would suggest that these two coverings were intended to fully envelop the Tabernacle structure – front, back, and sides – and provide complete insulation against the elements when required. It is quite possible that one or both of these latter coverings was partly rolled back from time to time, thereby allowing the Israelites a glimpse from afar of the canopies underneath.

It has been suggested that the two outer coverings may have been large enough to stand high above the Tabernacle, rather like a fly-sheet supported by ridge-poles. However, this speculative hypothesis conflicts with Scripture by introducing elements – such as the additional poles – which are nowhere mentioned and which, if present, would alter the typology of the Tabernacle.



The four coverings of the Tabernacle

The outermost covering was made entirely from the skin of an animal called *tachash* in Hebrew. The KJV translates this as "badgers' skin," but this is doubtful, not because badgers were not native to the region – the Egyptians could have imported badger skin from Syria – but because the badger was a ritually unclean animal. It should be remembered that an unclean animal was not just forbidden to the Israelites for dietary purposes but was actually repugnant to them: "**Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing**" (Deuteronomy 14:3). We would note that it was forbidden even to handle the dead carcass of an unclean animal, such as a badger. In light of this the use of badger skin for the outermost covering is highly improbable, especially as the covering itself was meant to typify some aspect of Christ and his redemptive work.

Other commentators have suggested porpoise or seal skin as suitable alternatives, particularly as they would have been in plentiful supply in the Nile and Red Sea area, but these too are unclean animals.

The only other category of clean animal – apart from the sheep, goat or ox – whose hide would have been suitable for this purpose, was the deer: ("**The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer...the pygarg...and the chamois**" – Deuteronomy 14:5). The most common Egyptian equivalent would have been the antelope or gazelle. These are quadrupeds that chew the cud and have hoofs cloven into two parts ("**And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat**" – Deuteronomy 14:6). In light of these scriptural considerations, the outermost, *tachash* covering was very likely made of antelope hide.

Being desert animals, the varieties of antelope in the region would have had a rather dull color, such as tan or a deep shade of beige. The Tabernacle tent would therefore have blended into the desert terrain and made little impression on an observer. This outermost covering represented the unassuming humanity of Christ described by Isaiah: "**...and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.**" (Isaiah 53:2).

This *tachash* covering was virtually all that that the common Israelite could see of the Tabernacle tent. Only when he made an offering might he possibly get a glimpse of an inner covering or one of the golden pillars. If he was truly fortunate, he might briefly savour a trace of the incense that burned continually on the Golden Altar.

The fourth or outermost covering completed the sequence. The first depicted Christ in his divinity and kingship, while the second and third depicted the two aspects of his redemptive work. Finally, the outermost, which alone the world could see, depicted his unassuming humanity.

Those who "**received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved**" (2 Thessalonians 2:10) will look no further than the outer covering and reject the good news of the gospel.

Chapter Six

THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND

The Golden Lampstand (*Menorah*) sits on the righthand side of the Sanctuary as seen from the Most Holy Place, just as Christ sits at the right-hand of the Father. Since the Sanctuary was east-facing, the Golden Lampstand stood on the southern side of the tent.

The Word of God specified that the Golden Lampstand should comprise one talent of gold (about 95lbs), that it should have seven branches, and that it should be formed through beating or hammering only (not caste in a mould or assembled from component parts). Some scholars have estimated that it was a little over 4ft tall. (A carved image of the Golden Lampstand from the Second Temple may still be seen today on the Arch of Titus in Rome, which dates from 82 A.D. or thereabouts – see photo.)



The Brazen Laver, the Golden Lampstand and the Mercy Seat were similar in that each was made entirely from one material (brass and gold, respectively). The daily cleansing of the believer, represented by the Laver, is a continual work of Christ, just as the light that shines within him – represented by the Lampstand – is a continual work of Christ. And they both point to our wonderful Shepherd and Intercessor whose substitutionary atonement – represented by the Mercy Seat – paid for our salvation.

Since there were no windows or open portals in the Sanctuary, the Golden Lampstand was the only source of light, just as Christ is the only supernatural light in our lives today. He will also be the only source of Light in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:23) which will descend from heaven at the end of the Millennium.

The spiritual significance of the *Menorah* is further emphasized in the fourth chapter of Zechariah, where the prophet foresees an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the End Time. Thereafter the oil of the seven lamps will burn copiously into eternity.

The Almond

The Word of God specified that the Golden Lampstand should have 3 almond buds and 3 almond blossoms on each of its three outer branches, and 4 almond buds and 4 almond blossoms on the central branch.

The use of the almond for this purpose is significant, as shown by an incident recorded in the Book of Numbers:

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod. And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers. And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you. And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you...And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod. And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not." (Numbers 17:1-5 and 8-10)

Through this dramatic demonstration of His authority, the LORD was confirming in a very public way that, among all the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Levi had alone been chosen by Him to serve in the priestly office. Furthermore, none of the other tribes would have any role or say in this arrangement. The rebels, who had presumed to challenge the will of the LORD in this matter, had received a solemn warning.

Aaron's Rod was made of almond wood. Miraculously, in the course of the night, it came back to life. As such it was a figure of the Resurrection, where Christ – to whom the Word refers several times as The Branch – came back to life after lying in the darkness of the tomb for three days and three nights.

The buds and blossoms on the Golden Lampstand speak triumphantly of the Resurrection and of the eternal Light that would in consequence illuminate our lives. It also speaks of Christ and his Resurrection as the only way to salvation. Men in their pride may have their opinions, their philosophical convictions, and their religious traditions, but the LORD has provided only one way.

The Hebrew word for almond – *shaqed* – literally means "the wakeful tree" because it is the first of the fruit-bearing trees to bud or "awaken" after the winter season. As such it symbolized God's early execution of His purpose. This same thought is strongly expressed by Jeremiah when, in his youth, he was called to his prophetic office:

**"Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it."
(Jeremiah 1:11-12)**

Aaron and his sons – who were the only ones authorized by God to enter the Sanctuary – were required to trim the Golden Lampstand every morning and every evening without fail. This was to be done continually, throughout all their generations. Each time he did this, the priest would cleanse himself at the Brazen Laver and bring with him into the Sanctuary a fresh supply of olive oil to refill the seven lamps. In doing so, he would renew the wicks with the golden tongs and gather spent material in a snuff dish.

Just as the Golden Lampstand itself was made of beaten or hammered gold, the oil in the seven lamps was made from beaten rather than compressed olives – "**pure oil olive beaten**" (Exodus 27:20). As a figure of Christ, the Golden Lampstand speaks of the suffering endured by our Redeemer, the Light of the World – "**He was bruised for our iniquities**" (Isaiah 53:5).



The Golden Lampstand or *Menorah*

Flaxen wicks

Interestingly, the third and final element in the Golden Lampstand, the flaxen wick, is also obtained by beating. According to Holman's Bible Dictionary, wicks in Old Testament times were generally made of twisted flax. Isaiah 42:3 gives confirmation of this and even makes reference to a smoking wick when describing the spiritual character of the Messiah: **"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth."** This verse tells us that, despite their manifold spiritual weaknesses, Christ will neither reject nor condemn those lost sinners who come to him in faith.

The wicks in the Golden Lampstand represent regenerated humanity. As Christ said to his disciples, **"Ye are the light of the world."** (Matthew 5:14). A believer has no light of his own but when he is filled with the "oil" of the Holy Spirit he is a lamp through whom the Light of Christ can shine into the world: **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."** (Matthew 5:16)

The LORD must sometimes chasten the believer in order to equip him to serve in this capacity, just as the High Priest, by trimming the wick, turns it from a "smoking flax" into a source of radiant light. The believer too must do his part by ensuring that he fills himself anew every day, not with the wine of the world, but with the oil of the Holy Spirit: **"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit"** (Ephesians 5:17-18).

The Golden Lampstand is a glorious figure of Christ in his divinity. With its seven branches the *Menorah* is also a representation of the church of Christ, the collective body of true believers in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. The seven branches may also anticipate the seven churches addressed by Christ in the Book of Revelation (chapters 2 and 3) and the "seven spirits of God" (chapter 4 and Isaiah 11:1-2).



Sweet almond blossom.

As Christ said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5). The shape of the Golden Lampstand is itself suggestive of a vine, a set of branches attached to and supported by a central stem. The following table shows how this image permeates the four Gospels.

Gospel	Christ, the Branch
Matthew: Christ as Man	"...Behold the man whose name is The Branch ..." (Zechariah 6:12)
Mark: Christ as Servant	"...for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch " (Zechariah 3:8)
Luke: Christ as King	"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch , and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." (Jeremiah 23:5)
John: Christ as God	"In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious..." (Isaiah 4:2)

In his discourse to the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, Christ confirmed that each local assembly of believers – each *living* church – was a lamp or lampstand which gave light to the world through the power of the Holy Spirit:

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks [lampstands]. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks [lampstands] which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Revelation 1:20)

He also raised the possibility that a church could lose its lamp or lampstand should it fail to do "the first works" – reaching the lost with the gospel message – and become preoccupied with other tasks:

**"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick [lampstand] out of its place, except thou repent."
(Revelation 2:5).**

The Golden Lampstand tells us that it is incumbent upon every believer to do all that Christ has commanded us to do, to have fellowship in a church that is dedicated to the salvation of souls, and to fill oneself daily with the Holy Spirit. In the depths of his human frailty the believer is invited to serve the living God as a burning vessel for the Holy Spirit and to bring into the world the Light – the only Light – that can lead the lost to salvation.

Chapter Seven

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

The light of the Golden Lampstand shone directly onto the Table of Shewbread which stood on the lefthand side of the Sanctuary as seen from the Ark.

The table was just 2¼ ft tall, with a small surface area (3ft x 1½ft). We have already noted the surprising fact that its height was the same as that of the Mercy Seat and the grill in the Brazen Altar.

The table consisted of an acacia frame on four legs, overlaid with gold. The surface had two raised rims or "crowns" around the edge, a hand's breadth apart. Like the Brazen Altar it was conveyed on two staves inserted into rings, one at each corner. The staves were of acacia wood overlaid with gold, while the rings themselves were of pure gold.

Twelve loaves of bread of equal size – one for each tribe – were displayed continually upon the table, arranged in two groups of six. The bread, seemingly, was unleavened, though this is not expressly stated. Given the size of the table, the loaves were likely placed one on top of another. The table was replenished by a fresh set of twelve loaves baked every Sabbath. The priests were invited by the LORD to consume the bread they had just removed. This invitation tells us that, despite the dry desert environment, the loaves were as fresh as when they were first baked – the LORD serves only perfect bread. The priests then ate the loaves in a representative capacity on behalf of Israel as a whole.



The Table of Shewbread

The bread was called *lechem haPanyim*, the 'Bread of the Presence' – "**And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me always**" (Exodus 25:30). *Panyim* literally means 'face', thus the bread was always before the face (or in the presence) of God. The King James Bible translates *lechem haPanyim* as 'shewbread' because it was on display or 'on show' before the LORD.

The priests were allowed to bring the week-old bread home to be eaten by their families. A purchased servant of the family could also eat it, but not a hired servant. All who ate it had to be ritually clean.

Each loaf was made from a fifth of an ephah of highly refined wheaten flour, without grit or impurities of any kind. This measure, which seemingly represented the amount that a man would normally eat in a day, was equivalent to several pounds of flour per loaf.

A golden dish of frankincense was placed on top of each pile of six loaves, the contents of which were burned before the LORD "**as a memorial**" on the following Sabbath. The frankincense dishes were then replenished.

The various vessels associated with the table, such as dishes, spoons, jars and bowls, were made of pure gold.

The bread – the Bread of the Presence – was a figure of Christ as Shepherd, feeding and providing for his sheep. The bread would have been prepared in the traditional manner – with olive oil, salt and water – where each ingredient referred in some manner to the office and work of Christ. The oil designated the presence of the Holy Spirit; salt, the preserving and sustaining power of Christ; and water, the Word, both the living Word, which is Christ himself, and the written word of Scripture. The thorough grinding of the flour and kneeding of the dough represented the suffering of Christ in the hours before Calvary, while the fire which baked the loaf was Calvary itself.

The Bread of the Presence has mistakenly been construed by some theologians, such as Luther, to mean that the bread of the Lord's Supper is imbued in some way with the 'real presence' of Christ. They overlook the fact that the 'Presence' to which the *lechem haPanyim* refers is that of the LORD in the Holy of Holies. It is not in the bread, either mystically or spiritually. When Jesus broke the bread at the Last Supper and said, "**This is my body...**", he was referring to his earlier description of himself as "**the bread of life.**" For others to share in this bread, like the priests in the Holy Place, it would have to be broken on Calvary: "**...and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**" (John 6:51)

The blasphemous Roman Catholic doctrine that the communion bread becomes the actual body of Christ is deeply injurious to anyone who wants to know Christ personally, as he truly is, the wonderful Savior who died once, and once only, for our sins.

Chapter Eight

THE GOLDEN ALTAR

The Golden Altar of Incense has a special affinity with the Brazen Altar in that both involved the consumption of an offering by fire, the release of an odour or perfume that was pleasing to God, four horns in a foursquare arrangement, and a flame that originated from the same source, namely fire sent from heaven. In addition, both were made of acacia wood overlaid with metal, and both were conveyed by two staves set in rings.

The symmetry between them is striking. In fact it served to make their disparity in size even more pronounced. In volume terms the Brazen Altar was nearly forty times larger than the Golden Altar of Incense!

The Golden Altar was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was three feet tall, with a top measuring 18 inches x 18 inches and a golden rim or crown. It had four horns of acacia wood overlaid with gold, and two – not four – rings of gold set just beneath the crown. It was conveyed by two staves of acacia wood overlaid with gold.

Only one object – a golden censer – ever sat on the Golden Altar and only one type of offering was ever made thereon, namely the burning of incense.

The High Priest (or one of his sons) renewed the offering of incense every morning and every evening, during which time he also trimmed the Golden Lampstand. Apparently a golden censer was filled with a fresh supply of incense and coals from the Brazen Altar; this was then carried into the Holy Place and substituted for the censer that was sitting on the Golden Altar. The censer itself seems to have comprised an upper and a lower compartment, with incense filling the upper compartment and coals the lower.

In the language of God's Holy Word, incense designated an offering of prayer that was acceptable to our Father. As David wrote, "**Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense**" (Psalm 141:2).

The Golden Altar of Incense in the Tabernacle is a reflection of the golden altar of incense which stands before the throne of God:

"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." (Revelation 8:3-4)

The fragrance of the incense designates the selfless obedience of Jesus. Our prayers are only acceptable to the Father because they carry with them the fragrance of what His Son achieved on Calvary: **"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."** (Ephesians 5:2)

We need to consider once again the burnt offerings on the Brazen Altar and what they meant to the Father: **"And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt offering unto the LORD: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD."** (Exodus 29:18). The pleasure that the Father derived from the burnt offering was grounded, not in the offering itself, but in the perfect sacrifice that it represented, the selfless offering on Calvary. Even at the time the Levitical sacrifices were instituted, the **"sweet savour"** that they conveyed to the Father was that of Calvary, an event which in His omniscience was ever before Him.



Intercessor

The Golden Altar of Incense represents the remarkable role that Christ performs as our Intercessor before God. Our prayers come before our Father only because Christ intercedes continually on our behalf and renders them acceptable to Him: **"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."** (Hebrews 7:25)

It is daunting to realize that, without this act of Intercession, our prayers would never come before our Father. Only those who are born again can reach the Father with their prayers. The prayers of nominal Christians and non-believers, no matter how devout and sincere they may be, are not heard. Much has been said about the 'great religions' of the world, but these so-called great religions are dead to the core. Their followers have no access whatever to the Father, and until then repent and accept the salvation that Christ has earned on their behalf, they are completely cut off from God.

Christ referred specifically to this daunting truth when he said, "...I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me..." (John 17:9). We are given to Christ – and received by him – when we are born again on this earth. All who reject Christ, including those who spurn or "neglect so great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3) are calling upon themselves the righteous wrath of God on the day of judgment.

The church today is very slow to proclaim this truth, but it is part of the gospel. The good news is good for those who hear and accept it, but not for those who hear and reject it.

The Incense

The incense itself comprised four sweet spices compounded together with salt (which represented incorruptibility). These would appear to have come from distant lands:

Stacte – a gum from the *storax* tree in Syria

Onycha – probably from the *strombus* shell found in the Red Sea

Galbanum – a gum imported from Persia

Frankincense – an aromatic gum imported from India.

These four aromatic ingredients represented the perfection of Christ and his obedience to the Father. As they burned their perfume diffused slowly into the atmosphere and spread thereafter to the four corners of the world. The presence of *four* spices denoted the universal nature of the work that Christ would perform. Interestingly, even the incense had to be beaten to a very fine powder to serve this purpose, reflecting yet again the truth expressed by Isaiah: "He was bruised for our iniquities".

According to Exodus 30:37, no-one could make or use incense of the same kind. Anyone who did would be expelled from the nation of Israel. Furthermore, only incense prepared exactly in accordance with the requirements of Scripture would be acceptable before the LORD. Any other kind ("**strange incense**"), no matter how rare or expensive it might be, was absolutely forbidden.

The Word of God states that the incense "**shall be unto you most holy.**" It is akin to the prayer that Christ makes to the Father on our behalf, which is indeed most holy and cannot be duplicated by anyone. Throughout his walk with the Lord, the believer must recognize that his prayers have absolutely no efficacy unless they are imbued with the perfume, the holy incense of our Savior's intercessory prayer.

We can never pray in our own strength. The modern church has mostly forgotten this. We need the Holy Spirit who is dwelling within us to guide us in our supplication, and we need the intercession of our Redeemer, who sits at the right hand of God, to bring our words before the throne of the Most High.

Professing Christians who pray to the Holy Spirit are gravely mistaken. They fail to understand the clear teaching of the Tabernacle and have adopted in place of true prayer an invocation of their own invention, a "**strange incense**" that cannot be pleasing to God. They forget – or choose to ignore – that Jesus *never* prayed to the Holy Spirit. Neither did anyone else in the Bible.

This is why the Roman Catholic Church has incorporated charismatic prayer into its Catechism (1992) – paragraphs 2670-2672. It will be one of the poisonous devices that this counterfeit church will use to create a universal world religion.

Strict obedience

There are many occasions in the Bible where man's attempt to modify or improve upon what God has prescribed is roundly rebuked. Sometimes this rebuke is fatal. For example, when the Ark was being transported by cart to a new location, Uzzah grabbed it with his hand in order to keep it steady. For this presumptuous act he was immediately struck dead. Uzzah and his team knew – or should have known – that God had given clear instructions as to how the Ark should be transported, using only the staves that slid between the golden rings. Their attempt to 'improve' on this by using a cart had angered the LORD.

How many in the church today are provoking the LORD to anger by using methods of prayer and worship that have not been given in God's holy Word and which, in many cases, are in violation of what He has clearly ordained?

The two eldest sons of Aaron committed a similar act of disrespectful worship, an act which in most churches today would likely pass unnoticed. Instead of filling the golden censer with coals taken from the Brazen Altar, they would seem to have taken them from another source. Their "**strange fire**" was at variance with God's Word – see Leviticus 16:12: "**And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD...**" (See also Numbers 16:46) As a result of their disobedience they were both struck down by fire from the LORD. What is more, neither Aaron, their father, nor Eleazar and Ithamar, their brothers, were allowed to mourn their dramatic and untimely deaths. They were commanded instead to grieve the need to punish their brothers' disobedience in this manner:

"And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled." (Leviticus 10:6)

Remember, too, that Nadab and Abihu had actually been part of the elect group of 74 who had ascended the mountain in Sinai and seen the God of Israel:

"Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness." (Exodus 24:9-10)

They were blessed beyond measure, and yet they still fell headlong into the sin of disobedience. And when they did, their special privileges and exalted experiences made no difference. Their punishment was swift and final.

Only the sons of Aaron could offer incense

Only descendants of the house of Aaron could offer incense on the Golden Altar. As time passed and the number of eligible persons increased, it proved necessary to assign this great honor by lot. By the time of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, a priest of Aaron might fulfil this special act of service (for a two week period) only once in his lifetime. As it happened, Zechariah's opportunity came only when he was well advanced in years.

Men in their pride imagine that the LORD's commands are not truly absolute but are akin rather to instructions whose application may vary from person to person and from place to place. But this is false. The Tabernacle teaches that all who love the LORD must do exactly as He commands, not simply from obedience, but from a true desire to please Him and to serve Him as a faithful son. This attitude is almost entirely absent from the modern church, where man himself decides what ought to be pleasing to God. The Emerging Church, the New Apostolic Reformation, the Word Faith preachers, the sign seekers, the wonder workers, the ecumenical movement, contemplative spirituality, the Purpose Driven Church, the Rome-approved Alpha Course – and many more – are in open revolt against the Tabernacle. They are led by men who profess to understand the Word of God in a new way but who, in reality, have decided to set aside or simply ignore what God has plainly stated. In their presumption and pride they are similar to the mighty king Uzziah whose story is told in the second book of Chronicles:

"But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house [i.e. a place of separation], being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land." (2 Chronicles 26:16-21)

Unwavering obedience to God's holy Word is at the heart of true Christianity. Few today seem to appreciate the radical difference in God's eyes between a believer who strives at all times to be completely obedient to His Word and one who is satisfied with a modern, user-friendly interpretation of what He has plainly stated.

Chapter Nine

THE VEIL

The Holy Place was separated from the Most Holy Place by a veil, which in Hebrews 9:3 is called "**the second veil**", the first being that of the Sanctuary itself. This veil marked the boundary line between God and man. As a topographical feature, it covered only a few feet of space, but as a spiritual and historical reality it was an insuperable barrier that no man could pass.

Fortunately for mankind, following the tragic journey taken by all nations since the Fall, the LORD chose one man to give birth to a special nation and another to lead that nation to the Tabernacle.

Only a handful of its members could get as far as the second veil, and only one could pass beyond it. This unique individual was the High Priest.

He did this only on a designated day each year. He had absolutely no qualification or right to pass through the veil, except the authority given him by God. As an individual he was just as ineligible as everyone else. The authority to do so derived solely from his office of High Priest, in which capacity he represented the person of Christ.

The work that Christ would later do on Calvary would make payment in full for all of the past and future sins of mankind. If the six days of Creation brought all things into existence, the six hours of Calvary would restore them, in the fullness of time, to their original perfection.

When Christ uttered the words, "**It is finished**," just moments before he died, the veil in the Temple was torn in two, straight down the middle, from top to bottom:

**"And the veil of the temple was rent in twain
from the top to the bottom." (Mark 15:38)**

**"And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple
was rent in the midst." (Luke 23:45)**

The veil was so dense and heavy that the noise of this supernatural action must have shocked everyone in the vicinity of the Temple. Interestingly, when referring to the months that followed, the Bible states that "**...the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)**

By doing this, the Father was telling the world that the veil of separation between God and man had been removed through the payment made by His Son on Calvary. The Greek word translated "**It is finished**" is *tetelestai*, which literally means 'paid in full'. Greek was the language of commerce in the Middle East at the time, and when a trader received payment in full he marked the invoice accordingly – *tetelestai*!

The Father removed the veil Himself, as a sign of His complete satisfaction with what His Son had achieved on Calvary. What is more, He didn't delay. We are reminded of His precious words at the baptism of Christ in the Jordan:

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17)

If there is a single image that encapsulates the salvation of mankind, it is probably that of the veil, torn decisively in two. It expresses both the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father. And for each individual believer it expresses "**the unsearchable riches of Christ**" (**Ephesians 3:8**), the glorious privilege that we now enjoy, as adopted children of God, to come before our Father at any time in prayer, thanksgiving, and joyful expectation.

Chapter Ten

THE MOST HOLY PLACE

The innermost part of the Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place (*qodesh qodesh*). The Ark of the Covenant sat in this sealed enclosure, separated by the second Veil from the Sanctuary or Holy Place (*qodesh*). Only one person could enter the Most Holy Place, namely the High Priest, and he could do so on only one day in the year, the Day of Atonement or *Yom Kippur*.

The precise dimensions of the Most Holy Place are not given explicitly in Scripture, but they may be inferred. Since the tent structure was symmetrical, we know the portal of the Most Holy Place had the same height and width as the Sanctuary entrance, namely 15ft by 15ft. Thus we need only determine the distance from the Veil to the western wall – the back of the Tabernacle tent – to know the exact size of the Most Holy Place.

This may be inferred in three ways. Firstly, since the dimensions of the Temple of Solomon (like those of Ezekiel's Millennium Temple) were double those of the Tabernacle, and since the Holy of Holies in the Temple was 30ft by 30ft by 30ft – a perfect cube – it may be inferred that the unstated dimension in the Tabernacle was 15ft, forming another perfect cube.

The second line of reasoning is based on the size of the Tabernacle coverings. In his commentary on Exodus 26:32, Rashi, the 12th century French rabbi, gave the following lucid analysis (Note: *Mishkan* is the Hebrew term for the Tabernacle tent):

"The dividing curtain was ten cubits long, corresponding to the width of the Mishkan [from north to south], and ten cubits wide, like the height of the planks. [It was] spread out at the one-third [point] of the Mishkan [from east to west], so that from it [the dividing curtain] toward the [Mishkan's] interior were ten cubits, and from it [the dividing curtain] toward the exterior were twenty cubits. Hence, the Holy of Holies was ten [cubits] by ten [cubits], as it is said: "And you shall place the dividing curtain beneath the clasps" (verse 33), which join the two sets of the curtains of the Mishkan, the width of the set being twenty cubits. When he [Moses] spread them on the roof the Mishkan from the entrance [all the way] to the west, it [the first set of curtains] ended after two-thirds of the [way into the] Mishkan. The second set covered [the remaining] third of the Mishkan with the remainder [of the curtains] hanging over its rear to cover the planks."

The cube-shape of the Holy of Holies was repeated later in Solomon's Temple and will feature also in the Millennium Temple foretold by Ezekiel:

"So he measured the length thereof, twenty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits, before the temple: and he said unto me, This is the most holy place." (Ezekiel 41:4)

Incredibly the Most Holy Place in the heaven of heavens will descend at the end of the Millennium and will be known on earth as the New Jerusalem:

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God... And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."
(Revelation 21:10 and 16)

This gives the third, and conclusive, line of reasoning. Since the LORD required that each of the elements of the earthly Tabernacle should be an exact copy of its heavenly counterpart – **"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."** (Hebrews 8:5) – we can be certain that the Most Holy Place that Moses built, along with the Most Holy Place built by Solomon and the one foretold by Ezekiel in the Millennium Temple, must **all** have been cube-shaped. The New Jerusalem that will come down from heaven – whose length, breadth, and height are equal – was the original upon which the earthly versions were modelled.

By the shedding of his blood on Calvary, Christ removed the Veil that had hitherto made it impossible for man to enter the Most Holy Place. In the fullness of time, when all things are renewed, all who are now living in Christ through faith will live with him forever in the New Jerusalem, the most holy place.

It will be known from that day forth as *Yahweh Shammah*, **"the LORD is there"** (Ezekiel 48:35).

Chapter Eleven

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

There are four arks in the Bible and are all related.

The first was the ark of Noah which took 120 years to build. As instructed by the LORD he covered it with pitch, both inside and out, to make it waterproof.

The second ark was the one made of bulrushes that Jochabed, the mother of Moses, covered with pitch or tar to provide a watertight vessel for her infant son.

The third ark, so often overlooked, is the one that Moses himself made to convey from the mountain the second set of stone tablets, as instructed by the LORD:

"At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand. And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me." (Deuteronomy 10:1-5)

We are not told what became of this ark, which Moses made of acacia wood, possibly by his own hand. It was clearly used to hold the two stone tablets until the fourth ark, the gold-coated Ark of the Covenant, was constructed by Bezaleel in accordance with the measurements dictated to Moses when the law was given to Israel.

Many respected commentators (e.g. Gill, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown) understand the acacia ark to be the finished ark in its pre-gilded form. The Word of God is not specific on this point, but it is difficult to see how the exceptional skills needed to construct the acacia frame of the final ark could have been available before Bezaleel and Aholiab were supernaturally enabled by the Holy Spirit to build it. Scripture gives no indication that they were.

This interim ark, made entirely of wood, was a figure of humanity. By itself it could never protect fallen man from the wrath of God. Another ark was needed for that purpose, one whose humanity was clothed in divinity and shielded from the fire of God's wrath by a cover of pure gold. There was nothing that man in his fallen state could do to protect himself, so the LORD in His mercy would send a perfect man to absorb, on behalf of all mankind, the full force of His righteous anger.



The Ark of the Covenant

Damaged by sin, the frailty and deficiencies of the third ark rendered it useless for any redemptive purpose. However its very existence served to highlight the perfection of mercy that the fourth would embody.

The Dimensions of the Ark

The Ark was 2¼ ft high, 2¼ ft wide, and 3¾ ft long. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold, inside and out. The walls and base of the Ark comprised a distinct receptacle or chest. For this reason it may be considered a separate item of furniture from the 'lid' that sat on top of it. This feature is underlined by the fact that the lid, known as the Mercy Seat – *kapporeth* in Hebrew or *hilasterion* in Greek – was made entirely of gold and was not fixed by clasps or hinges to the Ark. Instead it sat in a "**crow**n" or ridge of gold on the rim of the Ark (Exodus 25:11).

Two large cherubim were wrought or beaten from the same portion of gold as the Mercy Seat and stood facing one another on either side of the Mercy Seat, their outstretched wings enclosing the space from which the LORD spoke to Moses, "**for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.**" (Leviticus 16:2)

The Ark was conveyed by two acacia staves overlaid with gold. These rested in solid gold rings fixed to the Ark, two on each side. While the Israelites were permitted to remove the staves that were used to carry the Brazen Altar, the Table of Shewbread, and the Golden Altar, they were not permitted to remove the staves of the Ark (Exodus 25:15). This suggested that the Ark was to be kept in a continual state of readiness until it reached its final home in Zion (1 Kings 8:8).

The cherubim above the Ark conveyed the same meaning as those woven into the inner Veil and into the innermost covering above the Tabernacle. Just as Adam and Eve were prevented by cherubim from entering the Garden of Eden, lest they eat of the Tree of Life and live forever – with no hope of salvation – so the cherubim in the Tabernacle depicted both the judgment and the protection of God. Man must be prevented from approaching the Most Holy Place until every vestige of sin had been removed by the redemptive work of Christ.

The Tabernacle contains many profound truths about God. Among these is one that the church today has largely forgotten. This relates to the character of sin and its alarming destructiveness. In our fallen human state we can hardly begin to grasp the infinite perfection of God's holiness. Therefore we think of sin as an error or blemish or fault, a lapse of some kind. But none of these capture the absolute destructiveness of sin. In our pride we forget that even the mind that we use to gauge the nature of sin is itself so badly corrupted by sin that it cannot handle the task. Unless the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, we will never see it as it truly is.

Sin and Leprosy

This is why the Bible frequently compares sin to leprosy. In its initial stages the symptoms of leprosy are barely noticeable and the disease may pass undetected for many years. Only as the condition progresses do more obvious symptoms begin to emerge. Since it causes a numbing of nerve receptors and a slow deterioration of the immune system, the patient may incur further injuries through neglect and secondary infections. In its final stages, if left untreated, leprosy will cause hideous physical deformities and a slow, painful death.

If the LORD compares sin to leprosy, we should take note! In ancient times, nobody recovered from leprosy. Like sin, it was a death sentence, and like sin its symptoms were barely noticeable in its initial stages. The Word of God emphasizes the deadly nature of this disease by frequently describing its miraculous cure as a cleansing rather than a healing.

In God's eyes we are born into this world in a leprous condition, entirely polluted by sin. Only the cleansing that comes through the blood of Christ can remove it.

Many unbelievers are perplexed by sin and its deadly effects. They can't understand how a kind, generous individual, who has spent his entire life serving others and causing no harm to anyone, can be condemned 'simply' because he rejected the free gift of salvation. What they don't understand – or wilfully choose to ignore – is that sin is already present in every one of us from birth and that, like leprosy, it will continue indefinitely to eat away anything of value that we seemed to have. Anyone who rejects Christ will end up eventually with the same craving for wickedness that today torments the Adversary and his army of fallen angels: "**There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked**" (Isaiah 48:22). Jesus himself appeared to be referring to this solemn truth when he said:

"...Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant ... For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath [gained] shall be given; and from him that hath [gained] not, even that he hath [received] shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." (Luke 19:22-27)

In his commentary, Adam Clarke suggests that the words 'gained' and 'received' be added where appropriate (as shown above in square brackets).

The Mercy Seat

The Hebrew word for Mercy Seat is 'kapporeth', from the root of the word *to cover, to forgive, to reconcile, and to atone*. It is the ultimate covering since it perfectly protects all who believe in Christ from the punishment that their sins justly deserve.

The concept of *covering* occurs over and over in the Tabernacle. The tent itself has four coverings, and in all instances where wood is used it too has a covering, whether of bronze, silver or gold. The bronze coverings point to the promise that judgment can be held in abeyance if man is obedient and adheres to God's plan; the silver coverings – on the capitals of the Courtyard pillars – point to the promise that the blood of Christ can cleanse us of all sin; while the gold coverings – which are found only within the Tabernacle tent – point to the divine perfection in all that Christ has achieved on our behalf.

It is notable that the only gold found in the Courtyard was in the ceremonial garments and gold plate worn by the High Priest. As the representative of Christ, he carried on his person the emblems of divinity.

As we have already noted, the only uncovered wood in the Courtyard was the fuel for the fire of the Brazen Altar. This fire burned continuously, even when the Tabernacle was being transported from one encampment to another.

Moreover, the fire itself came from heaven:

"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." (Leviticus 9:24)

This happened the very first time the Brazen Altar was used for ceremonial purposes. The LORD lit the fire Himself. This meant that all sacrifices that were laid on the Brazen Altar during their 40-year sojourn in the desert – and presumably thereafter – were burned on the fire that God Himself provided:

"And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out" (Leviticus 6:12)

This fire, the fire of God's righteous judgment, is never extinguished, not even in eternity.

In our humanity – represented by wood – we are destined to be consumed by His fire unless our sins are "covered." Our covering is the blood which Christ shed voluntarily on Calvary. It is through this, and this alone, that our sins are covered.

As the Psalmist said, "**Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**" (Psalm 32:1)

The Reality of Hell

A great many today, even professing believers, have forgotten that ALL sin must – and will – be punished. Christians are spared the wrath of eternal fire because Christ took upon himself the suffering that their sin demanded. He took all of our iniquities upon himself in order to make perfect restitution to God on our behalf. This remarkable gift is appropriated only by grace through faith in Christ. Thus we have here the great core doctrine of Christianity, the substitutionary atonement, where Christ, our substitute, suffered in our place and paid, or atoned for, our sin debt by his blood. In doing so he also earned the right to remove and cast away our sin nature on Resurrection Day, thereby freeing us forever from any remaining propensity to sin.

As we have seen, the first part of the gift is represented by the goat sacrificed on the annual Day of Atonement, while the second is represented by the goat sent into the wilderness on the same day, never to be seen again.

If the Brazen Altar is the most terrifying image in the Bible, the Mercy Seat is the most wonderful.

The only thing that shields man from the consequences of his sin is the person whom the Mercy Seat represents. Once that shield is removed and God sees, not the perfect atonement for sin, represented by the Mercy Seat, but the two tablets of stone that lie underneath, bearing His holy and immutable laws, He must dispense the full wrath of His judgment.

We got a remarkable demonstration of this when the Philistines stole the Ark of the Covenant on the field of battle. As a consequence they suffered great illness and hardship over a period of seven months, until they decided to send it back. After seeking counsel from their elders, they loaded the Ark onto a cart drawn by two milch cows. They then allowed the cows to wander without a guide. As it happened, the cows passed over into the land of Israel and were spotted by some villagers reaping in the fields of Bethshemesh. They rejoiced to see the Ark. However, in their ignorance they removed the Mercy Seat and looked inside. As a result, over fifty thousand of their population were struck dead by the LORD (1 Samuel 6:19).

All men are sinners and need the Mercy Seat. It is the only protection that we have against the righteous judgment of an awesomely holy God. Alas, most churches today have forgotten to teach their members the uncompromising nature of God's holiness and its profound implications for man. God does not forgive us simply because He loves us and has chosen to overlook our sins. Rather He forgives us because our sin debt has already been settled in full by His Son.

The doctrine of God's "unconditional love" as taught by the New Age movement is wrong. God's love is not unconditional. Why? Because there is nothing unconditional about sin. Man's condition is one of sin, and he cannot change his condition by pretending otherwise. Sin must be addressed, and it can only be addressed through Christ.

God's love for us was expressed to the greatest extent possible through the suffering and death of His Son on Calvary. Our Father could not possibly have done more. He allowed His Son to suffer His full wrath *in our place*. Unless we understand the significance of this, the substitutionary atonement, we will fail to see that God has done everything necessary for our salvation.

The Roman Catholic teaching that man must add to what Christ has done, through good works and sacramental rites, is an appalling lie. Rome rejects the sufficiency of the cross. It gives the individual a role, however small, in his own salvation. But this is impossible! There is nothing we can do to cleanse our sins. Christ did it all for us on Calvary.

The Reformation theologians expressed it very succinctly in five Latin slogans: *Sola Fide*, *Sola Gratia*, *Solus Christos*, *Sola Scriptura*, and *Soli Deo Gloria* – by faith alone, through grace alone, in Christ alone, with the Bible alone, all for the glory of God. No organization on earth has worked as hard as the Roman Catholic Church to suppress, undermine, and destroy these truths!

The Bible teaches that everything God did for us He did through His Son. His love is found through His Son, and in no other way. To reject Christ is to reject God: "**All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.**" (Luke 10:22)

The modern church urges its pastors to emphasize God's love and to downplay His wrath. But this is foolishness! We are where we are because of sin, and sin has terrible consequences. Hell is a real place, and all who reject the great gift of love that the Father has offered mankind – perfect salvation through the suffering and death of His Son – will spend eternity in a place of complete alienation from God.

It may be possible to describe hell in a number of ways, but for anyone who has come to know Christ – "**for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily**" (Colossians 2:9) – hell is the emptiness of eternity without him, a state which Scripture describes as "**the blackness of darkness forever**" (Jude 1:13).

The fire of hell is nothing less than the fire of God's righteous judgment. The first thing the Israelites saw when they entered the courtyard was the Brazen Altar and, by implication, the devastating consequences of sin. The Tabernacle proclaims in the most vivid manner possible, for all to see and know, that hell is the unavoidable domicile of all who reject Christ.

A gospel message that fails to convey this awful truth is a false gospel. Sadly, a great many today who describe themselves as "born again" have only heard this false gospel. And a false gospel cannot save anyone.

Inside the Ark

The universal and unavoidable necessity to judge sin was expressed very powerfully by the inclusion in the Ark of the stone tablets bearing God's holy law. They would remain there in perpetuity as a witness to man's fallenness. There is also a reference to the inclusion, in or next to the Ark, of a copy of the law written by Moses:

"And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." (Deuteronomy 31:24-26)

We know for certain that the Ark contained three items: The stone tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments; a golden pot in which a sample of manna was stored for posterity; and Aaron's staff of almond wood:

"... 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" (Hebrews 9:4)

The Mercy Seat sat above the two stone tablets and protected man continually from the righteous judgment of God.

The law, once given, could never be repealed, and still exists today. As Christ said,

**"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."
(Matthew 5:18)**

A great misunderstanding entered the church with the false interpretation of this basic truth by the so-called Church 'Fathers'. The early theologians, who laid the foundation for the false Roman Catholic Church, abolished the law and replaced it with "grace" (over which they claimed to exercise complete control). But salvation was **always** by grace through faith and never by the deeds of the law. Apart from Christ, who kept the law without blemish, it was impossible for any man to live fully in accordance with its exacting standards.

Paidagogos

The Tabernacle and its offerings were a detailed picture of Christ. His mission and sacrifice were prefigured in a set of tangible religious activities in which man could participate. Through their obedience and their faith in God's Word, the Israelites were anticipating the sanctifying power of Calvary. They were saved by faith, just like Enoch, Noah and Abraham – who lived *before* the law was given – as well as Gideon, Barack, Samson and David, who lived *after* the law was given (but who never observed it perfectly). As the book of Hebrews confirms, salvation was always by grace through faith, right back to the days of Abel.

As the Apostle Paul states

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Galatians 3:24-25)

The original Greek word for 'schoolmaster' in this translation (from the KJV) is *paidagogos* which, contrary to popular belief, does not mean 'schoolmaster' at all! In Greek and Roman times, a *paedagogus* (Latin form) was a trusted slave whose duty it was to supervise the life and morals of boys belonging to the upper class. They were strict disciplinarians and often much more severe in their chastisements than a father. They brought the boy to school every morning and collected him afterwards, keeping a close eye on him throughout the day and scrutinising all of his social activities. The *paedagogus* went everywhere with his charge until he reached maturity, thereby ensuring that he acquired during those critical formative years the values and traits that his parents esteemed.

The word *paidagogos* is also translated as 'tutor', 'guardian', and 'custodian' in other Bible versions, but the literal and correct term in English is given in Young's Literal Translation, namely "child-conductor."

Paul struggled to impress upon the early Christian Jews that the law was fulfilled in Christ and that, by itself, it could not save anyone. Many of them mistakenly thought that Paul had abolished the law – as if this were possible. What he taught, however, was that anyone who rejected Christ had also rejected the law, because the law was fulfilled in Christ. Jesus made a similar observation when he chastised the Pharisees, who observed the law in minute detail in its outer or visible form but did not do so in their hearts. In reality, they did not believe the law and, not believing Moses, they were unable to believe Christ: **"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me."** (John 5:46)

By setting out God's perfect standard, the law impressed upon man his utter inability to save himself. Adam Clarke, in his commentary on Galatians, put it like this: "Thus the law did not teach us the living, saving knowledge; but, by its rites and ceremonies, and especially by its sacrifices, it directed us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." It is in this sense that the law was a *paedagogus* [child conductor], directing us to Christ so that we might be justified, i.e. made just or righteous before God.

The law was also necessary for a reason that is seldom mentioned by Bible scholars. In order that he could serve as the **"lamb without blemish"** (**Leviticus 23:12** and **1 Peter 1:19**), the world needed an objective standard that would demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth was, indeed, the perfect, sinless offering. Without that standard, which was set down in very specific terms by God Himself, man would have had no means of knowing whether Jesus fulfilled this vital condition. This was why the Messiah could come only **after** the law was given. Sinai had to precede Bethlehem and Calvary.

Pot of Manna

The second object inside the Ark was a pot of pure gold containing a specimen of manna. The word itself is thought by some to mean "what is it?" since the Israelites asked this question over and over when it first appeared.

Manna was the bread given from heaven, virtually the only food on which an entire nation survived for forty years. It spoke of the perfect spiritual nourishment that we find in Christ, the one and only Bread of Life. The "**hidden manna**" mentioned in the Book of Revelation (2:17) would seem to be an allusion to the manna "hidden" in the Ark, and thus the food that will nourish the saints throughout eternity.

Aaron's Staff

We have already discussed the final object in the Ark, namely Aaron's staff. Since he probably used the same staff in his daily rounds, he could not have been a tall man. The Ark was 3¾ ft long, 2¼ ft high, and 2¼ ft wide, so it could have accommodated a staff no longer than 4ft or so. This would suggest that Aaron was about 5ft 6 inches in height.

The disappearance of the Ark

There has been much speculation about the whereabouts of the Ark today. Some conjecture that Jeremiah had it removed before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and later concealed it in a secret vault beneath the Temple mount. The enemies of the Gospel of Christ are keen to get their hands on the Ark since it could be used for sacrilegious purposes and possibly as a means of "authenticating" the Antichrist. For example, if he were to disclose its location by supernatural means, it would be taken by many as a sign of his messiahship.

The Ark of the Testimony mentioned in the Book of Revelation ("**the ark of his testament**" – 11:19) may possibly be the same Ark that stood in the Temple at Jerusalem. Whether or not this is so, the Word of God makes it perfectly plain that the Ark will **never** be found again on earth:

"And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart."

(Jeremiah 3:16-17)

The same cabal of wicked deceivers are also keen to promote the so-called Shroud of Turin, presumably as another possible way of authenticating the Antichrist. Why do some Christians believe it could be genuine? Has it never occurred to them that the LORD would never violate his own commandment and make an image of himself? It shows how far professing Christians have drifted from the Word of God that they actually give credence to these audacious lies.

Coverings during transit

While they were being transported, the main items of furniture in the Tabernacle were protected by a number of coverings. The Ark was covered firstly by the inner Veil and then by a blue cloth. The last was "a covering of badgers' skins" [Hebrew *tachash*]. As discussed earlier this was very likely a covering of antelope hide rather than badger skin. It is difficult to conceive of the Ark, or even the Veil, coming into close proximity with the skin of an animal that the Levitical laws declared to be unclean.

The other items of furniture – the Golden Altar, the Golden Lampstand, and the Table of Shewbread – were covered as follows during transit (as stated in Numbers 4):

Golden Altar:	blue cloth and <i>tachash</i>
Golden Lampstand:	blue cloth and <i>tachash</i>
Table of Shewbread:	blue cloth, scarlet cloth, and <i>tachash</i>

Again the act of covering receives special attention. In this case it is suggestive of separation, where sacred vessels are protected from profane eyes. The theme of sanctification or separation continues even while the Ark is en route to a new location.

We can compare these layers of fabric with the metals used in the Tabernacle – brass, silver and gold. The metals covered the pillars and other wooden structures, just as the fabric covered the sacred vessels. The blue cloth denoted the heavenly origin of Christ, while the *tachash* denoted his humanity. Both aspects of Christ – his divinity and his humanity – are needed for our salvation.

Scarlet cloth was used only to cover the Table of Shewbread. This represented the blood of Christ which was shed for our salvation. It was likely associated with the Table of Shewbread in the same way that wine, the other symbol of blood, was included with bread in the Lord's Supper:

"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... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (John 6:51-53)

It is significant that the "ashes" – the glowing embers from the Brazen Altar – were also covered in transit and that the covering was purple:

**"And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon:"
(Numbers 4:13)**

The color purple is a reference to kingship, in this instance the absolute sovereignty of the LORD God of Israel who supplied the fire initially, having sent it directly from heaven.

There is much else that we would love to discuss – such as the consecration of the priests, the anointing of the Tabernacle, or the sequence in which the Tabernacle was assembled – but these and related matters lie beyond the scope of this short study.

Chapter Twelve

NOTABLE ABSENT FEATURES

There are a number of features that one might possibly have expected to find in the Tabernacle but which are not present. These 'missing' features add to our understanding of the Tabernacle and its overall purpose.

No locks

Firstly, there were no locks. This reflects the fact that the barriers to truth are not physical but may be found, rather, in man's fallen nature and in his indifference to God's holy will. The real "locks" are in the wicked depths of the human heart. The path to truth is open to all men everywhere, no matter where on earth they may be. Some critics claim that only a small percentage of the population of the world have ever had an opportunity to hear the gospel, but such reasoning is defective since it overlooks the sovereignty of God. All who genuinely want truth, who yearn for it in their hearts, will be led to the age-old gospel of redemption through the shed blood of the Lamb. The Word of God makes this perfectly clear, not just in the typology of the Tabernacle, but in many other places. Consider, for example, the promise of the LORD in Proverbs 2:3-5

"Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God."

There are many ways an individual can arrive at the Courtyard of the Tabernacle, but once he has arrived he must follow thereafter the plan established by God. As Christ said, **"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."** (Luke 9:62)

No cherubim on the Courtyard gate or Sanctuary entrance

The cherubim were seen only by the priests. There were none on either the Courtyard gate or the Sanctuary door, the two entrances that were visible to the congregation. The cherubim inside the Tabernacle tent denoted the awesome depth of God's holiness and the need for man to approach Him strictly by the path specified. Living cherubim stood at the entrance to the Garden of Eden to keep man out – and may have stood there for centuries – but the Tabernacle was given to lead man back to God. Therefore no cherubim 'stood' at the Courtyard entrance and none were visible on the door to the Sanctuary. The LORD in His mercy was saying, in effect, *Come, fear not, the way has been prepared.*

No steps

The priests never stood above the people. Not even the High Priest was given an elevated position. The person occupying the highest office in the land and the lowliest servant were on the same level. There were no steps or graduated ascent in either the Courtyard or the Tabernacle, thereby indicating that all, in their fallen sinful nature, were equal in their condemnation before an awesomely holy God. But it also highlighted the perfect equality of acceptance before God that all enjoy once they are cleansed by the saving blood of Christ. In reality, all men are destined to live in eternity in one of two states – total condemnation or perfect acceptance. There is no middle ground, despite what the philosophers say. They like to believe that there are many roads and one destination, but they are wrong. There are two destinations, only one of which offers eternal life, and only one road leads to it.

It is believed by some that a ramp was used to facilitate access to the Brazen Altar, but since this is not specified or even implied in Scripture, there is no basis for including it in the typology of the Tabernacle. Every aspect of the Tabernacle was clearly defined by God, and Moses was asked, when overseeing the design and construction of its various components, to ensure that it conformed perfectly with what he had been shown on the mountain. In their fallenness and pride, men have a remarkable tendency to add to God's word, or to downplay the significance of certain 'details', as though they were entitled to decide which were 'more relevant' than others. The LORD did not even allow Moses to do this, but told him to study carefully everything that the craftsmen prepared and ensure that it was identical with what the LORD had revealed to him on the mountain:

**"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."
(Exodus 25:9)**

"And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." (Exodus 25:40)

"And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount." (Exodus 26:30)

"Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it." (Exodus 27:8)

"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." (Hebrews 8:5)

Twenty-one times in Scripture Moses is referred to as "**Moses the servant of the LORD / God**". It is a mark of his meekness and perfect obedience that he was described so many times in this way. And yet even he was reminded on several occasions to do exactly as he was told.

No measurements for the Brazen Laver

A set of dimensions or an exact quantity of material was specified for every component in the Tabernacle except one – the Brazen Laver. The Word of God stated simply that it should be made entirely of brass, but gave no directions as to its shape, weight or dimensions. The priests used the Laver countless times throughout the day to wash their hands and their feet. As such it signified the believer's need – and privilege – to cleanse himself as often as possible in the course of the day through **"the washing of water by the word"** (Ephesians 5:26). The word of course is the Bible itself.

No windows

The light that shone in the Sanctuary was not the light of the world, but the light of the Golden Lampstand only. The individual has a choice in life, to follow the light of the world or to follow the light of Christ. Many professing Christians try to do both, but the Tabernacle declares that this is impossible. We can only know the light of Christ after we die to the world. Believers who try to equip their Tabernacle, their life in Christ, with a window onto the world are only fooling themselves. It cannot be done.

It is significant also that while the Sanctuary or Holy Place was completely lit at all times, night and day, the Most Holy Place was in complete darkness at all times. It must be assumed that the Veil was sufficiently dense to completely block out all ambient light from the Sanctuary – **"The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness."** (1 Kings 8:12) This stark contrast between total light and total darkness would seem to point to several spiritual truths:

The Holy Place

- eternal day in the New Jerusalem
- the light-filled perfection of Christ
- the unimpeded visibility of Christ through faith

The Most Holy Place

- the unknowability of God in His absolute sovereignty
- the unseen work of Christ in the life of every believer
- the unsearchable riches of Christ.

In an age of science so-called, where men of intellect profess to be able to identify the cause behind all phenomena, there is a strong tendency among Christians to conceive of God and His works in 'scientific' terms. They foolishly imagine that they know how God does what He does, but they are seriously in error. The truth is that we know absolutely nothing about the ways and methods that God uses to execute His holy will. As the Apostle Paul said, **"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!"** (Romans 11:33)

In so far as science claims to 'explain' creation, to the exclusion of God, it is straightforward idolatry. Modern science is being used extensively by the wicked to attack Biblical truth, to undermine the sovereignty of God, and to manufacture an alternative reality – including a false cosmology – that will entrap the unwary and prepare the way for the Antichrist.

No seats for the priests

There were no seats or resting places in either the Courtyard or the Sanctuary. The priests were continually active, and even ate the shewbread while standing.

We, as believers, need to be continually active in our service to Christ, to **"work out"** or serve out our salvation here on earth **"with fear and trembling."** (Philippians 2:12)

There is a tendency to conceive of heaven as a place of idleness, but it will likely be nothing of the kind! No matter where we look in God's wonderful creation we find continual activity. We also find immense diversity. Very likely we will each serve God in eternity in a way that is uniquely suited to our individuality. Indeed, our time here on earth would seem to be designed in part to prepare us for life in eternity, where those who served Christ most fully during their earthly sojourn will be assigned a role in eternity that reflects, in both glory and stature, the depth and sincerity of their service here on earth.

No floor

Given the special status of the Tabernacle and its extraordinary place in God's holy plan of Redemption, it may seem surprising that no floor covering of any kind was included in its construction. When one considers, for example, the fabulous amounts of silver and gold, cedar and stone, that were used in the construction of Solomon's Temple – which superseded the Tabernacle – the contrast is even more striking.

One might have expected to find boards on the floor of the Sanctuary where the priests came and went continually, but there were none. Incredibly even the Ark of the Covenant sat on bare earth.

The priests, including the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, conducted all of their ceremonial activities while walking or standing on the flat desert terrain. Such was the unadorned nature of the intimacy between God and His chosen people.

By virtue of His presence in the Ark He rested on the same stony ground as the multitude of Israelites in the surrounding encampment. He had come down to their level in order to restore them to Himself, just as Jesus would come down in human form and live humbly among the lowly villagers of Galilee and Judea. His birth in a stable fulfilled the typology of the Ark, while the many occasions during his ministry when he slept outdoors on rough terrain reflect the steady progress of the Ark from place to place across the sun-burnished wilderness.

No shoes or sandals

None of the priests wore shoes, not even the High Priest. This is not specifically stated but is generally understood to have been the case, particularly as both Moses and Joshua were instructed to remove their shoes while in the divine presence. The absence of footwear was also, it would seem, a necessary part of the Tabernacle's typology. Just as the Ark – where God dwelt – had direct contact with the earth, so too had each of the priests. As a result they were unable to avoid the defilement of their feet through constant contact with the earth. No matter how many times they washed their feet at the Brazen Laver, they would immediately begin to accumulate more grime and dirt. Even when the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement, his feet were somewhat defiled as he walked from the Brazen Laver to the inner Veil. The message is clear. The world defiles each and every one of us continually. Since its spiritual pollutants are everywhere, we must attend continually to our sanctification. A church that does not separate from the world is a church in name only.

No ceiling boards

The tabernacle was literally a tent, a supporting structure covered by layers of fabric. While we generally think of a tent as a transitional or temporary dwelling, there is nothing in the Pentateuch to indicate that the Tabernacle was designed to have a limited lifespan. Indeed, the very opposite is suggested. Later, when David proposed to the LORD that he would build for Him a Temple in Jerusalem, the LORD replied:

"Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?" (2 Samuel 7:6-7)

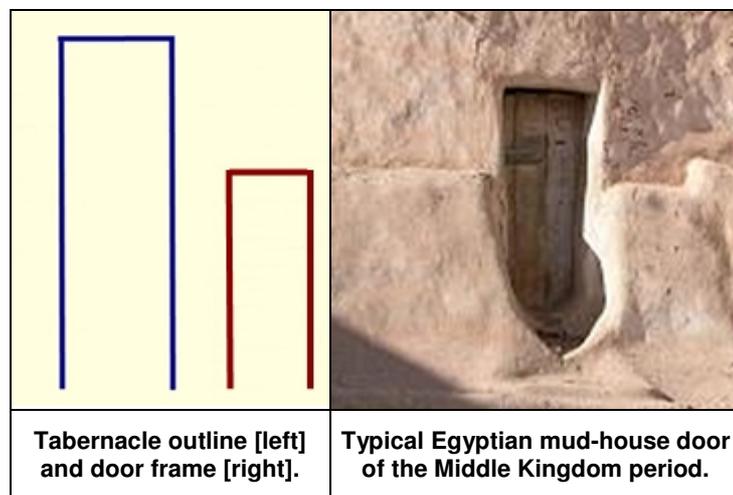
It was a moment of great significance in the Bible when the LORD chose Jerusalem as His permanent habitation. The Father had chosen for His Son the city from which he would reign forever. Once this momentous decision was revealed to mankind, one of the most striking features of the Tabernacle, namely its mobility, was no longer needed.

In like manner each of us lives temporarily in a tabernacle of flesh, wandering the earth as strangers and pilgrims:

"These [the Old Testament saints] 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." (Hebrews 11:13)

The soft, tent-like covering of the Tabernacle consisted of four layers, each of which depicted an aspect of Christ. To be born again means to die to the world, enter the Tabernacle, and dwell thereafter *in* Christ. While we are here on earth in the flesh, Christ is our spiritual tabernacle. The words "**in Christ**" occur no fewer than ten times in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We are migrants here on earth, living in Christ, serving him as priests, growing in sanctification, and increasing in knowledge of who he truly is.

We would also draw attention to the correspondence between the shape of the Tabernacle, as defined by its walls (with neither wooden ceiling nor floor), and the Passover door: "**And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.**" (Exodus 12:7) –



It is difficult to say for certain whether this is significant, but the similarity is striking.

No exposed wood

Despite the large quantity of acacia wood that used in the construction of the Tabernacle, none was exposed. Rather, it was covered as appropriate with bronze, silver or gold. It is notable that anything in the Tabernacle that was not covered or protected in some manner was consumed. The bare wood used as fuel in the fire of the Brazen Altar was completely consumed by the flames. The offerings themselves (which we will discuss in more detail later) were also consumed, whether by the fire or by the persons entitled to eat them. Both the bread on the Table of Shewbread and the incense on the Golden Altar were consumed. Even the wick in the Golden Lampstand was consumed.

Although it was an unadorned piece of wood, Aaron's staff survived because it was protected by the Mercy Seat.

Aaron's staff is representative of the High Priest, and in particular our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. The flowering of the staff overnight, when almond blossoms sprang miraculously from its seasoned shaft, was evidence that God had chosen the tribe of Levi above all the tribes to serve in a priestly capacity. This miraculous flowering was itself a type of the Resurrection, both of Christ, our first fruits, who rose from the tomb, and of the dead in Christ who will rise miraculously from the grave when our Morning Star returns (Revelation 22:16).

The Tabernacle depicts the great plan of Redemption for all mankind, where all that is not covered by Christ is consumed. To all who believe in His Son, the LORD gives eternal life; and to all who reject him, eternal judgment.

The cuddly teddy-bear 'Christ' of the modern church is a great deception. When Christ returns he will deal severely with all who have rebelled against his Father.

There is nothing 'cute' about the Tabernacle. Its message is profoundly important for all believers and for the world at large. Indeed, it can even be said that its message is *the* message from God to all mankind. Either we accept the protection of the Mercy Seat, the perfect covering that Christ offers, or we stand alone before the righteous judgment of an awesomely holy God.

Chapter Thirteen

THE PRIESTHOOD

The priestly office consisted of three levels: the High Priest, the Aaronic priests, and a large group of assistants known as Levites:

"At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day." (Deuteronomy 10:8)

All three came from the tribe of Levi, while the first two came exclusively from the family of Aaron (whose name meant "Very high"). The tribe of Levi was confirmed in this honor, it would seem, because it actively sided with Moses when he called for the destruction of the golden calf and its principal supporters. In their zeal the Levites slew a large number of idolatrous Israelites:

"And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." (Exodus 32:28)

Priestly garments

The Aaronic priests wore the four items of apparel specified in God's Word – a full-length robe of fine white linen; a bonnet of fine white linen (sometimes referred to as a mitre or turban); a girdle or belt of fine white linen; and linen breeches, a tight-fitting undergarment covering the midriff and thighs. Linen speaks of the earth since it is produced from flax, a hardy crop from which textile fibers are extracted by repeated beating and then spun into yarn. Again we find the "beating" theme, this time in relation to the immediate representatives of Christ on earth. The priesthood, which alone could mediate between man and God, was clad entirely in garments that came from the earth, just as man himself was made from the dust of the earth.

The High Priest

The High Priest wore additional items of apparel, including a more elaborate girdle and a distinctive feature in his bonnet. These comprised:

- blue robe

A sleeveless blue robe of fine twined linen, which he wore over his full-length white linen robe. This reached below his knees and had a fringe along the lower edge which was ornamented with an alternating series of bells (made of gold) and colored pomegranates (made of blue, purple scarlet and gold thread). The robe itself was woven as a single piece, without a seam.

The blue color represented the heavenly perfection of Christ, the bells the sweetness and harmony of his person, the pomegranates the fruitfulness of his work, and the seamless garment the wholeness of his being – since Christ was both fully man and fully God in the same person.

The bells may also be a reference to the remarkable truth that Christ shared with his disciples when he said, "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:27).



**Golden bell found in Jerusalem, July 2011,
near the Temple Mount.
Believed to be similar to those worn
by the High Priest on his blue robe.**

- ephod

An ephod or sleeveless priestly mantle of fine twined linen, embroidered throughout with blue, purple, scarlet and gold thread. This was worn over the robe of blue linen and reached to knee-level or thereabouts. The front and back of the ephod were not connected below the armpits. The gold thread used in his priestly garments was actual gold, beaten, cut, and twisted into fine filaments.

- girdle

A girdle or belt of fine twined linen interwoven with blue, purple, scarlet and gold thread. The familiar Biblical phrase, "gird up your loins," means to free one's legs for work by pulling one's robe to knee level or thereabouts and holding it in place with one's girdle or belt. The girdle was therefore indicative of constant readiness and willingness to work.

- gold plate

A gold plate was attached to the front of his bonnet, embossed in Hebrew with the words "**Holiness to the LORD.**" Since it was located across his forehead, it was visible to all – see picture below. The High Priest was representative of the tribe of Levi which in turn was representative of Israel as a whole. It was only through his consecrated office, with its imputed righteousness, that the children of Israel were recipients of divine blessing. This is equally true of the church today, whose members are blessed with the imputed righteousness of Christ, our High Priest.



**Gold plate embossed with the words,
Holiness to the LORD, on the
forehead of the High Priest**

Jeremiah was speaking of this when he described Christ at his Second Coming as "**The Lord Our Righteousness**" (Jeremiah 23:6). As believers, whatever righteousness we possess is grounded solely in our High Priest and coming King. By wearing the gold plate on his forehead – which was akin to a crown or royal diadem – the High Priest was anticipating the day when the two supreme offices, that of priest and that of king, would be united in the person of Christ.

Referring to holiness, MacLaren says:

"It is a very unfortunate thing – indicating superficiality of thought – that the modern popular notion of 'holiness' identifies it with purity, righteousness, moral perfection. Now that idea *is* in it, but is not the whole of it... The root-meaning is 'separated,' 'set apart,' and the word expresses primarily, not moral character, but relation to God. That makes all the difference...The first thought is 'set apart to God.' That is holiness, in its root and germ."

The saints in glory will be set apart to God, fully and completely. They will be separated forever from their sin nature and will be holy in the true and perfect sense of that word. The very last chapter of the Bible is pointing to this when it places the name of God in their foreheads:

**"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."
(Revelation 22:4)**

- onyx plates

On each of his shoulders was fixed an onyx plate on which the names of the twelve tribes were engraved, six on each plate. This too was a reference to Christ our coming King, who will rule on earth in strict accordance with God's holy will: "... **and the government shall be upon his shoulder**" (Isaiah 9:6). It is also a reference to the glorious promise by the Lord to gently care for and carry his flock: "**He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young**" (Isaiah 40:11).



The onyx shoulder plates

- the Breastplate of Judgment

Over his chest he wore a pouch of fine twined linen interwoven with gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread. This breastplate comprised a folded foursquare piece of cloth, a span in width, the inner portion of which served as a pouch. Twelve different semi-precious stones were fixed to the front, arranged in four rows of three. Each individual stone represented one of the twelve tribes of Israel and had its name engraved thereon (though which tribe was represented by which stone is not known).

The breastplate was called "**the breastplate of judgment**" (Exodus 28). This was likely a reference to the Urim and Thummin, meaning "lights and perfections," which were kept in the pouch. We are not told what these objects were except that they enabled the High Priest to receive counsel ("judgment") from the LORD. The Urim and Thummin enabled the High Priest to exercise in a representative capacity yet another aspect of the work of Christ, namely that of prophet.



The Breastplate of Judgment

By carrying it next to his heart, he was bearing witness to the immeasurable love that the Messiah had for his chosen people. The Israelites themselves were greatly blessed to see this truth proclaimed so clearly and so prominently on the vestments of the High Priest.

We are reminded here of the startling way the LORD referred to Himself in Exodus 34:14: "**For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.**"

Where love is concerned, perhaps no word other than *jealous* quite captures the exclusive and abiding regard that the lover has for his beloved. The Breastplate of Judgment is truly the token of a jealous God.

The same powerful expression of divine love may be found in Zechariah when the LORD says: "**Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.**" (Zechariah 8:2)

The entire world will experience His formidable fury when, at the close of the age, He sends His Son to defend Jerusalem from her enemies. His love for Zion is inscribed upon the palms of his hands in the same way the names of the Twelve Tribes were etched into the semi-precious stones worn by the High Priest: "**Behold, I have graven thee [Zion] on the palms of my hands: thy walls are continually before me.**" (Isaiah 49:16). There is clearly a prophetic reference in this passage to the nails that were hammered into his hands on Calvary.



Vestments of the High Priest

The office of High Priest is given an unusual distinction in chapter 35 of the Book of Numbers. It states that if a person unwittingly causes the death of another person and thereupon flees to a city of refuge to escape retribution, he can dwell there indefinitely **"unto the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the holy oil."** Upon hearing that the High Priest had died, he could return to his home and possessions without penalty. The threat of retribution from the avenger of blood will have lapsed. In other words, for a man confined to a city of refuge, living daily in the shadow of death, the death of the High Priest was actually good news! It restored his liberty, just as the death of our eternal High Priest restored ours.

The Day of Atonement

The single most important function of the High Priest was to perform the atoning sacrifices on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, which fell on the tenth day of the seventh month (*Tishri*) [cf Leviticus 16]. After making an offering of incense in the Most Holy Place, he sacrificed a bullock and a ram to atone for his *own* sins. He did this while wearing, not the garments of the High Priest, but the linen garments only of the Aaronic priesthood.

He then sacrificed the goat chosen by lot and released the scapegoat. Before releasing the latter the High Priest was to –

"... 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:" (Leviticus 16:21)

After doing this he went into the Holy Place, changed the linen garments that he had been wearing and put on those of the High Priest. Only then did he return to the Brazen Altar to offer the burnt offerings.

In his fine study on the Pentateuch, C H Mackintosh says of Leviticus 16 that it "unfolds some of the weightiest principles of truth which can possibly engage the renewed mind."

The offerings made throughout the year were in respect of the individuals who made them, but those on *Yom Kippur* were made for the nation as a whole. Their efficacy came entirely from the one and only sacrifice that could possibly please God, namely that of the Lamb on Calvary. The LORD accepted their offerings, which in themselves could not expiate sin, in anticipation of the one and only sacrifice that one day would make full expiation for ALL sin throughout time, both past and future.

Even though the Israelites did not understand that their coming Messiah would die for their sins, their belief in the efficacy of their sacrificial offerings was sufficient to maintain their relationship with God. Once their disobedience reached the point where, despite all prophetic warnings, their hearts were hardened against the LORD and their sacrificial offerings became an empty ritual, the presence of the LORD left the Ark of the Covenant and departed from Jerusalem – seemingly just prior to the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 BC (see Ezekiel 10:18).

The rank spiritual decay and obstinate lack of faith that led to this calamitous event had already been sharply expressed in the Word of God about four hundred years earlier:

"The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" (Proverbs 21:27)

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight" (Proverbs 15:8)

Chapter Fourteen

THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL

As we have seen, the word 'holy' is much misunderstood among Christians. It is probably fair to say that many pastors today make little if any reference to it in their sermons. And yet holiness is exactly what the LORD asks of each one of us. **"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God." (Leviticus 20:7)** and **"Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).**

The LORD emphasized the holiness of the Tabernacle and everything in it by requiring that each of the priests, the tent, and every item of furniture, including every utensil, be anointed with holy anointing oil (Exodus 40 and Leviticus 8). The ceremony decreed that everything so anointed was set apart thereafter unto God for His holy purpose.

Hebrews chapter 9 reveals a remarkable additional detail that is not recorded in the Pentateuch:

**"Moreover he [i.e Moses] sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle,
and all the vessels of the ministry." (Hebrews 9:21)**

If it is to have any meaning, separation or holiness must always point to the shed blood of Christ. That was the essential truth of the message embossed on the gold plate worn by the High Priest – "Holiness to the LORD" (in Hebrew: קֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה – *Qodesh La YHWH*), or literally 'set apart to God'.

Composition of the anointing oil

The anointing oil was made of olive oil mixed with four spices – myrrh, cinnamon, calamus and cassia – in the ratio 2:1:1:2.

Myrrh is an aromatic resin or natural gum made from a small, thorny tree native to the Middle East. As an essential oil it can be used to make both incense and perfume, while its medicinal uses are better known under its alternative Biblical name, the Balm of Gilead. To harvest the resin, the tree must be repeatedly wounded to bleed the gum. Myrrh was also widely used in ancient times to prepare a corpse for burial. Thus we can see how myrrh, which was a constituent of both the anointing oil and the ceremonial incense, was a remarkable figure of Christ, both in his death and in his resurrection.

Myrrh also has a numbing effect on the senses and was sometimes mixed with wine to induce drowsiness. When Christ was offered such a mixture at his crucifixion he refused it, thereby showing that he was willing to drink to the full the cup which his Father had given him – **"O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."** (Matthew 26:42)

The next spice, cinnamon, was extracted by peeling and beating the inner bark of an aromatic tree. So too was cassia, another variety of cinnamon. Calamus, which was made by drying and powdering the strongly scented roots of a wetland reed, was used in perfume making, as well as for medicinal purposes and as a food additive.



Myrrh Tree

With each of these three spices we have the image of a beautiful perfume being released through the beating and pulverising of selected plants. Collectively they portray the intensity and fragrance of what Christ achieved for mankind through his suffering and death, as well as the sweet perfume of his perfect obedience and love before the throne of his Father.

We are given a tiny glimpse into the magnitude of his suffering and the depth of his obedience when, in the Book of Revelation, he said: **"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."** (Revelation 2:27)

Through his work on Calvary, *his* Father is now *our* Father by adoption, just as Jesus became the legal son of Joseph by adoption. Under Jewish law the adoption of Jesus by Joseph conferred on him all the rights and prerogatives of a naturally born son. Only thus could he claim the throne of David, a position he will not formally occupy until his Second Coming.

The interval, where he holds the right to the throne but does not yet occupy it, reflects the interval between the hour we are born again – and thereby legally adopted – and the time we enter into our inheritance. And just as the believer should be watching every day with sincere expectation for the return of Christ, Christ too is waiting for the moment when his Father says, My Son, the day of the Rapture is now at hand; go and retrieve your bride.

What a wonderful day that will be! Christians everywhere should speak constantly of this coming event, the resurrection of the righteous dead and the snatching up of born-again believers in the Rapture. It is truly an indictment of the modern church that heartfelt mention of this glorious day is almost entirely absent from most professing churches and even scorned by some as poetic folly.

Chapter Fifteen

THE OFFERINGS

There were five main offerings – the Trespass Offering, the Sin Offering, the Peace Offering, the Grain Offering, and the Burnt Offering. Only the Grain Offering did not involve bloodshed. A libation of wine, known as a Drink Offering, was included with each of them.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22). This means the Grain Offering could not atone for sin, but every Burnt Offering, which did atone for sin, included a Grain Offering. Thus each of the five offerings pointed to sin, with a different emphasis in each case, as the following table shows:

Offering	Spiritual lesson for the individual
The Trespass Offering	The need to recognize the offense of sin.
The Sin Offering	The need to recognize one's sinful nature.
The Peace Offering	The need to be reconciled to God.
The Grain Offering	The need for a Saviour.
The Burnt Offering	The need for a perfect sacrifice to atone for sin.

Offering	Steps to Redemption
The Sin Offering	Man is conceived in sin.
The Trespass Offering	Man lives in sin.
The Burnt Offering	Christ atoned for sin on Calvary.
The Grain Offering	Christ defeated death at his Resurrection.
The Peace Offering	Man is fully restored to God at Pentecost.

A tabular summary of the Offerings may be found in **Appendix B**.

A Drink Offering was made with each of the five main offerings and involved the pouring of a libation of red wine at the foot of the Brazen Altar. The amount of the libation was in proportion to the size of the animal being sacrificed – a quarter of a hin for a lamb, a third for a ram, and a half for a bullock (A hin was about 12 pints). The amount poured out at a Grain Offering was not specified. Drink Offerings symbolized the shedding of Christ's blood on Calvary, to which Jesus referred in Luke 22:20: "**This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.**"

Every sacrifice with bloodshed had to be accompanied by a Grain Offering and a Drink Offering (as stated in Numbers 15). Unlike the Grain Offering, the Drink Offering was never offered alone. The red wine also represented the delight that God took in the finished work of Christ – even though Calvary still lay in the future.

The two offerings that were most pleasing to the LORD, it would seem, were the Burnt Offering and the Peace Offering. When such offerings were made "**...in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months...**" (Numbers 10:10), the silver trumpets were sounded. This told the entire camp – the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel – that an offering, a sweet savour unto the LORD, was in progress. Every man, woman and child knew that a special event was taking place at that moment.

If the covering of cloud by day and the covering of fire by night were a constant visual reminder that God's presence was dwelling among them, then the trumpets sounding over the Burnt Offerings and Peace Offerings were a corresponding audible reminder of the same reality. They were also an audible reminder to the nation as a whole that one day an Offering would be made before the LORD that would atone fully and perfectly for all sin.

We will now examine each of the five main offerings in turn, starting with the most important of all, the Burnt Offering.

The Burnt Offering

The Burnt Offering normally comprised a male without blemish "**of the herd**" or "**of the flock**," namely a bullock, sheep or goat. The bullock [young bull] had to be intact and the sheep or goat had to be of the first year. If the offerer lacked the means, he could offer instead a turtle dove or a pigeon (of unspecified gender). These offerings were made in public, "**at the door of the tabernacle**," showing that man cannot hide his need for atonement.

The procedure was as follows: Standing at the door of the Tabernacle, the offerer placed his two hands firmly on the head of the animal, an act that expressed his identification with the animal. It was in essence an act of faith. In Scripture the laying on of hands is always an expression of faith in the sovereignty and mercy of God, of complete submission to His holy will. The only time sin was transferred was when the High Priest placed his hands on the head of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement. In that instance the animal was not sacrificed but released into the wilderness, into "**a land not inhabited**."

The offerer then killed the animal himself by cutting its throat. The priest captured the spurting blood in a special vessel and poured it here and there on the Brazen Altar.

The offerer then flayed the animal to remove its hide, which was the only part of the animal that was not placed on the altar (Even the horns were consumed) [In the case of a bird, the crop was removed]. The hide was retained by the priest. This pointed to the covering that each of us receives, "the robe of righteousness," through the perfect atonement that Christ made on our behalf:

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness..." (Isaiah 61:10)

Next he cut the flesh into pieces. The priest then laid these in a set order on the altar, along with the head and the fat. The legs and the internal organs were washed before being laid. The entire animal was then left on the altar to burn, a process which, depending on the size of the cuts, could continue throughout the night.

After the sacrifice had been completely consumed by the fire, the priest collected the ashes from beneath the grill of the altar, removed his priestly garments, donned common attire, and went outside the camp to dispose of the ashes.

The Hebrew word for burnt offering, *olah*, actually means 'that which ascends or goes up,' while the word for 'burn' in connection with a burnt offering (*qatar*), also means 'to burn incense.' The burnt offering is described many times as **"a sweet savour unto the LORD,"** indicating that the LORD received the smoke from the offering as though it were incense.

The burnt offering was unique in that it was wholly consumed by fire. No part was removed (except the hide), no part was retained to be eaten by the priest, and no part was carried outside the camp.

The Burnt Offering was always accompanied by a Grain Offering and a Drink Offering.

The Grain Offering

The Grain Offering was a gift offering of wheaten flour, grain or bread. It was performed in a number of ways, as described in the second chapter of Leviticus. In one variation, the flour could be uncooked. In others it could be mingled with oil and then cooked. The offering could even consist of unground corn ("first fruits"), dried or parched by a domestic fire. All grain offerings included olive oil and salt, while some variations included an offering of frankincense.

The amount of uncooked flour to be offered was an *omer* (a tenth of an *ephah* or roughly four pints). Presumably the cooked offerings were to comprise a similar amount. In all cases the priest burnt only a portion of the offering with some salt, and retained the rest. Where frankincense was used, it was entirely consumed by the fire; none was retained by the priest.

A Grain Offering could not include either leaven or honey. Leaven always signifies sin, while honey denotes man's enjoyment of the world. It is notable that shortly after his resurrection, Christ ate some honey (Luke 24:42), showing that hitherto he had been constrained until his work was done – **"...and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50)**

The Grain Offering was always made after a Burnt Offering, an association that points to the life and death of Christ. While the Burnt Offering looked to his death and to all that he accomplished on Calvary, the Grain Offering looked both to his resurrection and to a life of perfect service and obedience to his Father. Without the latter, the former would have been impossible.

The Grain Offering could also be made on a voluntary basis as a gift or oblation (*minchah*) in its own right. If so, the offering was made, not as an atonement for sin (since no blood was shed), but as an act of worship.

[Please note that the KJV uses the term 'meat offering' where grain offering is intended.]

The Peace Offering

The Peace Offering was similar to the Burnt Offering except that

- the sacrificial animal could be either male or female;
- the parts burnt on the fire comprised the kidneys, the fat of the inner organs [suet], and the caul over the liver;
- in the case of a sheep the fatty part of the tail was also burnt on the fire;
- the flesh could be eaten by the offerer, his household and his friends after the ceremony (provided they were ceremonially clean).
- the bread used in the Grain Offering (which had to accompany every Peace Offering) could contain leaven, but only the portion retained and eaten by the offerer and his household/friends. It could not be placed on the altar before the LORD.

Both the breast of the animal ("**wave offering**") and right shoulder ("**heave offering**") were retained by the priest. The term 'heave offering' referred to the part of the offering that was held aloft by the priest before the LORD, as though to heaven, while the 'wave offering' was waved but not raised.

- sacrificial meal

The Peace Offering was the only offering in which the offerer shared. It was also the only offering in which leavened bread was eaten and wine consumed. As such it was a sacrificial meal, related in its typology to the Lord's Supper.

- the fat of the inner organs

The fat in question was the suet surrounding the inner organs, which is unlike fat found elsewhere in the body. The Hebrew word was *cheleb*, meaning 'sweet fat'. It was indicative of health and well-being.

The Mosaic law forbade both the consumption of blood (including flesh containing blood) and the consumption of the fat of the inner organs: "**It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.**" (Leviticus 3:17) The blood was forbidden because "**the life of the flesh is in the blood**" (Leviticus 17:11), while the suet fat belonged wholly to the LORD: "**...all the fat is the LORD's.**" (Leviticus 3:16)

- the caul over the liver

The caul that covered the liver is believed to have been the diaphragm that separates the chest from the lower half of the torso, a muscular membrane that regulates the breath. The Word of God reminds us that our next breath is in His hand and that we exist for Him alone: "**... the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways...**" (Daniel 5:23).

We can see from this that the all three elements in the Peace Offering – the diaphragm, the kidneys, and the suet fat – were associated with the vitality and well-being of the animal and thus, by extension, of the person making the offering.

Three kinds of Peace Offering

Peace Offerings were of three kinds:

1. The first was a voluntary thanksgiving offering (in this respect akin to a Grain Offering but with animal flesh instead of wheat);
2. The second was also a thanksgiving offering, but on foot of a vow to do so if certain blessings were received;
3. The third was a simple expression of one's love for God.

The voluntary thanksgiving offering had to be eaten on the same day, while the other two could be eaten partly on the same day and partly on the following day, but not on the third day. Any portion remaining on the third day had to be burnt. Failure to do this was a serious offence before the LORD.

The Peace Offering was accepted by God and returned in part to the offerer to be enjoyed by him and his family. There were therefore three recipients of the same offering – God, the priest, and the offerer. Seen in this light, the offering was a token of reconciliation between God and man, pointing directly to the finished work of Christ on Calvary.

The Sin Offering

The three offerings we have discussed – namely the Burnt Offering, the Grain Offering and the Peace Offering – are sometimes referred to as "sweet savour" offerings because the smoke thereof was a "sweet savour unto the LORD." However, this description is misleading since the Sin Offering was also burned "for a sweet savour unto the LORD," as the following passage shows:

"Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering. And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. 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. (Leviticus 4:28-31)

The sin to which the Sin Offering related was one which the individual committed **"through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done"** (Leviticus 4:2), while the Trespass Offering related to sins of ignorance which, in addition, resulted in a loss of some kind to another person. In such cases he had to make full restitution to the person concerned, plus an additional fifth.

What really set the first three offerings apart from the Sin and Trespass Offerings was their voluntary nature. There was no obligation on anyone to make a Burnt Offering, a Grain Offering, or a Peace Offering, but there was a strict obligation on the individual to make a Sin Offering or a Trespass Offering, as appropriate, as soon as he became aware of his infraction.

– degrees of sin

The gravity of a sin was in proportion to the level of responsibility of the person who committed the sin. A priest had to offer a bullock, while a tribal leader offered a male goat. A common Israelite however was required to offer a female goat, while those of lesser means could offer two turtle doves (or two young pigeons). Indeed, if the individual could not afford two turtle doves or young pigeons, he could offer one tenth of an ephah of fine flour (This measure seemingly was less than an adult's daily allowance of bread.)

It is significant that this latter offering – one tenth of an ephah of fine flour – could not include either oil or frankincense, **"for it is a sin offering"** (Leviticus 5:11). The Sin Offering was a profession of repentance before the LORD, a personal confirmation that in our fallen, sinful state we need a Redeemer to atone for our sins. Since only Christ could do that for us, he is represented by the fine flour, the 'bread' of life. But the Holy Spirit, to Whom the oil refers, could not be included since He did not atone for our sins. Neither did the Father, whose awesome holiness is represented by frankincense. Only the Second Person of the Holy Trinity became sin for us: **"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin"** (2 Corinthians 5:21). Thus the offering made by the poorest of sinners consisted of nothing but the simplest of the elements that represented Christ, namely refined white flour.

This humble provision shows how easy it is for all men to approach Christ and repent of their sins. The LORD in His mercy has removed all barriers and impediments. No matter how lowly or miserable our condition, whether in our own eyes or in the eyes of men, we have the means through Christ to enter into fellowship with God.

– the Golden Altar of Incense

The Sin Offering differed from the other animal sacrifices in that, where the offering was in respect of a priest, the blood of the bullock was taken inside the Sanctuary or Holy Place. Here it was sprinkled seven times before the Veil and applied to the horns of the Golden Altar, while the remainder was taken into the Courtyard and poured out at the foot of the Brazen Altar:

"And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD" (Leviticus 4:7)

In the case of the Burnt Offering and Peace Offering, however, the blood was applied only to the Brazen Altar and none was taken inside the Sanctuary.

This remarkable exception underscored the need for the priests to be utterly blameless before the LORD at all times.

The offerings speak over and over again of the blood, without which cleansing and atonement were impossible. Viewed in its totality, the Tabernacle was the place that God designed to exalt the glorious blood of His Son. It is doubtful whether any other structure, with its furniture and ceremonial rites, could come close to expressing even a fraction of all that the Tabernacle says about Christ.

– the fire outside the camp

The parts of the bullock in the Sin Offering that were not consumed at the altar (which included flesh, hide and dung) were taken outside the camp and burnt. The Bible uses a different Hebrew word for 'burnt' in this instance from the one used to describe the burnt offering itself. They are never used interchangeably. The fire at the Brazen Altar produces a "sweet savour" unto the LORD, indicating that which is acceptable, while the fire that consumes outside the camp is indicative of His judgment and wrath. Both refer to the work of Christ, the former by pleasing the Father through his sacrificial work on Calvary, the latter by taking upon himself the righteous wrath that would otherwise fall on sinful man.

The Trespass Offering

The Trespass Offering was related to the Sin Offering in that both applied to unwitting infractions of God's holy law. However, the Trespass Offering also addressed infractions where damage or injury was caused to another person, again unwittingly. The Sin Offering pertained entirely to our relationship with God – **"against thee, thee only, have I sinned"** (Psalm 51) – while the Trespass Offering (also known as a Guilt Offering) took account of how we treated our fellow man.

We cannot make personal restitution to God for our sins – since only Christ can do that on our behalf – but we can make restitution to our fellow man for any harm or injury we may have unintentionally caused. Therefore the Trespass Offering required that the offerer make restitution in full, plus an additional amount. The offering comprised a male lamb without blemish, along with an estimation by the priest in silver of the damage or loss caused by the trespass, to which a fifth was added.

After the offerer killed the lamb, the priest sprinkled his blood on the Brazen Altar. He then took the fatty (suet) portions of the lamb, along with the kidneys and the caul above the liver, and burnt them on the altar.

Bible scholars have commented on the close similarity between the Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering. Each dealt directly with sin but from a different perspective. While the Sin Offering emphasized the defiling effect of sin and, by implication, the destructiveness of our sin nature, the Trespass Offering emphasized our utter inability to repay – to God – the debt that sin incurs and that His righteous judgment demands. On Calvary, Christ had to deal with both aspects. He had to pay our sin debt in full **and** he had to cleanse us forever from the leprosy of our sin nature. As we have already noted, the church has tended to understate the importance of the latter.

To appreciate the depth of this, we need to go right back to the Garden of Eden. Before the Fall, the world was absolutely perfect. It was so incredibly beautiful that, after having declared six times that what He had just created was "good," the LORD, in a general pronouncement covering the whole of creation, declared that it was "very good."

When God says something is very good, He is describing something which in our sin-damaged condition we can hardly imagine. The excellence, the sheer perfection of all that He had made was simply staggering.

By bringing sin into the world, Adam and Eve brought death and decay. They shattered abruptly the wonderful bond of spiritual intimacy that had existed between themselves and God. This meant that the plan that He had for mankind before sin intervened was put on hold and a new plan, a plan of Redemption, initiated.

If God did not return everything – **everything** – to the perfection that existed before the Fall, then Satan would have won. Evil would have taken *something* from the sovereignty and excellence of God. The plan of Redemption, which has been unfolding ever since, was designed by God to do just that.

Jesus himself referred to this as "the regeneration" (Greek *paliggenesia*) in Matthew 19:28, while the Book of Acts describes it as "the times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21). The word is in the plural (*times*) because it is a process that begins with the Second Coming of Christ, continues throughout the Millennium – the Age of Righteous Government – and culminates in "**a new heaven and a new earth**" and the descent from heaven of "**that great city, the holy Jerusalem...having the glory of God.**" (**Revelation 21:1,10,11**)

God sent a man into this world, a second Adam, who would fully glorify Him in all things. He needed someone who, through a single act of infinitely perfect obedience, would undo all the damage caused by Adam's single act of disobedience. As events transpired, more glory accrued to God by the work of Christ on Calvary than was lost in the Fall.

This is probably why the restitution required with the Trespass Offering included the requirement that one fifth be added to the amount owing. Christ was our Trespass Offering. He made perfect restitution for our sins on Calvary. In doing so, according to the typology of the Levitical Offerings, he enriched his work of restitution with a bounty that gave even greater glory to God. The world in the fullness of time will be even 'better' than it was when it was first created. And since it was absolutely perfect when it was first created, but did not endure, the perfection to come will be permanent and unchanging, utterly impervious to sin.

God's Love for His Son

We need to dwell on this profound truth since it reflects the astounding love that the Father has for the Son and the Son has for the Father. It is this incredible love that brought us into existence in the first place – since the Father gave the saints to His Son before the foundation of the world – but it also the same love that redeemed us completely from corruption and death.

This is why, when we pray to our Father, we must always do so in the name of His Son. Remember, it is with His Son that He is "well pleased." The traditional translation of Matthew 3:17 and 17:5 – "**This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased**" – may not disclose fully the fact that the original Greek word, *eudokeo*, connotes not just great satisfaction but actual pleasure. The Father was both greatly pleased with the work of His Son and took great pleasure in it.

There is absolutely nothing we can do to give pleasure of any kind to God. Of ourselves, we cannot please Him. But when we approach Him in the name of His Son, all is transformed. Since we are made in the image and likeness of God, we can reflect the glory of Christ in our prayers and in our worship. And that is what our Father sees and hears when we do this!

H A Ironside crystallized all of this when he said, "It is of inestimable value to the soul to dwell upon God's estimate of His Son" (*The Levitical Offerings*). He went on to note that there is nothing that any man can bring to God that will give Him joy unless it speaks in some way of His blessed Son and his work on Calvary. We commune with God only when our soul enters into His thoughts concerning Jesus.

Chapter Sixteen

THE RED HEIFER

Referring chapter 19 in the Book of Numbers, which sets out the role of the red heifer, R F Kingscote said: "...I think there is no chapter in the Bible, at least in the Old Testament, that gives us such a sense of the holiness of God as does this chapter."

Alas, many Christians today have no knowledge of the red heifer. This alone says a great deal about the condition of the church in today's dark and troubled world. The One True God revealed a great deal about Himself in the first five books of the Bible, and yet whole sections of these books are neglected or treated in the most cursory way. How many readers have heard a pastor preach on the red heifer, even though it is one of the most wonderful types of Christ anywhere in the Bible?

The children of Israel were instructed to select a red heifer and give her to Eleazar, Aaron's son, who was to oversee the slaying of the heifer outside the camp. In succeeding generations the priest seemingly was the presumptive successor of the High Priest. Another priest was appointed to assist Eleazar and slay the heifer before him. The heifer had to be without blemish and must never have worn a yoke. Eleazar then took of the blood and sprinkled it seven times "**before the tabernacle of the congregation.**" He did this while facing the Tabernacle, which was some distance away (perhaps three miles or more).



Modern red heifer

He then watched as his assistant burned the heifer in her entirety. Every part of the animal, without exception, was consumed by fire. This included the hide, the dung, and the remaining blood. It is notable that in this instance the hide was consumed by the fire. As he was doing this the priest threw three items onto the flames – some scarlet wool, a piece of cedar wood, and some sprigs of hyssop.

After the sacrificed animal had been entirely reduced to ashes, both the priest and his assistant – while still outside the camp – bathed themselves and washed their clothes. They then returned to the camp in fresh garments but were not deemed clean until the evening.

Meanwhile another assistant (again a priest) was sent out to gather up the ashes. He too had to be ritually clean. Once they had been gathered, the ashes were stored permanently outside the camp "**in a clean place**" [i.e. ceremonially clean].

This second assistant was also required to wash his clothes, but there was no requirement that he bathe himself. He too was deemed unclean until the evening.

The ashes were subsequently added, pinch by pinch as required, to a large container of water freshly gathered from a flowing source, such as a spring. Seemingly only a tiny amount of ash was required for this purpose. The water was then known thereafter as "**water of separation**" and was used as "**a purification for sin.**" As such it was intended for use by all the children of Israel, as well as "strangers" in the land who converted to Judaism (proselytes).

Bloodguiltiness

Chapter 21 of Deuteronomy deals with a circumstance that adds appreciably to our understanding of the red heifer. It specifies that, if a person is slain in a field and it is not known who slew him, the elders in the surrounding towns must come together and establish by exact measurement which town is nearest to the scene of the crime. The elders of that town must then take a heifer into a valley which has never been sown ("**a rough valley**") and strike off her head. The heifer must never have been used for work or worn a yoke, but she did not need to be red. The priests, who were in attendance in their capacity as magistrates, blessed this act. The elders then washed their hands over the beheaded heifer and said:

**"Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.
Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed,
and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge."
(Deuteronomy 21:7-8)**

The ceremony removed from them and their town all bloodguiltiness arising from the unlawful killing of an innocent person.

There is a striking parallel to this in the New Testament where Pilate, before he passed sentence, washed his hands of any guilt for the blood of Jesus.

The beheaded heifer speaks powerfully of the need to atone for all sin, even in those instances where the perpetrator was unknown. If they were to continue to live on land that had been defiled by the blood of a murdered person, the Israelites had to be exonerated by God – in their own eyes – from any complicity in the crime. The righteousness of God demanded that all sin be punished, no matter how it arose. In light of His awesome holiness, the blood of a murdered person was like a voice crying to Him from the ground. As the LORD said to Cain in Genesis 4:10, **"the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."**

More generally, in order to make sure that innocent blood was not shed by the avenger of blood (a close relative of the victim), the LORD established six cities throughout the land to which the guilty could flee. Where primary roads intersected, the way to the nearest city of refuge had to be marked with a signpost saying, 'Miklat Miklat' ('Refuge, Refuge'). Indeed, to facilitate access by fugitives, the roads leading to these six cities were about twice the standard width.

The beheaded heifer was an innocent victim of sin, but through her unmerited death she pointed to the only sacrificial death that would atone for all sin. Moreover, she did not die by having her throat slit, which was the normal practice, but by beheading. This meant that all of her blood poured into the ground. The ceremony was a stark reminder that, unless the LORD Himself sent a perfect sacrifice, a sacrifice wholly acceptable to Him, the entire bloodstained earth would have to be destroyed.

Leviticus 14 speaks of the need to cleanse a dwelling of leprosy. Since the earth will in due course become the dwelling place of Christ, it too must be thoroughly cleansed of 'leprosy' or sin. The first and second Resurrections will remove from the earth the blood of all persons who at any time in history were unlawfully killed – since the life of the flesh is in the blood. By the end of the Millennium, all cries from the earth will have ceased and the earth itself will have been cleansed.

Clean and Unclean

In order to understand the significance of the red heifer and the water of separation made from her ashes, we need to understand what the Bible means by **"unclean."**

The distinction between clean and unclean was grounded in the principle of separation. This is evident from the name that the LORD gave to the water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer – the water of *separation*. The separation that the LORD required found expression in several ways in the lives of the Israelites: (a) separation from idolatry; (b) separation from pagan people; (c) separation from all practices contrary to God's law; and (d) separation from disease, sickness and death.

One of the principal tasks of the Levites was to teach the people to discern the difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the profane:

**"And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane,
and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."
(Ezekiel 44:23)**

The rules of ritual purity permeated the life of every Israelite and were a constant reminder, especially when meals were being prepared, that the chosen people were a people set apart from other nations. They could not live as others lived, but dwelt constantly in a covenant relationship with God. The rules of ritual purity enabled them to appreciate and reaffirm that relationship on a day-to-day basis.

The laws of Levitical purity drew a sharp distinction between life and death. They impressed upon the mind and heart of every Israelite the need to abide always by the statutes and precepts of an awesomely holy God – which gave life – and to avoid anything that conflicted with His revealed will – which brought death.

The circumstances that gave rise to uncleanness fell into the following categories:

Food

in relation to certain animals, wild or domestic, for human consumption
in relation to the consumption of the flesh of an animal not ritually killed

Disease

in relation to leprosy and anything touched by a leper
in relation to leprosy-infected dwellings

Procreation

in relation to childbirth
in relation to fluids connected with procreation

Death

in relation to contact with or proximity to human corpses
in relation to contact with animal corpses
in relation to objects in the immediate vicinity of a human corpse

Marriage

in relation to sexual intimacy between a man and his wife.

We find here a common theme, namely a celebration of human life and an abhorrence of death and decay.

Christ came to triumph over death, to grant eternal life, and to restore what was lost through sin. By suffering through the consequences of our sin and dying in our place, he conquered death on our behalf. This gave him the right, through his own resurrection, to offer each and every one of us the gift of salvation, a gift that we can appropriate only through faith in the cleansing power of his blood.

The sanctification associated with this wonderful gift was reflected in the laws of ritual purity.

Interestingly, a person could become unclean unintentionally, for example by walking over an unmarked grave. Even though it was incurred in a way that we could not fully understand, it left one defiled in the eyes of God. Objects, too, could be unclean. This pointed to the contaminating condition of the world itself and to the onus on man to live beyond its polluting effects.

We have already met this idea with the Brazen Laver, where the priest is expected to cleanse himself periodically as he went about his daily duties in the Tabernacle. Israel was intended by God to be "**a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation**" (Exodus 19:6). As such they had to take whatever steps were necessary to preserve themselves from contamination by the world.

The worst contamination came through contact with death, since death itself came by sin. It is the ultimate product and consequence of sin, and the last enemy to be destroyed: "**The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.**" (1 Corinthians 15:26)

The water of separation – namely water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer – was given to Israel as "**a purification for sin**", but the sin or "uncleanness" in question related only to contact with a human corpse: "**He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days**" (Numbers 19:11) It was not applied in cases of uncleanness arising in any other manner.

The only remedy for death, the ultimate consequence of sin, was the death of Christ, whose sacrifice was prefigured by the red heifer. Through his suffering and death on Calvary he conquered and destroyed the awful consequences of sin, including death itself. His Resurrection was a glorious and widely testified witness to this triumph, but the full bounty of all that he achieved on Calvary will not become manifest until the resurrection of the saints.

The earthen vessel

All types of uncleanness could be cleansed except one. The exception related to contact with "**the creeping things that creep upon the earth**", which were declared by God to be unclean. Leviticus 11:29-30 itemised them as follows: weasel, mouse, tortoise, ferret, chameleon, lizard, snail and mole (This list is somewhat tentative since scholars are not certain to which animals the original Hebrew words refer). Should the dead body of any of these fall into an earthenware jar, the jar could not be cleansed by washing but had to be destroyed:

"And every earthen vessel, whereinto any of them falleth, whatsoever is in it shall be unclean; and ye shall break it." (Leviticus 11:33).

In Scripture the image of an earthen vessel often refers to man in his frail human condition:

**"Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again"
(Jeremiah 19:11).**

If the vessel had been covered, the uncleanness would not have been incurred and its destruction would not have been necessary.

Christ, in his humanity, voluntarily underwent this destruction in our place.

**"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."
(Revelation 2:27)**

The ashes that the assistant collected after the heifer had been totally consumed comprised not just the ashes of the heifer, but the ashes of the wood consumed in the fire. They were intermixed and indistinguishable. Thus the ashes in the water of separation were those of the perfect heifer – Christ in his deity – and of the lowly wood – Christ in his humanity.

The main penalty for uncleanness or impurity was loss of the right to approach the Tabernacle until the uncleanness was removed. This meant that an Israelite could not make any of the sacrificial offerings, not even the Sin Offering, until this was done. This restriction, which may seem paradoxical, is telling us that, in order to come closer to God – by approaching the Brazen Altar – we must first look at ourselves from His perspective. This requires that we acknowledge our own wretched condition and approach Him only on His terms, not ours.

It should also be noted that an unclean person could not eat of consecrated food and, if unclean at the Passover, had to celebrate the feast a month later.

Uncleanness always gave rise to a waiting period before the individual could return to a condition of ritual purity. In most cases the uncleanness lasted until the evening, but in others it could last seven days or longer. The maximum was eighty days for a woman who had just given birth to a daughter. This waiting period may help to explain why every person who believes the Gospel and is born again – and therefore is fully justified before God – must nonetheless 'wait' on earth for an unspecified period before being united with Christ.

Sin and leprosy

The most important symbol for sin in Scripture is leprosy. Even though it was a disease in medical terms, its miraculous removal was usually described as a cleansing rather than a healing:

**"Then went he [Naaman] down, and dipped himself seven times in
Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came
again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."
(2 Kings 5:14)**

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers..." (Matthew 10:8)

**"...how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,
the deaf hear... (Luke 7:22)**

When Jesus cleansed (or healed) the leper in Matthew 8:4, he asked him to go to the priest and be ritually cleansed according to the law of Moses. Remarkably, this priestly rite comprised elements – cedar wood, scarlet wool, and hyssop – that were found only in the red heifer ceremony [Hyssop was a common plant which seemingly grew abundantly on stony walls]:

"And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water: As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water:"

(Leviticus 14:5-6. See also Leviticus 14:50-51)

It is significant that the earthen vessel is also mentioned here, but in this instance there is no requirement that it be broken since it had not become unclean.

As we have already seen, these same elements were added to the fire in which the red heifer was consumed. While their significance has been much discussed, most Bible scholars would agree that –

cedar wood represents the humanity of Christ, with possible reference to both the cedar of Lebanon – the mightiest of all trees, from which the Temple of Solomon was made – and the wood of the cross, which could be regarded as the most despised tree ever grown.

scarlet wool represents the blood of Christ, a twine so slender and insignificant that it would seem too weak to support anything, and yet it binds with unbreakable assurance the entire remnant of saved humanity to the Living God.

hyssop sprigs represent the lowly origin of Christ in his humanity and his wonderful accessibility to all who call on him for salvation. Not only was hyssop used in the sacrifice itself, but it was also used to sprinkle the water of separation. This in turn points to the first direct reference to the blood of Christ, when hyssop was used to sprinkle the lintel and doorposts with the blood of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:22).

Distinctive features of the Red Heifer sacrifice

When compared with the Levitical sacrifices, the red heifer sacrifice has many unique and distinctive features:

1. The red heifer is mentioned Numbers but not in Leviticus or Deuteronomy. Indeed, apart from two brief references in Hebrews, one direct and one implied, she is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible:

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
(Hebrews 9:13-14)

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water [i.e. the water of separation]."
(Hebrews 10:22)

2. All sacrifices of atonement had to be made on the Brazen Altar and nowhere else, with one exception – the red heifer. What is more, she had to be sacrificed outside the camp on open ground.
3. When the supply of ashes was depleted to the point where it would shortly run out, a new red heifer had to be selected and sacrificed. Apparently the ashes from a single heifer could last for a hundred years or more. Some rabbinical sources suggest that only nine red heifers were ever sacrificed in the history of Israel, from the time of the Exodus in 1446 BC to 70 AD or thereabouts.
4. Even though it was akin to a Burnt Offering, where the animal sacrificed was always male (whether bullock, he-goat, or ram), the animal sacrificed in this instance was always female – a heifer or female ox.
5. The purification related only to uncleanness arising from contact with a human corpse, whereas a Sin Offering was not restricted to sins of a particular kind.
6. The water of purification could remove uncleanness, not only from humans, but from objects and dwellings.
7. The spiritual efficacy of the Sin Offering was immediate, while the purification granted through the water of separation took seven days.
8. The Sin Offering was a single event, while the water of separation had to be applied twice – on the third day and on the seventh. The days appear to have been counted from the time the individual sought purification, which presumably was the same day the uncleanness was incurred.
9. The person who carried out the purification ceremony had to be ceremonially clean but did not need to be a priest or a Levite.
10. Remarkably, the person who carried out the purification was rendered unclean by doing so. Jesus, on the other hand, being sinless, could touch an unclean person, such as a leper, without being defiled himself and yet in doing so remove any defilement from that person. He also healed quite often by touching the supplicant, even though this was not necessary, in order to demonstrate that the law of uncleanness would be superseded by his work on Calvary.

There is a similar requirement in relation to the Sin Offering. The priest is entitled to eat of the meat sacrifice, having cooked it in either a brazen or an earthenware pot. If the latter, however, the pot must be destroyed: "**But the earthen vessel wherein it is sodden [cooked] shall be broken**" (Leviticus 6:28). Nevertheless, "**Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy**" (Leviticus 6:27).

We see here an unmistakable connection with by the person who sprinkled the water of separation. Even though he was instrumental in restoring a person or object to a state of cleanness, he himself was rendered unclean by doing so.

11. The red heifer sacrifice is the only one in which the person who slew the animal did not first place his hands on the animal's head. There was no identification with the animal or representative transference of sin on behalf of the people.
12. The blood of the red heifer was sprinkled on the ground outside the camp. The sprinkling of the blood of all other sacrifices took place within the confines of the Tabernacle.

Chapter Seventeen

THE SILVER TRUMPETS

For some reason, commentators usually omit any discussion of the two silver trumpets when describing the tabernacle and its functions:

**"Make thee two trumpets [*chatsotsěrah*] of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps."
(Numbers 10:2)**

As a result of this neglect many Christians today are not even aware that the LORD instructed the Israelites to fashion two priestly trumpets, each from a single portion of silver, and to use them for a specified range of functions. These functions comprised (a) the calling of a general assembly of the people, whether princes or tribes, to the door of the tabernacle; (b) the sounding of calls to each tribal grouping to break camp and advance to a new location; (c) the sounding of supplications upon the LORD to come to their aid when threatened by neighboring pagan nations; and (d) the musical adornment of sacred occasions:

"Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God." (Numbers 10:10)

The silver trumpets – *chatsotsěrah* – could be used only by the sons of Aaron. While the Levites could assist in the performance of many sacred functions, there were some that could only be carried out by the Aaronic priesthood. The blowing of the silver trumpets was one such function. The Levites, on the other hand, could employ the common trumpet or *shopher* as the occasion required. (A short *shopher* was made of ram's horn and a longer version from the horn of a mountain goat.)

It is significant that each trumpet was made from a single piece of silver, thereby suggesting a spiritual association with three major items of furniture in the tabernacle itself – the Golden Lampstand, the Mercy Seat, and the Brazen Laver.

In light of this typology, there can be no doubt that the silver trumpets should be seen as part of the furniture of the tabernacle and as elements intrinsic to its function. They were not simply musical instruments or tools of communication, though they served as such, but elements whose true spiritual meaning can be understood only in the context of the tabernacle as a whole.

Accordingly, the silver trumpets were related typologically to the silver used elsewhere in the tabernacle and the surrounding courtyard, namely the silver chapters on top of each of the fence posts and the silver sockets that supported the tabernacle walls. The former represented the summit and the latter the foundation of the tabernacle. While the former were visible to everyone, the latter were visible to no one, not even the priests. In like manner, the silver trumpets, when blown at the tabernacle gate, could be heard throughout the entire camp, but were otherwise unseen (The tribes were forbidden to come closer than 3,000 feet (2,000 cubits) to the Ark of the Covenant).



Silver trumpets on coin from the first century AD.

The Bekah

As we have already seen, silver signified atonement, redemption, or sanctification. The following passage of Scripture gives a vivid illustration of this:

"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."

(Exodus 30:11-16)

Every person aged twenty and above had to give annually for the service of the tabernacle a half shekel of silver, **"to make an atonement for [their] souls"**. This was literally **"atonement money"** and **"an offering unto the LORD"**. As such it pointed to the only offering that could atone for our sins, namely the blood of Jesus.

Note also that the weight of the half shekel was determined by reference to the "**shekel of the sanctuary.**" This meant it was fixed for all time and could not vary as weights and measures often did. The reference shekel, which was retained at the sanctuary, was the perpetual standard by which the scales were calibrated. No one could give more and no one could give less; the amount never varied. The price of our salvation had been fixed from the foundation of the world.

This half shekel was also known as a bekah – "**A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary**" (Exodus 38:26)



The Call of the Silver Trumpets

The call of the silver trumpets was predominantly a call to sanctification, whether through the sacrificial offerings made by the children of Israel or through their continuing progress toward, and conquest of, the promised land. That it also had a protective function may be seen from the following remarkable passage:

"And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets [*chatsotsěrah*]; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies." (Numbers 10:9)

It is humbling to think that a call from these two simple instruments was certain to reach the ears of the LORD Almighty and secure His victorious assistance!

Apart from Christ himself, no person or object (with the possible exception of the Urim and Thummim), has ever borne this privilege – "**Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?**" – **Matthew 26:53.** The two silver trumpets are therefore a type of Christ, of his unwavering commitment to the preservation and ultimate exaltation of the righteous remnant of Israel.

But why have *two* silver trumpets? Surely a single trumpet would suffice to complete the typology? Perhaps the explanation may be found in the earthly life of Jesus who constantly sought the will of his Father and never acted solely on his own authority: **"...for I do always those things that please him."** (John 8:29). When he spoke he spoke for both, like two trumpets sounding.

The significance of the silver trumpet may also be seen in two major events in the Jewish calendar, the annual Feast of Trumpets and the Year of Jubilee.

The Year of Jubilee

The Year of Jubilee was the year following the last year in seven cycles of seven ("**the fiftieth year**"). Every seventh year was a Sabbath year, a time when the land was given rest and the LORD sustained the nation by miraculous means, providing enough food in the harvest of year #6 to feed the nation –

- (i) in year #7, when the land was at rest, no harvest was gathered, and no crops were planted for the following year;
- (ii) in year #8, since no crops were planted the previous year; and
- (iii) in year #9, until such time as the harvest for that year, planted in year #8, had matured.

The word 'jubilee' is a translation of the Hebrew word **yôwbêl**, which Strong defines as "the blast of a horn (from its continuous sound); specifically, the signal of the silver trumpets; hence, the instrument itself and the festival thus introduced:—jubile, ram's horn, trumpet."

Accordingly, the silver trumpets were linked with yet another assurance of miraculous deliverance, this time from hunger and want. In this respect they again constitute yet another type of Christ: **"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."** (John 6:35)

Also, in the year of **yôwbêl** – when the silver trumpets were at their most 'jubilant' – all outstanding debts were forgiven and all property restored to its original owner.

How often do we forgive the sinner who repents? As Christ said, in response to this question: **"I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."** (Matthew 18:22) This seemingly was a reference to the unconditional forgiveness that was available to all in the **yôwbêl**, the year of Jubilee, which fell after seven times seven years were fulfilled. It also identified Christ himself with the **yôwbêl**, the jubilant blast of the silver trumpets, whose glorious resurrection proclaimed the universal and unconditional forgiveness of sin.

The Feast of Trumpets

The silver trumpets were also especially prominent during the Feast of Trumpets:

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation." (Leviticus 23:24)

The word for 'trumpets' in this verse is neither **chätsôts^erâh** nor **shôwphâr** but **t^erûw^aâh**. Strong defines this as follows:

t^erûw^aâh, ter-oo-aw'; from H7321; clamor, i.e. acclamation of joy or a battle-cry; especially clangor of trumpets, as an alarum:—alarm, blow(-ing) (of, the) (trumpets), joy, jubile, loud noise, rejoicing, shout(-ing), (high, joyful) sound(-ing).

The Feast of Trumpets or *Yom Teruah* – which is also called *Rosh Hashanah* because it inaugurates the new civil year in the Jewish calendar – is a feast of joyous acclamation and the blowing of trumpets. Given the exuberant nature of the occasion, it is clear that the ram's horn trumpet or **shôwphâr** was the principal instrument intended, though no doubt the silver trumpets would also have been used. It should be remembered that there were only two such instruments in Israel, a number which Solomon later increased to 120 – see 2 Chronicles 5:12.

The Last Trump

For all believers, the rapture (*harpazo*) of the church is truly a 'blessed hope', where 'hope' denotes a future event that is certain to occur. Since the church, the bride of Christ, will not endure the wrath to come, she cannot be on earth during the great End Time tribulation. We are told that the Rapture could occur at any time, seemingly in close proximity to the start of the seven-year Tribulation:

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [i.e. precede] them which are asleep [i.e. dead in Christ]. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump [trumpet blast] of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up [Greek: *harpazo*] together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)

The "last trump" or trumpet blast is produced by many trumpets sounding together. This will be akin to the last trump at the Feast of Trumpets – and would have been understood as such by the Thessalonians. It is not related in any way to the various trumpet blasts in the Book of Revelation since that book had not been written when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians.

The long drawn-out trumpet blast at the Feast of Trumpets was the final jubilation to sound at that feast, the ultimate or culminating call to God's people. Known as the *teruah gedolah*, it prefigured the wonderful 'last trump' that will sound from heaven when Christ himself descends to our earthly atmosphere and calls his bride to meet him **"in the air."**

Chapter Eighteen

CONCLUSION

The Bible is a remarkable record of God's love for man, but in many ways it is an even more remarkable record of the love that the Son has for the Father and the Father for the Son. We think of Creation as an astounding event that utterly confounds our understanding, but it may have been equalled, if that is the right term, by a subsequent event, namely the moment when the whole of Creation was completely Redeemed.

What love the Son must have had to voluntarily undertake such a task, in obedience to his Father, and what love the Father must have had when, at the time of Creation, He knew that this very act would necessitate the sacrifice of His Son.

Though we are tiny, finite beings, with a miniscule capacity for comprehending a truth of this magnitude, the LORD has graciously put into us the ability to taste it to some degree and to benefit greatly from contemplating its reality.

Educating a nation

Their sojourn in the desert was a remarkable spiritual education for the nation of Israel. Purely by miraculous means, the LORD freed about two million slaves from the iron furnace of Egypt and preserved them in good health over a period of forty years in the most inhospitable terrain. During that lengthy period they could devote themselves almost exclusively to a study of God's Holy Word – as He had asked them to do. Never before or since has an entire nation been separated in this way and allowed to attend a 'university' course for forty years, under the inspired counsel and guidance of one of the greatest men who ever lived.

The Church

The truths expressed through the Tabernacle constitute a remarkable picture of Christ and therefore of the church, the body of Christ. As believers, we are the house that Christ built. An understanding of the church that conflicts with the teaching of the Tabernacle must be deficient in some way.

Contrary to popular opinion, the Reformation did not 'reform' the church, but freed it, albeit imperfectly, from the pernicious grip of Rome and her vile imposters. Equally, the 'reformation' that some believe is under way today is not a reformation at all, but a cynical perversion of what the Word of God plainly teaches. The masterminds behind this global campaign are determined to bring the professing church – and millions of nominal Christians – into bondage to Rome, the modern equivalent of Egypt. As it happens, they are making significant progress, principally because most Christians today are painfully ignorant of God's Word and, in particular, of what it says about the Tabernacle.

Christ vindicated an awesomely holy God

The sacrifice on Calvary did more than atone for the sins of mankind. It went further and glorified the Father. It completely destroyed the works of Satan, who opposed the sovereignty of God at every turn, and provided for the restoration of the world – in the fullness of time – to the perfection that it enjoyed on the seventh day of creation. Through his shed blood on Calvary Christ ensured that the sovereignty of God could never again be contested. He thereby vindicated completely the awesome holiness of God and perfectly undid every act of disobedience by man.

The longsuffering and forbearance of the Father are grounded entirely in the atoning work of Christ. If the Lamb had not been slain before the foundation of the world, then the perfect righteousness of the Father would have necessitated the immediate destruction of all creation the moment Adam sinned.

Paradoxically the atheist today, who rails with pride and indignation against the sovereignty of God, enjoys health, contentment and well-being solely through the atoning work of Christ. Indeed, all who hate Christ owe their very existence to what he achieved on Calvary!

If they persist in their rebellion they will die in their sins. In choosing eternal exile from Christ, they will forfeit every sweetness and consolation that they now enjoy. Why? Because mercy and goodness are a gift from God through the work of Christ on Calvary. Once a person has rejected Christ, then nothing remains but **"the blackness of darkness forever"** (Jude 1:13).

The universalists argue that everyone will be saved and no soul will be lost, but they are utterly deceived! **"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life [i.e. eternal life], and few there be that find it."** (Matthew 7:14)

To reject Christ is to reject salvation, since they are one and the same. **"The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."** (2 Peter 3:9) God has made infinite provision for our salvation. Through the sacrifice of His Son, He has offered mankind – each and every one of us – the greatest gift that anyone could imagine. Alas, if fallen men are determined to reject that gift, despite every invitation from God, then they are destined to live forever, without hope, in eternal darkness.

An age of great spiritual darkness

If the professing church exalted Christ as it should, then it would hate sin, it would hate disobedience, and it would hate this present evil world. But, alas, the modern church takes pride in not hating anything. It is lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, tolerating the intolerable. Its Tabernacle courtyard has many gates and its Laver is in a corner. The pure song of heartfelt praise, offered without blemish, is deeply tarnished by worldly associations. The incense of true repentance has all too often been replaced by the pungent odour of self-esteem and self-worth. The steady glow of a heart dedicated wholly to Christ and his service is replaced by an insatiable appetite for signs and wonders and a vague craving for 'inner experiences.'

How many pastors in this age of great darkness are preaching a message remotely close to that of Vance Havner who issued the following dire warning in 1969? –

"The depths of present-day human depravity are too vile for any word in our language to describe. We are seeing not ordinary moral corruption, but evil double-distilled and compounded in weird, uncanny, and demonic combinations and concoctions of iniquity never heard of a generation ago."

Another generation has passed since Havner spoke those words, and the situation has become considerably worse, yet most pastors are still silent!

Peaceful coexistence with evil

Little by little, sin has been made to seem less sinful. As Havner put it, those who should be living in the light have decided instead to become accustomed to the dark. And the longer they sit in the dark, the more they adjust to it, so that today we have a "broadminded tolerance" that is nothing less than a peaceful coexistence with evil.

This failure to condemn evil is at the very heart of all our troubles, the willful inability to mourn the extent to which a rebellious world is persistently and outrageously offending an awesomely holy God. How many today sigh and cry for all the abominations that are committed in the midst of our so-called Christian communities? Many pastors today would rather grieve the Holy Spirit than offend the wicked!

The judgment, when it comes, will be devastating:

"And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary." (Ezekiel 9:4-6)

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January 1, 2016**

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APPENDIX A

The Courtyard Pillars

Some scholars have questioned whether the pillars of the courtyard consisted of acacia poles with a brass coating. Soltau believed they were made entirely of acacia, while De Haan believed they were made entirely of brass.

The relevant scripture is **Exodus 27: 9-10** – "**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: 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.**"

If Scripture says "**the twenty pillars thereof...shall be of brass**", there is clearly no possibility that they made entirely of acacia. The only possibility that we need to consider then is whether they were made *exclusively* of brass.

The strongest reason for believing they were made of acacia coated with brass is that the analogous elements – the 9 pillars and 48 boards of the Tabernacle – were made of acacia (coated with gold). For example, the entrance to the Sanctuary had pillars made of shittim wood (acacia) overlaid with gold and set in sockets of brass:

"And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them." (Exodus 26:37)

Furthermore, only three furniture items were made entirely of the same material – the Laver (brass), the Lampstand (gold) and the Mercy Seat (gold). Their typology would be greatly diluted if the 60 courtyard pillars were also made of one material only (not counting the silver chapiters).

We need also to have regard to the total quantity of brass used throughout the construction of the Tabernacle. Exodus 38:29 states – "**And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels**".

This was almost certainly consumed in its entirety by the following, each of which was made partly or wholly of brass:

- the brazen altar and grill
- the brazen laver
- 60 courtyard pillars
- 65 sockets (for 60 courtyard pillars and 5 in the Sanctuary)
- the multitude of tent pegs and pillar pegs
- the various vessels and utensils for the brazen altar.

The courtyard pillars were half the height of the Sanctuary pillars and had less weight to support. If the sockets for the pillars that supported the Veil each weighed a talent, then the brass sockets that supported the courtyard pillars must have weighed less than a talent. This would allow the 70+ talents available to be apportioned efficiently between the items specified, but only if the courtyard pillars were not made completely of brass. They must therefore have comprised acacia wood with a covering of brass.

There would have been sufficient brass to construct hollow courtyard pillars, but it is doubtful whether these would have been sufficiently strong to support the fence fabric under all conditions. What is more, a hollow copper tube in a dry desert environment could give an unpleasant electrostatic shock [Remember that *nēchosheth*, which we are calling 'brass', is actually copper, though brass itself is also highly conductive].

In summary, we conclude that the courtyard pillars must have been made of acacia wood covered with 'brass' for the following reasons:

- (a) the express mention that brass was used in the courtyard pillars (Exodus 27:10);
- (b) the amount of brass used in total (Exodus 38:29);
- (c) the meaning of acacia wood in the language of the Tabernacle;
- (d) the concept of "covering" which is central to the spiritual message of the Tabernacle;
- (e) the typology of the Laver, Lampstand, and Mercy Seat;
- (f) the known use of acacia in the pillars of the Tabernacle tent.

APPENDIX B

The Five Types of Offering

	Offerer's Role	Priest's Role	God's Portion	Priest's Portion	Offerer's Portion	Burned outside camp?
Burnt Offering	Brought the animal to the door of tabernacle, laid his hands firmly on its head, slew it, skinned it, and cut it into several parts. (A bird offering was not cut into parts.)	Caught the blood in a vessel and sprinkled it on the Brazen Altar. Placed animal parts in a set order on the Brazen Altar.	All that was burned on the Brazen Altar	The skin (hide) of the animal. [Not applicable to the bird offering.]	None.	No.
Grain Offering	Brought the offering to the door of the tabernacle and gave it to the priest.	The priest threw a handful of the offering on the Brazen Altar, along with all of the frankincense.	A handful of the offering, plus salt and all of the frankincense.	The remainder of the offering.	None.	No.
Peace Offering	Brought the animal to the door of the tabernacle, laid his hands firmly on its head, and slew it.	Caught the blood in a vessel and sprinkled it on the Brazen Altar. Waved the breast and "heaved" (lifted aloft) the right shoulder of the animal before the LORD.	The sprinkled blood, plus the salt, suet fat, kidneys and the caul over the liver.	The "wave" breast and the "heave" shoulder of the animal.	The remainder could be eaten by the offerer with his family and friends.	No.
Sin Offering	As for the Peace Offering. [See text for special cases and reference to the Golden Altar of Incense.]	Put some of the blood on the horns of the Brazen Altar and poured out the remainder at the foot of the Brazen Altar.	The salt, suet fat, kidneys and caul over the liver were burned on the Brazen Altar.	The priest chose parts at his discretion and then boiled and consumed them.	None.	Remainder of offering burned outside camp.
Trespass Offering	Male lamb offered as per Peace Offering. Full monetary restitution (plus a 1/5 th of value) also had to be made to the person wronged.	Caught the blood in a vessel and sprinkled it on the Brazen Altar.	As for the Sin Offering.	Remainder belonged to the priest.	None.	No.

NOTE: In all cases, the offerer also brought salt, some of which was placed on the Brazen Altar. Salt symbolized purity and longevity, with particular reference to God's covenant promises.

Animals and food items in each Offering

	Offering	Purpose	Typology of Christ
Burnt Offering	A bullock or a male sheep or a male goat – in each case a year old and without blemish – or a turtledove or young pigeon.	Complete consecration of the offerer to God.	Christ gave himself as a whole "burnt offering" on the cross of Calvary.
Grain Offering	Fine flour, either cooked or uncooked. If cooked, it could be prepared in an oven, on a griddle or in a pan. Included olive oil, salt, and frankincense*. Could also comprise an offering of 'first fruits,' namely green ears of corn dried by the fire. None could contain leaven or honey.	The consecration to God of the offerer's toil and possessions.	Christ was the bread of life, offered and bruised on Calvary.
Peace Offering	A bullock, a goat or a sheep (either male or female). In each case a year old and without blemish.	The reconciliation of the offerer with God. Offered in thanksgiving.	Christ, through Calvary, is the only means by which man can be reconciled with God.
Sin Offering	As for the Peace Offering.	The expiation of the sin of the offerer.	The blood of Christ cleansed us of sin.
Trespass Offering	A female sheep or a female goat or two turtledoves or two young pigeons or a tenth of an ephah of fine flour (without oil or frankincense).	To expiate sin and make restitution for the trespass of the offerer.	Christ made full restitution on our behalf on Calvary, giving more to God than had been lost through sin.

*Where frankincense was offered on any occasion, the full amount was always placed on the Brazen Altar. None was retained by the priest.

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