

**Lesson 11 – “Until the Time of Redemption”****Chapter 9**

*“According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so shall you make it.” Exodus 25:9*

In today’s lesson, we’ll address the tabernacle (which literally means “tent”) that journeyed with the Israelites through the desert. It was fashioned according to the specifications God had given to Moses in order to have a place to commune with His people. God ordained this earthly sanctuary because it was His desire to dwell among His people, and this portable tabernacle offered the people an opportunity for a relationship with God – but, it had to be through blood sacrifices. We’ll also discuss Jesus as the heavenly sanctuary of the new covenant and how His sacrifice was far superior to any other under the old covenant.

**Vss. 1-5.** In Chapters 26 & 27 of Exodus, God had given Moses specific instructions for building a movable tabernacle, which would go with them as they traveled through the wilderness. There was to be a large courtyard with a tentlike structure consisting of two inner parts: the first part called the Holy Place where the Levite priests would perform their services, and the second part which, was separated by a veil, would be known as the Most Holy Place, or Holy of Holies, and this was where they were to place the ark of the covenant, which was to be covered in gold, with two cherubim on top. In the center, between the cherubim would be the mercy seat.

There are many symbolic aspects as to why the tabernacle was set up the way it was. As we examine it more closely, we see that the outer courtyard had an altar for the burning of sacrifices, and a laver for washing before entering the Holy Place. Inside the tent were the two parts of the sanctuary. Two parts symbolizing the two natures of Jesus – human and divine. In the first part were the following:

- 1) The candlestick, which was actually oil lamps (or Menorah). This provided the only light in the sanctuary. It served to remind the Israelites of the darkness that could only be lit by the coming of Messiah, and the fullness of light He would bring with Him.
- 2) The table of show-bread, illuminated by the lamps demonstrates that only through the light of Christ can we have communion with Him and with one another. There were 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes of Israel, and they were replaced by the priests on each Sabbath. While it represented God’s provision in an earthly sense, it also reminds us that Jesus is the Bread of Life, and He is our sustenance.
- 3) The altar of incense was placed just outside of the veil that separated the two parts. It is also symbolic of Jesus. Just as the incense was burned to offer a sweet sacrifice to the Lord, He is our sweet incense Who makes intercession for us to God the Father.

The veil separating the sanctuary from the Holy of Holies is also a type of Jesus. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies once a year to atone for the sins of the people. When the veil was torn at Jesus’ crucifixion, however, the Holy of Holies became accessible to all.

The Ark of the Covenant, covered completely in pure gold, signified the purity of Christ, our perfect, pure sacrifice. Inside, it held:

- A golden pot with Manna – A sample of the manna that had fallen from the sky to feed the Israelites as they journeyed through the wilderness. It is interesting to note that the manna they collected had to be eaten the same day, or it would rot. This particular manna, however, God preserved as a sign of His physical provision for His people and, it too, is symbolic of Jesus Who is our Bread of Life.
- Aaron's Rod that budded – a symbol of authority of the priesthood that God had ordained. This was the rod that God had caused to bud in order to silence the murmurings of the Israelites when they questioned Aaron's authority (Numbers 16), and with which they performed many wonders, such as turning it into a snake in Pharaoh's court and having it devour the other magician's snakes. It is another type of Christ in that through the earthly ministry of Jesus, many signs and wonders were also performed.
- The tablets of stone – given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai for establishing His law with His people. The 10 Commandments, written by the hand of God, are still regarded today as a guidebook for living a Godly life. Again, we're reminded that it is only through Jesus that we are able to keep God's law and our obedience to Him -- only by His strength.

On the lid or top of the golden ark rested two cherubim facing one another at either end of the ark. Their wings were outstretched and touching one another, so that they created a covering over the middle (or seat) of the ark. It is reminiscent of the scene when Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of Jesus after His crucifixion and found two angels seated at either end of where Jesus' body had been placed. The account is in John 20:11-13.

This space in between the cherubim was known as the mercy seat, and this is where God's presence made itself known. During those times, there appeared a glowing light called the "Shekinah Glory". The Lord spoke to Moses in Exodus 25:21-22 about this mercy seat: *"You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel."*

**Vss. 6-10.** Every morning and every evening, incense was burned in the tabernacle by the priests, and the oil lamps were trimmed. The show bread was replaced once a week on the Sabbath. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement, known as "Yom Kippur." Just as the High Priest could not enter the Holy of Holies without first offering a blood sacrifice, Jesus, our High Priest, could not accomplish what He came to do without first having His blood shed. He became our perfect sacrifice. None of us can enter into God's presence except by the blood of Jesus. His blood is the only thing that can cleanse our sins and wash them away completely. Everything that was done under the old covenant still could not cleanse the people – not any of the rituals or ceremonies or rites. Nothing could make them clean enough to be worthy of reconciling with God. There are still rituals and rules today in many religions, but none of them can reconcile us to God ... only the blood of the perfect Lamb of God – Jesus!

If we were to look up the definition for the word “reconciliation”, we would probably find more than one meaning. I like the Christian definition, however: “an element of salvation that refers to the results of atonement.” Also, “the end of the estrangement, caused by original sin between God and humanity.” Jesus did that for us .. He reconciled us to the Father.

**Vss. 11-14.** Our High Priest Jesus came to earth, sacrificed Himself on the cross and, with the shedding of His blood – not the blood of bulls and goats and calves, but His own precious blood, entered Heaven once and for all in order to make a way for everyone to have “*eternal redemption*”. It was the perfect Christ obediently offering Himself for our redemption.

*“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” Isaiah 53:7*

The sacrificing of animals was all about cleansing in an exterior manner, but that does nothing for cleansing a person’s soul. Sin defiles it, and only Jesus can cleanse it with His blood. He is our sustenance here on earth, He is our Redeemer before God, and He is our one and only way to the Father. In spite of what some religions may preach, HE IS THE ONLY WAY! There is no greater sacrifice than that of Jesus Christ!

**Vss. 15-22.** A testament is someone’s last will, but it only becomes effective upon the death of that person. Just as a Last Will and Testament sets forth a person’s last wishes, it was Christ’s wish for us to enter heaven, but that could only be accomplished upon His death. He had to die to save us. The priests of the old covenant had sacrificed animals to atone for the sins of the people, but that still wasn’t enough to buy their salvation.

Without the shedding of blood, a covenant has no validity. This is why Moses, after performing the animal sacrifices, would take blood and sprinkle it everywhere – on the people, on the tabernacle, on everything in the tabernacle. This was something that was vital -- it had to be done because without blood, there is no remission of sins.

When we come to Jesus, there is no physical shedding of blood, but there is a covenant made, and it is sealed with the blood of Jesus – blood that was already shed for us. When we pray the sinners prayer with others, it is always important that the person’s sin be acknowledged, that they be repentant, and that they also acknowledge Jesus’ death and resurrection. That is, after all, the heart of the gospel message – that God loved us so much that He sent Jesus to be our atoning sacrifice, to do what we could not do for ourselves. Maybe if the Hebrews had understood this fully, they wouldn’t have been in danger of “falling away”. And what about us today? Do we have a true understanding of the precious price that was paid for our salvation? That should be at the forefront of our doctrinal belief – Jesus, our perfect sacrifice. Understanding and acknowledging this keeps us from the danger of falling away from our faith in the Lord. Here are some scriptures that reaffirm our faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ:

*"I know my Redeemer lives." Job 19:25*

*"... nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed ..." 2 Timothy 1:12*

*"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." John 6:68*

*"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Romans 8:35*

**Vss. 23-26.** Here we're told that the earthly tabernacle was a copy or a pattern of the heavenly tabernacle, and that while the blood sacrifices of animals had to be performed on a regular basis for purification, our heavenly tabernacle could only be purified by the one time offering of the blood of Jesus Christ. And this was done only once for the remission of sins, not often as in the earthly tabernacle under the old covenant. In offering Himself, Jesus destroyed the devil's plan, and opened the gates of heaven to us.

**Vs. 27-28.** Christ only had to die once for our sins. He didn't have to be offered up over and over again like the sacrifices of the levitical priests of the old covenant. And, unlike us, he never had to face judgment. Each of us will have our judgment one day, but Jesus, having been sinless and blameless, stood in judgment of OUR sins, not His own. He was the Lamb of God Who came once and bore all our sins. His second coming will not be as a meek lamb, however, and He will not come bearing a cross. He will come "apart from sin, for salvation" and wearing a crown!

In John 1:14, we're told that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The word "dwell" means to "tabernacle among", or "pitch one's tent among". Jesus wants us to tabernacle with Him ... to dwell with Him, to abide in Him. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." John 15:7

***"Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God." Revelation 21:3***

Will you allow Jesus to tabernacle with you? Will you allow Him to cover you with His tent and dwell with you? Will you welcome His presence in your life for the rest of your days?

\*\*\*

# The Tabernacle

