

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS

Part III

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The Same God Yesterday, Today, and Forever More!

(Malachi 3:6, Revelation 1:8)

God's greatest desire is to "dwell" with us!

INTRODUCTION

We are not "earning" our way to God, we are experiencing the God we already have through Salvation in Jesus Christ! -Tracy Strawberry

Matthew 7:13-14(NIV): "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

- There is only one way to God, to the truth, and the life, through Jesus:
 - **John 14:6 (NIV):** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

"The Tabernacle in the Wilderness" is a visual illustration of the divine experience taking place in us, and through us from the inside out when we take advantage of our direct access to God by firmly committing to every area of our Christian walk with God according to His way, which is narrow; precise!

Are You "Tabernacled" in the Wilderness?

God, through the Holy Spirit, dwelling in us as we dwell in Christ! This is how we become free, stay free, and empowered to live in purpose and power in a sinful, fallen world:

1. **Ezekiel 37:26-27:** I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people
2. **1 Corinthians 3:16-17:** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.
3. **Hebrews 8:10:** For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
4. **1 Corinthians 6:19:** Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.

5. **Romans 8:11:** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.
6. **Romans 12:1-2:** And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ²Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
7. **John 15:4-(NKJV):** ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.⁵ "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.
8. **John 8:31-32 (NKJV):** ³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

BELIEVE AND ABIDE

Are you a true follower of Christ? The freedom is in the following family! By following Jesus and the ways of God through Christ in you and you in Christ, you experience the fullness of God! You *know* the *truth* and the *truth* sets you free!

John 4:16: Jesus, the way, the truth and the life

A Prayer for the Ephesians from Paul and for you:

(Read at Home in your quiet time)

Ephesians 3:14-21 (NIV): ¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray *that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,* ¹⁷ *so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.* And I pray that you, *being rooted and established* in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that *surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, *according to his power that is at work within us,* ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

The Holy Place: 2nd Room

Consisted of:

1. **The Golden Lampstand:** Enlightened and led by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the vine (center of the lampstand) we are the 6 branches stemming from the vine, abiding in Christ, led by the Spirit. Jesus is the light of the world. In Christ, we are the light of the world.
Pure Gold: Symbolizes purity, divinity.
2. **Table of Showbread:** Christ, the Bread of Life, Tithes and Offerings, Provision for the people and the ministry. Made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, signifying Jesus humanity and the cross, and our sinful nature (humanity), gold signifies purity, divinity-we are covered in the righteousness of Christ (overlaid, completely covered).
3. **The Altar of Incense:** (Where we left off from Part II): Jesus, Incense, Prayer, and the Holy Spirit:
 - a. Made with acacia wood and overlaid with gold (Jesus humanity and the cross, and our humanity-sinful nature, covered in righteousness).
 - b. Our Prayer Offerings-The priest stood in place of the people of Israel, pleading and offering up prayers on their behalf.
 - c. The Priest and High Priest symbolize Christ: Christ's Prayers for us: Jesus, our Intercessor.
 - d. As Christians, we are all priests, able to have access into the things of God, even His presence, in Jesus' name.

THE INCENSE: Important Practical and Symbolic Functions:

1. **The practical function:**
 - a. to counteract the odors rising from the sacrifices at the Brazen Altar, that occurred daily, and on the Day of Atonement, all day long.
 - b. On the Day of Atonement (once a year, Yom Kippur), the High Priest would burn the incense to prevent his death by covering the Holy Place. In doing this, he would not be able to see the glory of God and die. (Leviticus 16:13).
2. **The Symbolic Function:**
 - a. Symbolic function of incense is prayer. Incense was a visual reminder of Israel's faith in God. Just like the smoke of the incense ascends toward God, and the aroma pleases the Lord, so the prayers of God's people ascend (rises-up) to his throne and are pleasing to him. (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8, 8:4).
3. **What makes our prayers today ascend like fragrant incense?**
 - a. **The Prayer in Jesus Name:** Praying in Jesus name clarifies who we are praying to, the one true living God through Jesus Christ. There is power in only ONE name, the name of Jesus. When you pray in Jesus name you are praying in power and in authority! You are IDENTIFYING with Christ, and are praying through Christ to the one true living God! We must be in Christ to pray effectively in His name-in union with His life and death! PLEASE pray in the NAME OF JESUS, in lieu of His name. SAY HIS NAME! JESUS!
 - b. **The Intervention/Intercession of the Holy Spirit:** Jesus promised us, his disciples, the gift of the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide our prayers. When our weaknesses or

circumstances cause us to relate to God incorrectly or feel empty inside, the Holy Spirit pleads on our behalf-intercedes for us, so we can be assured the Spirit is praying alongside of us, ensuring our prayers are conforming to God's will-His Word! (1 John 5:14). This is also why praying in "tongues"-our heavenly language is so important, powerful, and crucial. A Christian should always desire the corporate gift of speaking in tongues (in the Spirit), and should never be afraid of it. Not to be confused with the "spiritual gift of other tongues which must be accompanied by the gift of interpretation."

4. Prayer is a two-way conversation:

- a. As the incense went up, the prayers go up and the blessings, guidance, clarity, acceptance, power, answers, etc. come down to the Israelites! As our prayers are given unto the Lord, the communication and presence of God will come through us because it the conversation is happening within us. In Old Testament times they had to believe it would come down to them. Today, they come through us as God dwells within us through His Spirit. Just as we may only reach God in the Spirit **through** the **TRUTH** of Christ, so also God's guidance and teaching comes to us only through Christ by means of the Spirit! (John 4:24, John 14:26, 15:26, 16:12-14).

5. Intercessor and Intercession: Notice everything for us Christians today is still in and through Christ!

- a. In Old-Testament times the priests and the prophets stood in the gap between God and the people; intercession as intercessors.
- b. Intercession is still necessary today because of the gap that sin caused between God and humanity. Sin broke our relationship with God, with nature-all of creation, and with each other. CHRIST is the bridge that joins and fills the gap! Jesus is now the only and ultimate intercessor with the Father on our behalf. (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25). Jesus is the ultimate intercessor, but through prayer, Christians can also intercede for each other because every Christian is a priest: **1 Peter 2:9 (NIV):** ⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Personal Notes:

CHOSEN

THE LEVITE PRIESTSHOOD AND THE 5 LEVITICAL OFFERINGS

(I will only address 5 offerings for the sake of time)

Deuteronomy 33:10 states that the tribe of Levi was to act in a teaching and mediator role to the rest of Israel. God set them apart. Before the priesthood was established, the Head of the Household, made the sacrifices. But God's plan for the tabernacle was very precise in every way, revealing the importance of "holiness." The people of Israel had a lot to learn about holiness and holy, consecrated living unto the Lord. The same is true today.

1. **One of the 12 Tribes:** The Levites were one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Levi was the third son of Jacob and Leah. This was the tribe of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam (their sister). This tribe grew very large.
2. **Zeal for Holiness:** God called the Levites to the priesthood because of their zeal to protect the purity and worship of God, thus the Levites obtained special status as the priestly tribe. (Exodus 32:25-29).
3. **Golden Calf:** The Levites were the only tribe who did not participate in the sinful ways, behaviors and displays when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and saw the people worshipping the idol of the golden calf in a party like fashion.
4. **No Land Inheritance:** The Levites were not given an inheritance of "land" in the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. Their reward was their duty as priests and would be provided for through the tithes and offerings of the people. They were given cities within the land to live. The priests were to be cared for by the people as they were the workers of the people on behalf of God. We have no inheritance without Christ!
5. **Distinction** between a regular Levite and Aaron, and his descendants and sons: (Numbers 3:10).
 - a. God's intention was to make the entire nation of Israel a nation of priests to the world, His chosen people. Because of immoral and other failures this did not happen. (Exodus 19:6).
 - b. Aaron and his sons were to lead the priesthood and be the ones to approach God. Service in the Tabernacle was an EXCLUSIVE ministry of Aaron's descendants.
 - c. The Levites were responsible to maintain the Tabernacle stocked with animals, grains, wine, wood, and everything else necessary for the worship services. They also provided assistance to the priests in the tabernacle but did not "perform." (Numbers 8:18-22; 18:6).

Aaron and His descendants only as High Priest

1. Part of the law given to Moses at Mt. Sinai appointed Aaron the priesthood for himself and his male descendants. Aaron was the first High Priest of the Israelites and performed the duties of the High Priest in the tabernacle until his death.
2. Only the sons of Aaron could become High Priests. There was only to be one high priest at a time.
3. The high priest was in charge of the entire priestly order and involved in superintending the other priests and Levites as well.
4. Only the high priest could enter the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, to minister before the Mercy Seat once a year, on the Day of Atonement, known in Jewish tradition as Yom Kippur.

The Levite Families and their different responsibilities of the sacred duties

(Read at Home)

1. The Family of Gershon: in charge of the Tabernacle tent curtains and hangings of the court (Number 3:25-26).
2. The Family of Kohath: responsible for the furniture of the Tabernacle, including the vessels and the curtains of the inner rooms (Numbers 3:31).
3. The family of Merari: responsible to oversee the Tabernacle frames, bars, pillars, bases and accessories (Numbers 3:36).

The 5 Levitical Offerings

Offerings were a very important ritual of religious ceremonies commanded by God. They have great symbolic meaning in God representing Himself to the people and the priests representing the people to God.

I want you to keep in mind there are only 2 pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle that are altars: The Brazen/Bronze Altar (Sacrifice, Salvation, Righteousness, Atonement) and The Altar of Incense (Voluntary: Dedicated and Devoted: Prayer and Praise-Communication with God).

1. **Burnt Offering:** Voluntary: The first offering is the *olah*, literally, “an offering of ascent,” commonly called the Burnt Offering. The purpose of the Burnt Offering was for general atonement of sin and expression of devotion to God. The instructions for the Burnt Offering are given in Lev 1:3-17. The offering could be a bull (1:3), sheep or goat (1:10), or dove or pigeon (1:14). The animal was to be burnt whole overnight (6:8-13), though its skin was given to the priest (1:6).
2. **Grain/Meal/Tribute Offering:** Voluntary: The purpose of the Grain Offering was a voluntary expression of devotion to God, recognizing His goodness, care, nature, and provision. The

instructions for the grain offerings are given in Leviticus 2. Generally it was cooked bread — baked (2:4), grilled (2:5), fried (2:7), roasted, or made into cereal (2:14)—though always seasoned (2:13), unsweetened, and unleavened (2:11).

3. **The Sin Offering: Mandatory:** The purpose of the sin offering was made by one who had sinned unintentionally, or was unclean in order to attain purification.
4. **The Guilt Offering: Mandatory:** Made by a person who had either deprived another of his rights or had desecrated something holy.
5. **The Peace Offering: Voluntary:** Symbolizes fellowship with God.
 - a. Signifies thankfulness for a specific blessing.
 - b. Offers a ritual expression of a vow.
 - c. Symbolizes general thankfulness.

The Peace, Meal, and Burnt Offerings are the one's God Loves! They are voluntary! They are pleasing to God! The sin and guilt offering are mandatory! He wants us to move beyond the sin and guilt! He wants us to become Son focused and not sin focused! Jesus is our ultimate sacrifice-the Burnt Offering! The Meal/Grain represents our thankfulness to God and recognition that He is our source of all! He will forever take us! The peace offering signifies that because of Christ, we now have peace and fellowship with God! This is the position He loves the most with us!

God is always looking for us to see Him as our sources for all! The one who loves us, provides every sacrifice, everything that we need to be right with Him and in fellowship Him! He is always drawing us near to Him and away from sin, guilt, shame, and regret! In Christ we are one with God!

Praise be to the Lord our God from whom all good things flow and the greatest of love is experienced!