

## Christ as seen in the Tabernacle

### **The Tabernacle.** Exodus 25:1-9; 26:1-30, 36-37; 36:8-34, 37-38; 40:17-19, 28, 34-38.

Five names in Scripture describe the Tabernacle

Sanctuary Exodus 25:8 it was holy, set apart for God.

Tabernacle Exodus 25:9 it was the dwelling place of God among His people. John 1:14.

Tent Exodus 26:36 it was a temporary dwelling place.

Tent of meeting Exodus 29:42 it was where God met with His people.

Tabernacle of the testimony Exodus 38:21 it was where the testimony of God as given in the Law was kept (in the ark).

For almost 500 years, the Tabernacle served as a place for God to dwell among His people and a place where His people could commune with Him. Throughout Israel's history, there was a propensity toward idolatry; thus, the Tabernacle stood as a visual reminder to Israel that they served the true and living God. It helped keep Israel from the idol worship that was practiced by those living around them.

Although the Tabernacle made God accessible to the Israelites, He was only approachable in holiness. The structure and service of the Tabernacle showed a sinful people how they could come before a holy God in worship and service, offer sacrifice for sin, and receive instruction and counsel from the Word of God. Thus, it was a graphic portrayal of God's redemptive program for Israel.

**Hebrews 9:9** calls the tabernacle a **symbol** ( ). Every aspect of the Tabernacle from the bronze altar, where sacrifices for sin were offered, to the mediating **high priest**, who offered the sacrificial blood on the mercy seat pointed to God's redemptive plan. The people could only approach God through a **blood sacrifice** and a mediating priesthood.

The Lord Jesus Christ is both the High Priest and the Sacrifice.

High Priest Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:5, 10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21.

Sacrifice Hebrews 9:12, 14, 26, 28; 10:10, 12, 19.

**The Tabernacle was built according to a specific pattern given to Moses by God.** Exodus 25:9, 40. Numbers 8:4. 1 Chronicles 28:19. Acts 7:44.

This pattern was based on the heavenly original Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:1-9, 11, 23-24. Revelation 6:9; 8:3-5; 9:13; 11:19; 13:6; 14:17-18; 15:5-6, 8; 16:1, 7, 17; 21:3.

**The Tabernacle was the dwelling place of God among His people Israel.** Exodus 25:8; 40:34-38. 2 Chronicles 7:1-3. Acts 7:46-48.

The dwelling place of God is no longer among His people, but in His people. John 14:23; 17:23, 26.

Romans 8:9. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19. 2 Corinthians 6:16. Colossians 1:27. Ephesians 2:21-22. 2 Timothy 1:14. James 4:5.

In a day yet to come ... Revelation 21:22.

**The inner covering of the roof of the Tabernacle was embroidered with cherubim.** Exodus 26:1; 36:8.

Angels are watching Just as the inner covering of the roof of the Tabernacle was embroidered with cherubim to show that angels were watching the worship of God and the working out of His plan among men; so too, in a very real sense, angels are watching believers today as well. 1 Corinthians 4:9; 11:10. Ephesians 3:9-10. 1 Timothy 5:21. 1 Peter 1:12.

### ***The Bronze Altar.* Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7; 40:29.**

Located first as you entered the courtyard. The bronze altar was said to be at the doorway of the tent of meeting (Leviticus 1:5); however, the bronze altar was separated from the tent of meeting by the laver.

**The bronze altar was the place where blood was shed and poured out.** Exodus 29:12. Leviticus 1 - 4; 8:15; 9:9. Deuteronomy 12:27.

The sacrifices were slain next to the altar and then offered up by fire on the altar. The blood of the sacrifices was either sprinkled around on the altar or poured out at its base. The blood of these sacrifices was shed for the sins of the people.

The bronze altar pictures the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross on which and from which He shed His precious blood on our behalf. 1 Peter 1:18-19. Ephesians 1:7; 2:13. Hebrews 9:11-12; 13:11-12. Revelation 1:5; 5:9. Acts 20:28. Matthew 26:28. Romans 3:24-25; 5:9. Colossians 1:20.

**The bronze altar was the place on which God's judgment fell in the form of the fire which consumed the sacrifices.** Leviticus 9:22-24. 2 Chronicles 7:1-3. Leviticus 1:7-9, 12-13, 17; 2:2-3, 9-10, 16; 3:3, 5, 9, 11, 14, 16; 4:35; 5:12; 6:9-13.

The Lord Jesus Christ bore the judgment of God's wrath on His own Person on the cross on our behalf. 1 Peter 2:24. Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12.

**It was impossible for the Israelites to come into God's presence without sacrificing at the bronze altar.**

It is impossible today for people to come into the presence of God except by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 14:6. Acts 4:12.

### ***The Laver.* Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8; 40:30-32.**

Located in the courtyard between the bronze altar and the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:7, 30).

**The laver was made from the bronze that was used to make mirrors and thus was highly reflective.** Exodus 38:8.

As the priests washed in the laver, the highly reflective surface reflected their images, reminding them of how God saw them.

The reflective surface of the laver is a picture of the Word of God which allows us to see ourselves as God sees us. James 1:22-25. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

**The laver provided for the continual cleansing necessary for the priests.** Exodus 30:17-21.

The laver was provided only for the priests, who had to wash before entering the Tabernacle to serve the Lord.

The laver is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ who provides all that is necessary for our cleansing from the defilements of sin.

On a once-for-all basis. Ephesians 5:26. 1 Corinthians 6:9-12. Titus 3:5. Acts 15:8-9.

On a daily basis. 1 John 1:7, 9. 2 Corinthians 7:1. 2 Timothy 2:19-26. James 4:7-8.

The once-for-all cleansing established the relationship. The daily cleansing maintains the fellowship.

### ***The Lampstand.* Exodus 25:31-40; 37:17-24; 40:24-25.**

Located in the Holy Place on the south side of the Tabernacle, the lampstand consisted of seven branches.

#### **The lampstand provided the light for the Tabernacle.**

There was no other source of light to light the interior of the Tabernacle except the lampstand.

The Lord Jesus Christ Matthew 4:12-17. Luke 2:25-32. John 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12 (9:12); 12:35-36, 46. Acts 13:45-47.

The Word of God 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6. Psalm 119:105, 130.

A day yet to come ... Revelation 21:23; 22:5.

#### **The light of the lampstand was reflected off the walls.**

The north and south walls of the interior of the Tabernacle were covered with highly reflective gold. The lampstand, which was placed against the south wall, provided light which was reflected throughout the Tabernacle by the reflective gold walls.

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to reflect His light. Matthew 5:14-16. 2 Corinthians 6:14. Ephesians 5:8. Philippians 2:14-16. Colossians 1:12. 1 Thessalonians 5:5.

#### **The light of the lampstand was provided by pure oil.** Exodus 27:20; 39:37.

Oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit and is used in connection with the Holy Spirit. 1 Samuel 16:13.

It is interesting to note that the lampstand had seven branches giving light by means of the oil a picture of the seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 11:1-2 1) Spirit of the Lord. 2) Spirit of wisdom. 3) Spirit of understanding. 4) Spirit of counsel. 5) Spirit of strength. 6) Spirit of knowledge. 7) Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

The Holy Spirit in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke 4:18 (Isaiah 61:1). Acts 10:38; 4:27. Matthew 1:18, 20, 3:16; 4:1; 12:18, 28. Luke 10:21. Romans 1:4; 8:11.

The Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. John 3:3-6; 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:15. Romans 8:9-11, 26. 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 6:19; 12:7-13. Ephesians 2:18; 5:18.

The Holy Spirit in the world. John 16:8-11.

### ***The Table of Show-bread.* Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16; 40:22-23. Leviticus 24:5-9.**

Located in the Holy Place on the north side of the Tabernacle.

The term *show-bread* comes from a Hebrew word that means *bread of the face* or *bread of presence* (Exodus 25:30; 35:13; 39:36), because the loaves were set before the face or presence of the Lord (who dwelt in the Holy of Holies) as an offering from the children of Israel (Leviticus 24:5-9).

#### **Bread is called the staff of life and is emblematic of life itself.**

The table of show-bread pictures the Lord Jesus Christ the Bread of Life. John 6:35, 48, 51.

**The twelve loaves served as a memorial or reminder for the twelve tribes of Israel.** Leviticus 24:5, 8.

As the twelve loaves were a memorial for the twelve tribes of Israel, so too is the bread and the wine a memorial of remembrance of the work done by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

***The Altar of Incense.* Exodus 30:1-10; 37:25-28; 40:26-27.**

Located in the Holy Place in front of the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

Burning coals from the bronze altar were placed on the altar of incense, over which sweet incense was poured daily.

**The smoke of the incense rose from the altar of incense and ascended upward before the Lord.** Exodus 30:7-8.

Incense and the altar of incense are frequently associated with prayer. Psalm 141:2. Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4.

The incense and altar of incense picture the Lord Jesus Christ whose intercessory prayers ascend before the Father's throne. Hebrews 7:25. Isaiah 53:12. Romans 8:34.

The incense and altar of incense picture the Holy Spirit whose intercessory prayers ascend before the Father's throne. Romans 8:26-27.

***The Veil.* Exodus 26:31-35; 36:35-36.**

Separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

The veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies separated a holy God from a sinful people.

**Only the high priest could enter behind the veil, once a year, and only with blood.** Leviticus 16:2-3, 12-16. Hebrews 9:7.

The way inside the veil has been opened to all believers through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 27:51. Hebrews 6:19-20; 9:11-12; 10:19-20 (Hebrews 4:14-16 and Ephesians 3:11-12).

***The Ark of the Covenant.* Exodus 25:10-16; 37:1-5; 40:20-21.**

and

***The Mercy Seat.* Exodus 25:17-22; 37:6-9; 40:20.**

The ark of the covenant and the mercy seat were located in the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:34). The mercy seat was a cover (lid) for the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:21).

The ark of the covenant contained three items—the tablets of the law, Aaron's rod which budded, and a jar of manna. Hebrews 9:4.

On top of the mercy seat, at each end, there were two cherubim facing each other with their wings spread over the top of the mercy seat. Exodus 25:18-20.

The ark / mercy seat was symbolic of God's throne and His presence, making it the most sacred article of furniture in the Tabernacle. In fact, the Tabernacle was built to house the ark so that God could dwell among His people. Leviticus 16:2. Exodus 25:22. Numbers 7:89. Psalm 80:1.

It was on the mercy seat that the high priest sprinkled blood on the Day of Atonement, which enabled God to cover the sins of the high priest and the people. Leviticus 16:13-15.

The last mention of the ark of the covenant is in Revelation 11:19 in heaven.

**The ark of the covenant always traveled before the children of Israel to lead the way.** Numbers 10:33-36. Joshua 3:3-4, 6, 10-11, 13-17; 6:6-21.

As the ark led the way for the children of Israel, so the Lord Jesus leads the way for those who follow Him. John 10:4, 27.

### **The mercy seat and the doctrine of propitiation.**

God's holiness and justice demand that the penalty of sin, which is death, be paid.

Propitiation means to satisfy and make favorably disposed. Through the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross, God's holy and just demands against the sinner with respect to the penalty of his sin have been met. God is satisfied with the death of Christ in the sinner's place and is now favorably disposed to the sinner. His wrath is averted from the sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's wrath should have fallen on the sinner because of his sin. All the sacrifices in the world would not satisfy God's holy and just demands against the sinner or avert His wrath. Hence God alone can provide the means by which His wrath is averted and His holiness and justice satisfied. The righteous God is neither implacable (merciless or unrelenting) nor capricious (marked by whim, unpredictable). He provides Himself the substitute sacrifice that would satisfy Him.

In the OT, the means of propitiation was by an animal sacrifice whose blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat which covered the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. This was in anticipation of the ultimate and final means of propitiation in the NT the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Old Testament** anticipatory and temporary the blood of an animal sacrifice sprinkled on the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle.

Romans 3:25 Christ Jesus . . . displayed publicly as a **propitiation** in His blood ...

The word translated **propitiation** (*hilasterion*) is also translated **mercy seat** in Hebrews 9:5 ... the cherubim of glory overshadowing the **mercy seat**.

The mercy seat (*kapporeth* noun) refers to the lid that rested on top of the ark of the covenant. The mercy seat represented the throne of God and symbolized His real presence in the tabernacle (and temple). On the Day of Atonement, the high priest sprinkled the blood of the sin offering on it. Thus, the *kapporeth* was the central point at which Israel, through its high priest, could come into the presence of God.

The Septuagint (LXX) refers to the mercy seat as a *propitiary*.

Exodus 25:21-22 (30:6); 26:34. Leviticus 16:2, 13-15. Numbers 7:89.

The Hebrew word *kapporeth* (mercy seat) is derived from the word *kaphar* (verb) to cover over, propitiate, atone, appease. Genesis 6:14 (*cover*); 32:20 (*appease*). It is best known from the term Yom **Kippur** Day of Atonement.

Most uses of the word *kaphar* involve the theological meaning of *covering over* (**make atonement**), often with the blood of a sacrifice. This word occurs more frequently in the book of Leviticus than in any other book, since Leviticus deals with the ritual sacrifices that were made to atone for sin. Leviticus 1:4; 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18; 16:6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 20, 24, 27, 30, 32, 33, 34; 17:11.

Psalm 32:1. In contrast to John 1:29.

In the OT, God's wrath was temporarily averted and His holiness and justice temporarily satisfied when the blood of the animal sacrifice was sprinkled on the mercy seat.

**The New Testament** final and ultimate and permanent the blood of the Son of God shed from the center cross on Golgotha.

The Lord Jesus Christ **made** propitiation. What He **did** satisfied God. Hebrews 2:17. Note Luke 18:13 (*be merciful = make propitiation*).

The Lord Jesus Christ **is** the propitiation. Who He **is** satisfied God (Matthew 3:17).

Romans 3:25 ... **a propitiation** in His blood ...

*His blood* stands for the voluntary giving up of His life, by the shedding of His blood in substitutionary sacrifice under divine judgment righteously due to us as sinners, faith being the sole condition on man's part.

It is interesting to note that in connection with the Jewish sacrifices, *the blood* is mentioned without reference to the victim from which it flowed, but in connection with the sacrifice of Christ the words *the blood* never stand alone; the One Who shed the blood is invariably specified, for it is the Person that gives value to the work; the saving efficacy of the Death depends entirely upon the fact that He Who died was the Son of God.

1 John 2:2; 4:10.

The Lord Jesus Christ, through His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross for our sins, is the personal means by whom God shows mercy to the sinner who believes in Him. The fact that God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins is the great expression of His love toward man, and the reason why Christians should love one another.

God's wrath fell on His Son, rather than on the sinner. Isaiah 53:5, 10.

Man has forfeited his life on account of sin but God has provided the one and only means whereby eternal life could be bestowed, namely, by the voluntary laying down of the life of His Son, under divine retribution.

In the NT, God's wrath is permanently averted and His holiness and justice permanently satisfied when the sinner places his / her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who shed His blood from the cross for our sins.