

Jesus: God's True Tabernacle

The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us! (John 1:14) Jesus is the true tabernacle of God. He is the perfect fulfillment of all that the tabernacle of Israel foreshadowed. Listen to these sections from God's Word which speak of the tabernacle and then of Christ Jesus.

God told Moses in Exodus 25:1, Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the children of Israel, ...⁸ Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. ⁹ According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all of its furniture, even so you shall make it.... ²¹ Set the mercy seat on top of the ark and put the testimony that I will give you into the ark. ²² I will meet with you there above the mercy seat, between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony; I will speak with you from there about all that I command you regarding the Israelites."

The author of Hebrews writes in chapter 8:1- *Now the main point of what is being said is this: We have this kind of high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a minister of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle that was set up by the Lord and not man.* He further relates that the earthly priest served as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. Moses was cautioned by God as he was about to erect the tabernacle "*See, you shall make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.*" [Exodus 25:40](#)

John proclaims in his opening statements,
*The Word became flesh
and took up residence among us.
We observed His glory,
the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 ESV)*

The Tabernacle was an object lesson to the children of Israel for nearly 500 years from Moses to David. It gave place to the temple during the reign of Solomon. Although the tabernacle itself has long since ceased to exist, the lessons of it remain to this day. **The**

principal lesson with reference to the tabernacle was that it pointed to Christ

Jesus. This earthly tent of dwelling for the presence of God was designed to represent and prefigure the most important teachings of the Scriptures concerning the Messiah. Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, dwelt (tabernacled) among us. Literally, he "pitched his tent among us." Thus, he came reside with us as one of us.

There are numerous and varied correspondences between Christ (the Fulfiller) and the tabernacle (the Type). Let's consider some of the more important of these.

First, the very location of the tabernacle is important. It was ***at the center of the camp and all life in the camp revolved around it.*** This tent of meeting was the great gathering center. As such it portrays our blessed Lord who is our great gathering center. He promised to be with his people until the end of the age and with just two or three of his disciples when they gather in his Name. Jacob prophesied: "*When Shiloh comes unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*" (Genesis 49:10) Jesus is the center of the Christian Encampment and from him all life and authority radiates.

Second, the tabernacle was the divine provision for a place of worship. For worship to occur God must be present. The tabernacle was the earthly dwelling place of God. In a very special way, the presence of God dwelt in the most holy place in the cloud above the mercy seat between the cherubim This was cut off from human view by some very large curtains. This special room was the place of God's manifestation of himself to Israel. It speaks to us of him who is the image of the invisible God, Immanuel, "God with us." (Colossians 1:15; Matthew 1: 22-23)

The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. Just as the tabernacle was the actual visible dwelling place of God in his Shekinah glory, even so in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily! (Colossians 2:9 *For in Him the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily.*)

God has been revealed in the flesh and therefore John wrote, "*and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*" (John 1:14)

Moreover, **the tabernacle was the place where God met with men.** It was termed, "The tent of meeting." "*There is will I meet with them between the cherubim*" were his own

words (Exodus 25:22) Because God spoke to his people at this location it was **the place of revelation.**

The second tabernacle, Jesus Christ, is the place where God meets with people today and speaks to them. The Bible reports that God told Moses, "You cannot see my face and live." Yet God is revealed to us perfectly in Jesus in whom we see the Father's face. He is the express image of God's invisible person. (Hebrews 1:3) Jesus told Philip, *he who has seen me has seen the Father.* (John 14:9)

Christ alone is the meeting place between God and men. No one comes to the Father but by Him. There is but one mediator between God and humans- the Man Christ Jesus. (Jesus said to him, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* John 14:6) *(For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.* 1 Timothy 2:5)

Messiah Jesus spans the gulf that exists between a holy God and sinful people. He can do this because he is himself both God and man in one Person.

Where revelation exists and where God is present, there is **the true place of worship.** The devout Hebrew brought his gifts to the door of the tabernacle. When he wanted to worship Jehovah (or Yahweh) it was to the tabernacle that he repaired. From its door the voice of the Lord God was heard. Within its courts the true priests ministered before the Lord, and on its inner shrine there abode the glory cloud of God's special earthly presence. Even so it is with the great fulfillment of this prophetic shadow – it is by him – the Lord Jesus – that we are to offer unto God a sacrifice of praise. It is in him, in him alone – that we can worship the Father. Paul wrote of Christians, *"...we are the true circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus.* Through him we have access to the throne of grace. (Hebrews 4:16)

As the people of God, we worship gathered around the person of the Lord Jesus, who regulates our worship and receives our homage. It is through Jesus alone *that we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* (Ephesians 2:18)

The tabernacle alone was the place where the law was preserved. In the holy of holies Moses deposited the two tablets of the law. It was the place of God's testimonies. These were the terms of the Covenant God made with Israel. The perfect law of God was

enshrined in the bosom of the ark and ever covered by the sprinkled blood upon the mercy seat which proclaimed the sinner's acceptance.

Even so **Jesus as the true tabernacle** is the place where God's law is enshrined. He perfectly kept the law of God and fulfilled God's will. He observed the law in every thought, word, and deed. This aspect of Israel's tabernacle speaks of Christ's perfect obedience to the Father and his continuous life of righteousness before the Father on the sinner's behalf. He enables us to keep the law by his indwelling life and presence, and he remains our perfect righteousness before God. We are complete in him.

Man is a lawbreaker by nature. God's law demands the penalty of death when it is broken. Thus, the tabernacle was the place where sacrifice was made. In the outer court stood the brazen altar on which sacrifices burned continually. This was the first of the furnishings of the tabernacle and spoke of the way of approach to God. *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."* (Hebrews 9:22)

Christ Jesus as the true tabernacle fulfilled this aspect of God's great object lesson. The body in which he tabernacled on earth was nailed to a cruel tree. (Hebrews 10:5) The cross was the altar on which God's lamb was slain and he made by that one act the perfect and final sacrifice for sin. (Hebrews 10:10)

There is only one way of approach to God. That is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and we take to ourselves this holy provision by faith in him. He is both the Sacrifice and the Priest – on the basis of His Sacrifice we who were once the children of wrath have now become God' children. (Ephesians 2:1 ff)

Because it was **the place of sacrifice** the tabernacle was also **the place of cleansing**. The blood atoned and the water washed away the stain of defilement. So Christ Jesus is the fountain for sin and uncleanness. He gave himself for the church that he might sanctify and cleanse her. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Also at the tabernacle the priests of old did eat – they fed upon the sacrificial lamb and upon the Bread of Presence. How significant! Jesus is the true tabernacle, and he is the Bread of Heaven upon which all believers – the priestly family of God does feed by faith.

There are so many lessons that can be drawn from the tabernacle in the wilderness. The **major point is that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment – God’s true tabernacle.** He is the dwelling place of God in the flesh and he is the perfect Sacrifice for sin. As God’s Great High Priest he ever lives to save all that come unto God by him. In him we behold the glory of God and become recipients of God’s truth and of his abundant grace.

The message of the tabernacle and Christ can be summed up in two statements:

“God appears to man in grace.”

“Man’s approach to God is by faith.”

Have you responded in faith to the reality of Jesus Christ? Have you placed your confidence for eternal life and for forgiveness of sin in him alone? He is the way to God. Amen.

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