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CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 57
HEBREWS 8:1-3

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We will look at the Tabernacle as a part of the spiritual code of the Mosaic Law.

1. THE TABERNACLE IS A PICTURE OF CHRIST.

This is the unique High Priest, the unique Saviour, the incarnate person of Christ. The Tabernacle in Scripture often refers to the human body as in 2 Cor. 5:1 and 4. Then the Tabernacle is described as a representation of something greater that was yet to come. Hebrews 9:1-11 Exodus 25:1-9 speaks of the Tabernacle as God's dwelling place. The whole concept is the grace principle, God fellowshiping with men. The Tabernacle is a picture of the work of The Lord Jesus Christ in creation. The Tabernacle is a picture of the fact that we meet God at a specific place (Doesn't mean that we cannot meet God anywhere). Someone has said that you have to meet God someplace if you would see him anyplace. You have to meet God at some specific time if you would walk with him all the time. The idea of God having fellowship with man is the suggestion that God wants to walk with us all the time.

The Tabernacle was divinely designed and the specifications are given in Exodus 25. The specifications are exact. The Tabernacle is a picture of the believer in union with Christ. Remember, only a priest could enter the Tabernacle, but today every believer is a priest and every believer can enter the tent of worship. Every time a priest entered the Tabernacle it was a shadow of things about to come, how one day every believer would be a priest and would enter the tent of worship for himself. The priest of that day never realized that what he was portraying is this-- that the Holy Spirit would put every believer into union with Christ and thereby make it possible for him to enter the holy of holies for himself. This information was sealed away from the priests of that time as a part of the doctrine of the mystery. God has a plan for every life, a definite plan, just exactly like God had a definite plan for the Tabernacle.

Definite Instruction. God gave them every measurement, every thread was described. He didn't leave anything to their design or imagination. The same thing is true in the plan he has for your life. God is providing everything every day that you will ever need for your life. Millions of years ago he knew what you would need and he made provision for it. Jesus said, "Take no thought for tomorrow." Now why did he say this? Because he knew that God had made ample provision for all your needs long before you ever came along.

2. THE TABERNACLE WAS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS.

- a. Part one. The outer court which represented the earth where we live.
- b. Part two. This represented heaven where God lives.
- c. Part three. This is the holiest place of all which is the very throne room of God.

3. THE LOCATION OF THE TABERNACLE WAS VERY IMPORTANT.

It was not placed over to the side but at the very center of the camp. The first thing they saw every morning when they arose was the Tabernacle. They spent time on the outer fringes, but the most important thing was in the center. This says loudly to us that Bible Doctrine is by far the most important thing in the Christian's life. The Christian life is nothing apart from doctrine in the soul.

4. THE TABERNACLE HAD DEFINITE SPECIFICATIONS.

Exodus 25 gives these specifications. The first part gives the specifications for the Holy of Holies. This means that every thing starts with God and is built around this fact. In grace God initiated everything.

5. THE COURT IS A PICTURE OF THE EARTH.

It was shaped as an oblong. It was 100 cubits by 50 cubits. This means it was 175 feet long and 87 feet, six inches wide and 8 feet, nine inches high. This refers to the fact that God never changes. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. In building the outer court, there were 60 pillars of brass, not 59 but 60. God even specified the ones who would build the Tabernacle. There were 60 brass sockets. A white curtain was to go all around it. There were silver holders at the top of each peg. There were 20 pillars on the north and south and 10 pillars on the east and west. It took 490 feet of fine linen to go around it, all except the gate. The gate was of blue so people would know where the entrance was. There was one place to enter and there is one plan of salvation. One gate and it was 35 feet wide. Brass is a picture of sin and its penalty. Silver refers to redemption. White linen speaks of the perfection of Christ. (God gives specifications for salvation and he gives us a brain so we can believe. Believing is non-meritorious thinking.) The gate was big enough to accommodate those who needed to enter. The gate was closed but never locked. They could pull the blue material aside and enter. The gate had four colors on it--Blue representing deity, purple representing royalty, scarlet representing redemption, and white linen representing the righteousness of Christ.

6. THE TABERNACLE WAS MADE OF SPECIFIC MATERIALS.

The pillars were made of Acacia wood overlaid with gold. The entire weight of the Tabernacle was 6½ tons. The wood stands for the humanity of Christ and the gold stands for his deity. They didn't have the doctrine of the hypostatic union as we have it today, but they could read it in the Tabernacle. The roof of the Tabernacle was of four layers. Badger skin was the outer covering, next was ram's skin dyed red, the third was goat's hair, and the fourth was fine linen.

7. THE TWO ALTARS OF THE TABERNACLE.

At the entrance of the Tabernacle was the brazen altar where the animal sacrifices were made. This is a picture of the cross. The second altar was the golden altar and this was the place of prayer. One must come to the cross before he can pray.

8. THE LAVER OF CLEANSING.
This stood between the brazen altar of sacrifice and the entrance to the Tabernacle. This is the place of cleansing and stands for rebound in the Christian life. Christ bore our sins on the cross and then we can name our sins and be sure that through confession they are forgiven. Rebound always comes after the cross.
9. THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD.
There were twelve loaves of bread, one for each tribe (none for Levi). It means the table of his presence. The table speaks of the provision of Christ and the bread is a picture of his daily super grace blessings of provision for us. This is a picture of the daily intake of doctrine. Each loaf was under a crown.
10. THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS.
Seven is the number of perfection in the Bible and represents blessings. Doctrine brings light to our path and he is our light.
11. THE FUEL IN THE LAMPS.
This is a picture of the work of the Holy Spirit which abides inside every believer.
12. THE TWO VEILS.
The first veil--was before the entrance to The Holy Place.
The second veil--was before the entrance to the Holy of Holies.
Each veil was supported by five pillars (5 is the number of grace).
Had cherubs on the veils which speak of the essence of God. The splitting of the veil before the Holy of Holies at the time of the death of Christ signified an end to the Tabernacle worship and the opening of the Holy of Holies to every priest believer.
13. THE ARK AND THE MERCY SEAT.
This is a picture of propitiation and how God can love us without compromising his righteousness and his justice.

Therefore in Hebrews 8:2 Christ is spoken of as the minister of the true tabernacle which he and he alone is building.

HEBREWS 8:3 "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." Christ is here presented as a better high priest because he offered a better sacrifice.

The words "every high priest" come from pas archiereus and these were the Levitical priests who succeeded each other. One would die and the oldest one living would step in and take his place. Next we have the words "is ordained" and this is the present, passive, indicative of kathistemi and this is what we call an irrelative present which means something that occurred at specific intervals. This is the present tense of repeated action. The words "to offer" is the present, active, infinitive of prosphero and this is the custom which habitually occurred. The infinitive speaks of the fact that this was the purpose of God for them to do this. "Gifts and sacrifices" are from doron and phusia. Doron refers to food offerings and phusia refers to animal sacrifices.

The offerings and sacrifices always presented spiritual truth.

1. The burnt offering is described in Lev. 1. This is a picture of the propitiation of Christ.
2. The food offering is described in Lev. 2. This gives emphasis to the person of Christ.
3. The peace offering is described in Lev. 3. This is the removal of the barrier between man and God.
4. The sin offering is described in Lev. 4. This brings up confession and rebound in the taking away of sins. (These are the unknown sins).
5. The trespass offering is described in Lev. 5. This is rebound with emphasis on known sins.

The word translated "wherefore" is from hothen and really means "for this reason." Next we have "it is of necessity" and is better translated "it is concluded necessary."

"That this man" is from houtos and this is a direct reference to Christ and only Christ. The word for "have" is the present, active, infinitive of echo and it means he and he alone had this. The next word is "somewhat" but better translated "something definite." Christ had something definite to offer and nothing else in the universe could ever compare with what he had to offer. "To offer" is an aorist, active, subjunctive of prophero and means "which he might offer."

Some Implications Of This Supreme Sacrifice

1. If Christ is superior to all other priests then he must have a superior sacrifice to offer.
2. The implication demands a conclusion and the conclusion is found in the efficacious offering of himself in hypostatic union as the God-man.
3. This anticipates Hebrews 9:11-14 which we will cover in full detail later on.
4. Every high priest before Christ dabbled in shadows but the shadow was cast by the reality, and Christ is the reality.
5. Animal sacrifices can only picture an efficacious sacrifice but Christ himself is an efficacious sacrifice.
6. Christ is infinitely superior and offers a superior sacrifice.