

# **CHRIST FORESHADOWED IN THE TABERNACLE**

## **A LONGING TO TABERNACLE**

From the moment of creation there is an indication that God desired to have an intimate relationship, that is to “tabernacle” with the mankind he created, even in his holiness. There was a desire not only to visit but to dwell, i.e. “tabernacle,” with men. However, when sin entered into the picture direct access to God’s presence was lost and he could thereafter, only be known by his occasional obscure and unseen appearances to certain individuals.

Throughout the history of ancient Israel, God communicated his desires and leading in various ways. He instructed Noah to build the ark, and he called and led Abraham to leave his country and made a covenant with him. After the Children of Israel were enslaved in Egypt he raised up Moses to bring them out of Egypt and into their own country.

Each of these appearances were a step toward the restoration of that full relationship. Eventually, God intended to be accessible with everyone even on an individual basis.

However, up until the children of Israel were Israel, the land God called them to God had never offered to situate himself, or tabernacle in a certain place and to prescribe a way one might find access to his presence. Here in Exodus under the direction of Moses God makes Himself accessible with a very specific prescribed protocol as to how to approach him.

Usually God enacts a matter in the physical realm before he released it in its fullness in the Spiritual realm. From the following study, we will see how God first played out the tabernacle principles in the Old Testament type in order to prepare for and help us realize its fullness in Christ.

## **THE TABERNACLE of MOSES**

### **THE PURPOSE**

According to the instructions given to Moses on the mountain, he was to lead his people to construct a dwelling place for the God of Israel to dwell among His people. This was comprised of a large fenced enclosure and within that enclosure there was one basic structure. This structure is generally regarded as the actual tabernacle. This structure was made up of two rooms: the holy place and the holiest of holies. It was in the holiest of holies that the presence of God resided.

The purpose of the tabernacle was to allow God to dwell “tabernacle” among the Israelites. *“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make the tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.”* Exodus 25:8-9

Another purpose was to teach the Israelites about God’s holiness and their sinfulness. A further purpose of the tabernacle was for God to clearly tell the Israelites that there is a specific and only one way to approach Him, and that is by a blood sacrifice. *“...it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”* Leviticus 17:11

The hidden aspect lies in the fact that, actually, the tabernacle was a fore shadow of the reality, which would be fulfilled in the person and work of Christ. *“And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.”* Luke 24:27

Our study will present the stunning unmistakable parallel between the Tabernacle of Moses and its complete fulfilment in Christ. Then we will further explore the practical application for our daily walk and living in His presence.

### **THE PRECISENESS**

Every detail, in size, material and placement were all precisely prescribed. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle. *“See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown on the mountain”*

Exodus 25: 40 & Hebrews 8:5b This implies that to fully experience the beauty of God's presence, even in our time, one must be specific in following the prescribed approach.

## **THE ORDER**

The instructions for preparing the tabernacle begins with describing the Ark which was the very place of God's dwelling. This is followed by describing the development step by step moving outward ending up in the courtyard. This speaks of how God took the initiative to make Himself accessible to the Israelites, and that he was ready to meet them at the gate and lead them into his very dwelling. In the same way that He came to us by sending His son Christ Jesus to open the way for us to come to the Father. While He comes to us from the holy place, we however, need to approach God by first coming through the entrance of the courtyard and follow the prescribed course to meet with God. See: Exodus 25-27.

This speaks of the fact that Jesus having been sent from the Father becomes "the way" and the exclusive entrance for anyone who wishes to come into the presence of God. See: John 14:6

## **THE TYPOLOGY**

*"And the Word became flesh and "tabernacled" among us, and we beheld His glory..."* John 1:14. *"These are a shadow of things that were to come; the reality however is found in Christ."* Colossians 2:17. *"And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning him."* Luke 24:27

As a shadow portrays a reality, so the reality must fall within the general details of the shadow. Therefore, if Christ is the reality all the aspects of the Tabernacle of Moses should be seen and fulfilled in Him. The purpose of this study is to uncover the divine parallel between the first tabernacle and its complete fulfillment in Christ, and its application in our spiritual walk.

## THE PRACTICALITY

After the tabernacle was established the God of Israel had identified the specific place where He chose to dwell. The practical question arises, how can a person get to the place of His dwelling? Is there a protocol to follow; are there certain requirements to meet? Here we will see that every step toward this goal has specific requirements written into its qualities and structure. It is important to understand the symbolism of the colours and the materials.

## THE SYMBOLISM

**Colours:** -Jesus represented by each color and uniquely so portrayed in each Gospel:

**Blue:** heavenly -John

“The one who comes from heaven...” John 3:31

**Purple:** royalty -Matthew

“...born King of the Jews.” Matthew 2:2

**Scarlet:** sacrifice -Mark

“This is my blood of the covenant...” Mark 14:24

**White:** righteous -Luke

“This man has done nothing wrong.” Luke 23:41

**Materials:** Each material representing an aspect of God’s work of redemption:

Wood: humanity

Bronze: judgment

Silver: redemption

Linen: righteousness

Gold: deity

Oil: Holy Spirit

Ram skins: atonement

Badger skins -natural appearance

4 pillars: 4 gospels

## THE PRICE

The actual instructions for the tabernacle’s constructions begins in Exodus 25. It begins with; *“And the Lord*

told Moses, *“Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering... 25:1. “Then have them make me a sanctuary for me and I will dwell among them.” 25:8.*

The first pre-requisite for realizing the presence of God is that we must, “bring an offering.” It must take priority in our lives. This includes our, time, our finances and our full co-operation. They gave willingly!

The instructions and requirements are specific, not open to human adjustment, and must be followed in detail, if results are to be realized. *“Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.” 25:9 “See that you make then according to the pattern shown on the mountain.” Exodus 25:40.* When all the instructions were followed the Lord confirmed it. *“Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.” Exodus 40:34*

Just as there was a specific way to enter the tabernacle so there is a specific way, i.e. protocol, we must follow in our time if we wish to enter into and experience God’s presence.

## **THE APPROACH**

Finding a way to entering the courtyard or “outer court” was the first requirement if one wanted to begin the journey of meeting GOD. The dimensions and physical details were specific as follows:

### **The sizes:**

The overall dimensions were 150 X 75 feet or 46 X 23 meters, surrounded by a fence made up of a curtain of fine Linen, 7.5 feet high. Two sides of this linen curtain rectangle were held up by twenty posts each set in a bronze base topped with a silver hook and silver band. On the west end were ten posts with a bronze base and silver hooks. On the east end a 22.5 feet fence and three posts from each corner, leaving one 30 feet opening for the entrance.

The entrance, was covered by a 30 feet long curtain, made of fine linen embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet

yarn. This curtain/door was attached to four posts that fit in bronze sockets.

### **The Fence:** Exodus 27:9-15

Upon approaching one was faced with the white linen fence, this was in contrast to the black goat skin coverings of the surrounding tents of the Israelites. The fence was too high to jump over, or even to see over. So, unless one finds an entrance, there is no way to enter or even to see anything. The linen symbolizing righteousness implies that the first requirement that a person needed was to be righteous, the bronze base of the posts depicted that one must withstand judgment, and the silver top calls for redemption.

The point is; that there is no way any person can qualify to get in unless they are righteous, able to withstand judgment and have experienced righteousness. Here we get a clear indication of the fact that only a perfect person could ever even get into the outer court. Otherwise, one would need to find a gate or a righteous person who might be able to provide access.

### **The Gate:** Exodus 27:16-19

The entrance, or the gate, facing east, was covered by a curtain, 30 feet long, made of fine white linen embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet yarn. This curtain was attached to four posts that fit in bronze sockets.

Note that there is only one access, made up of four colours and it is held up by four pillars. Each colour: red sacrifice, blue heavenly, purple royalty and white, righteousness is an aspect that only Christ could attain to. The four pillars also typify and speak of how each aspect of his characteristics was clearly upheld by the four gospel writers

Here we see in the requirements for entering God's presence/the kingdom; the message of the Gospel is already prescribed. Not only can we not scale the fence, we must find an entrance through One who is heavenly, kingly, righteous and can offer His blood, otherwise we cannot enter the courtyard. Note the words of John 14:6, *"Jesus said, I am the way...., no man*

*comes to the Father except by me."*

Practically, to enter one must confess that we are unqualified, i.e. sinful, and acknowledge that Jesus paid the price for our sin, and acknowledge the necessity to accept Him as our Lord and Savior. Only this grants us entrance into the outer court.

As we proceed we will approach further doors in order to enter deeper into a relationship with God, but here we face the first step. We must begin by acknowledging that there is only one entrance and that Jesus is the way. Further "doors" will reveal Him as the truth and the life.

## **THE COURTYARD** Exodus 27:9-19

### **Inside the Courtyard**

Submitting to the first requirement by entering through the one and only gate, allows access into the courtyard. The courtyard implies a separation from the world. *"Therefore, come out from them and be separate, says the Lord."* 2 Cor. 6:17. However, one is not yet qualified to rush into the Holy presence of God. Each piece of furniture portrays a further transaction necessary to reach our goal of intimacy with a Holy God.

Once inside we can see the bronze altar, the laver and the tent of meeting which contains the lampstand, the bread table, the incense altar and the ark. These furnishings inside the courtyard are in the shape of the cross. The Ark of the Covenant represents the head, the bread of presence and the lampstand the two arms. The bronze altar can be regarded as the foot of the cross and the laver the stem.

### **The Bronze Altar** Exodus 27:1-8

Immediately upon entering the courtyard one faces the bronze altar. It was to be made of acacia wood covered by bronze. The bronze speaks of judgment as in the case of the brazen serpent Moses raised up in the wilderness for people to look to in order to be healed of the serpent's bite. (See Numbers 21:6-9) In John 3:15 Jesus presented Himself as the One who would bare the judgment of God.

The altar was a 7.5 feet square implying equal access to all. It had horns at each corner and stood 4.5 feet high. It is said that the altar was large enough to contain all the other furnishings. Showing that any further experience is dependent on what our Lord paid for at the altar. Every lamb sacrificed on this altar was a foreshadow of Christ the true Lamb. We can only respond by proclaiming, "Worthy is the Lamb." This will be our theme even into eternity. Rev. 14.

There were a number of sacrifices and offerings required, each representing an aspect of the sacrificial work of Christ. It is very important to realize that the fire, which was never allowed to go out was sent from heaven by God. See: Leviticus 6:12-13. Leviticus 9:24 refers to this fire. "*Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions.*" Only fire derived from this fire would ever be acceptable.

When Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu offered "strange" fire they suffered death. See: Leviticus 10 This would be a fire that originated from them and not from that fire which came from God's presence. This tells us that God will allow and honor only that which originates from Him. God will not allow a mixture of human works in his plan of salvation. The fire to light the lamps and for the incense altar had to come only from Him as the source. When the offering was consumed by fire it was the sign that the offering was accepted by God.

The altar signifies the foot of the cross and the sacrifice of blood. Blood from here needed to be applied to every station hereafter. See: Hebrews 10:19

One may have acknowledged Jesus as the gate and entered the courtyard. But, to proceed further we need to come to recognize our sinful nature and accept that Jesus, the righteous one, paid the price, his blood, on our behalf. Every step further toward the presence of God requires the application of the blood. In New Testament terms, we could refer to this as coming to the foot of the cross. This may also be regarded as acknowledging the atonement or experiencing consecration. This deals with our sin nature, whereas the laver



will deal with sins we commit.

### **The Laver** Exodus 30:17-21

Between the altar and the entrance to the Holy Place, stood the laver. It was a round bronze basin filled with water at two levels; somewhat like a cup and saucer where the priests needed to wash their hands and feet. This was required before a priest dared to enter the Holy place.

There were two washings required. A “one time” washing and a “daily washing.” To become a priest, one needed to be consecrated; for this the person laid aside his clothes, was washed overall and then dressed in the priest’s garments. This may be called the washing of regeneration. It also speaks of baptism which is to put aside the old and be dressed in His righteousness. See: Exodus 29:4

The “daily washing” required a washing of the hands which speak of service; what we do, and a washing of the feet which deals with our walk; where we go. This represents a further aspect of our journey referred to as sanctification or separation from the flesh and the world. At the altar, the burden of our sin nature is lifted and we are no longer under condemnation. The matter of sin is dealt with once for all. However, aspects of our character are not yet transformed and we may still commit “sins,” thereby become contaminated, and thus not qualified to enter the holy place. *“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart...”* Psalms 24:3-4

The basin and its stand was made from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Somehow the Spirit moved the women to give up their fixation on outward beauty to embrace the purposes of the tabernacle. Exodus 38:8 The implication is that any one coming close to the basin would see their reflection and thus be exposed. This washing was an absolute daily requirement both to enter into the Holy Place but also to serve at the altar. To approach the laver would be akin to approaching a scanning machine or a bright light. This aspect is often neglected and the general

assumption would be that one could go from the altar directly to the holy place, but the result is death.

We also see the water as “the water of the Word,” as in Ephesians 5:26. This water first exposes us and then cleanses us. Jesus may also have had this in mind when He talked of leaving your gift at the altar and first be reconciled to your brother before coming to worship. Matthew 5:23-24

## **THE TABERNACLE**

Although we generally refer to the tabernacle as the entire complex, in a sense only the structure within the courtyard is the actual tabernacle. There are two rooms within this structure. The first and larger room is referred to as the Holy Place. The second smaller room is called the Holy of Holies. There is a wall around this structure, a curtain at the entrance, and a special curtain separating the Holy place from the Holiest place. Also, a special cover serving as a ceiling and roof.

### **The Door**

In the outer court, we have acknowledged and experienced Jesus as the way. Now we must enter into the Holy Place in order to experience Him as the truth. See: John 14:6 After passing by the altar and washing at the laver we are faced with another veil, which we will refer to as the door. The door gave the priest entrance into the Holy Place which is where we experience fellowship; spiritual nourishment, light and direction. Whereas the Holy of Holies is the place of worship. **The heights and depth of our worship which we experience in the Holy of Holies is related to the level of our experience of fellowship in the Holy place. Our worship is our response to seeing who He is, while in the Holy place, compared to who we are.**

The fabric and colours; white, blue, purple and red, of this door are the same as those at the main entrance. Confirming again only the pure, heavenly, royal and sacrificial lamb qualifies us to enter.

## **The Five Pillars**

In this entranceway, there are five pillars. We saw the four pillars at the entrance of the outer court as representing the four gospels, here we could see these five pillars representing the five administrative gifts for the church. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who presented and upheld Jesus as the entrance to the courtyard. Whereas the apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher and evangelist act as the custodians for the preservation of the purity of the Holy Place.

The five pillars can also be seen as the five writers of epistles; Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude. Paul referred to these as pillars in Galatians 2:9

## **The Boards**

It is important to note that the pillars as well as all of the boards that formed the walls of the actual tabernacle were made of Acacia wood covered with gold. The Acacia wood grown in the harsh desert speaks of humanity, but the gold covering speaks of the transforming work of the Holy Spirit conforming us to the divine nature of Christ. We who once were growing wild, full of knots and twists, growing in the wilderness but have been collected and set apart to become a part of God's temple. The natural is eventually covered over so that only the divine is seen.

The boards, once connected to the world, but called and prepared to be set onto a base of silver which separated them from the sand of the desert, and gave them a firm foundation by the redemption of Jesus Christ. Each board was cut to size, made to stand, to be joined together to corporately contain the experiential reality of Christ. While each board represents an individual believer, there was a rod which connected all the boards together end to end.

*"For the body is not one member, but many."* 1 Corinthians 12:12 See Ephesians 2:21-22. "Fitly framed together."

## **The Bars** Exodus 26:26

The boards were framed together by bars of the same material overlaid with gold. While each board stood erect on its own foundation in a sense independent, it was also bound to the ones next to it by these bars. This speaks clearly of the Lord's desire for the unity and corporate aspect of the body of Christ. "Fitly framed together..." The cross bars were five in number with special attention to the one in the middle. *"The center crossbar is to extend from end to end at the middle of the frames."* Exodus 26:28

The shorter bars bind certain individuals together the central bar binds all believers together. While the other bars could be seen, the central bar seemed to be hidden, implying that there is something beyond the outward visible connection, that, being the bond of the unity of the Spirit.

## **The Covering** Exodus 26:1-14

The covering, the ceiling and roof of the tabernacle was made up of four layers, each of a different aspect. From the inside, what would appear as a ceiling was a covering of linen. The fine linen was embroidered with figures of cherubim in blue, purple and scarlet. The linen represented Christ in all His glory and perfect righteousness. The white linen represents the sinless, righteous Christ. Blue, the heavenly colour, represents His heavenly origin or nature. Scarlet represents His sacrificial death. Purple, His royal character and stately character.

The cherubim, with outstretched wings woven into the linen hovered over the priests. In the Bible, cherubim are seen as guardians, of the holiness of God. Here, the cherubim represented protection given to those in the tabernacle. Meanwhile, from the outside, none of this beauty could be seen.

The second layer of the covering above the linen was made of goat hair. This represents Christ as the sin offering. There were two goats brought to the altar. The one was killed at the altar and his blood was poured out there. The priest placed his hands on the head of the other goat and confessed the sins of Israel. He then sent it into the desert never to return.

This symbolized the fact that Jesus carried our sins as far as the east is from the west. The sin of mankind was placed on Jesus and He carried it away.

The third covering was ram's skin dyed red. This covering could not be seen from the inside or the outside, yet it was very necessary for what it represents. It represents the necessity of being covered by the blood of the lamb.

The final and outer layer was made of dolphin skins. This gives a common ordinary appearance. The beauty and splendor of the Lord's presence can only be seen from inside, after one enters through the door and follows the prescribed protocol.

## **THE HOLY PLACE**

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

Concerning the articles in the Holy Place, we will first focus on the lampstand, sometimes called the candlestick. Although it was not a candle. A candle consumes itself to make light. A lampstand requires a continuous supply of oil in order to produce light. Within the Tabernacle there was no need for natural light. Natural light does not enlighten spiritual realities. The light of the lamp was the light of the Holy Spirit which shines both night and day. However, the "wicks" needed to be trimmed daily.

It was made of about 75 pounds of pure gold, beaten into its shape. The central shaft typifying Christ in His divine nature standing firm in the middle. *"I am the light of the world."* John 9:5 Out from the sides of this shaft came six branches three on each side. This speaks of how in Genesis God built woman out of the side of man. By His crucifixion/ beating He produces the churches as shown by the lampstands in Revelation.

While the churches may be considered to be the branches, it is only by the burning of the oil, the Holy Spirit, that they light and illuminate, otherwise the branch is just an ornament. The wick needed to be trimmed every evening. Ash to be removed, and oil added speaking of our need to

be renewed every day. Only the Holy Spirit gives light and revelation to see and understand the experience in the Holy Place. *"If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship..."* 1 John: 1.7

Many other inferences can be drawn from the almond buds, flowers and the bowls, 66 in all which may speak of the 66 books of the Bible. They may also speak of new life bursting forth as a result of the light.

### **The Table of Showbread (Presence)** Exodus 25: 23-30; 37:10-16

This table was made of acacia wood covered by gold, and was placed on the north side opposite from the lampstand. There were twelve loaves of unleavened bread. This was the food for the priests and only priests were allowed to eat it. Only those who have passed through the experience of the altar, and the laver and live in the light of the lampstand are qualified to eat it. This speaks of Christ as the bread of life. See John 6 *"I am the bread of life."* The bread made from fine flour meant that the grain had to be ground, speaking of the suffering of Christ, and being unleavened refers to His sinless life.

While the light of the lamp enlightens and exposed the bread provides the life and nourishment to live a holy life, which is necessary if we want to approach the incense altar.

The bread on the table had to be replaced regularly, which indicates the need to come to the Word for a fresh portion each day. This was also portrayed in the need to find fresh manna each day. See: Exodus 16:16

### **The Incense Altar** Exodus 30:1-10

The incense altar stood next to the veil, and closest to the ark, indicating that this was the final necessary step before one could enter fully into God's presence. This speaks of the fact that it is our Lord Jesus whose intercession before the throne, and not our righteousness which qualifies us to enter into the holy place.

*"Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every*

*morning when he tends the lamps. He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the Lord for generations to come. Do not offer on this altar any other incense..." Exodus 30:7-9*

Incense was made up of four spices; stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense. These come from wounds in the trees and crushed shells. He was wounded and crushed for our transgressions.

Coals were brought in from the bronze altar and incense was placed on the coals to produce a fragrance which ascended as a fragrant offering unto the Lord. Even so our offering of prayer, intercession and praise becomes a fragrance which joins Christ's intercession in the heavens.

## **THE HIGH PRIEST**

Before we get into the Holy of Holies we note that only the High Priest could go behind the veil to enter into the place which represented the very presence of God Himself. He needed to bring some of the blood and some incense and also had to wear a breastplate.

We find later that Jesus Himself took the place of the high priest and entered behind the veil on our behalf. Not only did Jesus enter but as he entered the veil was torn and now we all have access by His blood.

### **The breastplate**

The breastplate had placed on it twelve stones, each one representing one of the tribes. This indicated that he was not entering in for or by himself but was representing all the children of Israel. So now Jesus our high priest has entered into the presence of God and intercedes there on our behalf.

## **THE HOLY OF HOLIES**

### **The Veil**

The veil which separated the Holy place from the Holiest was a curtain of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, with cherubim. It was upheld by four pillars of acacia wood, set on

silver sockets, with suspending hooks of gold.

Only once a year, the high priest, and he alone was permitted to enter with the blood of atonement in his hand and his person enshrouded by a cloud of incense.

We are told in Hebrews 10:20 that the veil was a type of Jesus flesh, and the moment that His flesh was torn, at the cross the veil was torn from top to bottom. Mark 15:38 Now if we acknowledge the death of Jesus on our behalf and symbolically bring the blood with us we can enter into the presence of God.

## **The Ark**

Within the Holy of Holies, the ark was the first article mentioned, indicating that it was the heart and center, and the meaning and purpose of the tabernacle. It was the heart and presence of God and everything else was for the purpose of preparing an access to the ark.

It was a chest made of acacia wood, covered both outside and inside with gold. While the other pieces of furniture spoke of different aspects of Christ's work the ark speaks of God's very person.

The brazen altar pointed to His sacrificial death, the laver typified His cleansing through the word, the showbread pointed to Him as the bread of Life, and the lampstand spoke of Christ as light. The altar of incense pointed to Christ as our intercessor. But, the ark of covenant speaks of who He is, not what He has done. When we see not only what He has done, but who He is we will be brought into a deeper understanding and higher worship. This why Paul said, *"That I may know Him..."* Philippians 3:10

It is only because of who He is that He can supply all our needs and open access to the Holy of Holies for us. The ark contained three items.

## **The contents**

1) **Golden pot of manna** Exodus 16:34; Hebrews 9:4

Since the manna sustained the lives of the Israelites in the wilderness, it speaks of His faithfulness to provide and care



for us. As Christ is our prophet, priest, and king, we see Him here as the prophet who brings God's word as our daily bread to be our sustenance.

When Jesus spoke of himself as the "bread of Life" in John 6 he contrasted himself with the manna in the wilderness. Whereas those who ate that manna eventually died those who partake of Jesus Christ will live forever. Manna preserved physical life where as Jesus as the living bread sustains eternal life.

### 2) **Aaron's budding rod** Hebrews 9:4

When Aaron's authority was challenged according to Numbers 17, God caused his rod to blossom and bear fruit. This was proof that the blessing of priesthood authority was on him. This rod kept in the ark represents Christ having the authority to be our high priest.

### 3) **The tablet of the ten commandments**

Moses broke the first tablets of the commandments when he came down from the mountain and saw the idolatry of the people. This represents people's inability to keep the commandments. However, the second set of tablets represented Christ who fulfilled the law. The law represents God's perfect standard of holiness which no man can meet. Yet, Hebrews 12:14 tells us: that, "*without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*" Only Christ himself could meet this requirement and He did so on our behalf.

### **The Mercy Seat** Exodus 25:17

On top of the ark of covenant in the Holy of Holies was a pure gold cover referred to as the mercy seat. Here is where God desires to commune with His people. Although sinful man could not approach a Holy God, God provided a way through the mercy seat to make this possible, provided man would accept His prescribed way, through the sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat. Once a year, on the day of atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies.

Immediately upon entering while carrying the incense in a golden censer, the priest needed to sprinkle the blood from the brazen altar.

In His life, the Lord Jesus met the requirements of God's holy standards, and was then able to pay the penalty of death on behalf of mankind, by shedding His blood. In this way, he became the propitiation which is another word for mercy seat. Romans 3:25, Hebrews 9:5 Therefore, our access to the Presence of God is based on the blood. The priest was instructed: *"He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover."* Leviticus 16:14

Today, Christ is our high priest, for He has made a way into the Holy of Holies available to all who come by means of His shed blood. *"Therefore, brothers since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is His body, and since we have a great high Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart of full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water."* Hebrews 10:19-22

## **The Cherubim**

Two cherubim were situated facing each other with wings spread and looking down onto the mercy seat. They were made of solid gold and actually a part of the mercy seat.

Cherubim are first mentioned in Genesis 3:24. *"After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the garden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."*

They are also referred to in numerous places but their primary function as indicated in Psalm 80:1, and Psalm 99:1 and relative to our study is to host the presence of God and to monitor access, assuring that only those who qualified may approach God. In this case only the high priest who followed

the prescribed protocol and brought the evidence of the blood was allowed to approach and live. Any access apart from the prescribed approach would result in certain death.

We might consider how this might apply in our times. It seems that rather than an unbeliever attempting to enter God's presence presumptuously the mercy seat today is hidden from such pursuits, and only made accessible through faith in Christ.

Under the gaze of the cherubim from above and the commandments of God from below one might shrink in fear. This requires us to have a deep revelation of the fact that Christ through his life and death has met all the requirements on our behalf. Thus, there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus and our Holy God gladly invites us into His Holy presence.

## **Conclusion**

We can gain much help in our Christian life journey from an in-depth study of the various aspects of the tabernacle. At the same time, we stand in awe at the wisdom and foreknowledge of our God. Before time, even in eternity, long before the New Testament unfolding of the work and redemption of our Saviour Jesus, God played out the details of Christ's work through the tabernacle in the wilderness.

While this is so obvious and clear, it is hidden to the natural eyes. Yet, by his mercy He grants revelation to those who come to him with humility and faith and opens, "the eyes of our hearts,"

*"Oh, the depth of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out!*

*For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be the glory forever. AMEN." Romans 11:33, 36*

