

Nudgings on the Tabernacle

Altar of Burnt Offering:

This was the largest of all the furnishings of the Tabernacle and it was placed in the court, just inside the door. As the place of sacrifice, it is one of the greatest Old Testament shadows of the work of our Lord at Calvary. Among its many features are the four horns, which according to Psalm 118, are connected to four cords. The question arises: "What are the four cords which held Christ to Calvary?" This is explained plus much more.

Ark of Covenant:

The ark was a wooden chest covered inside and outside with gold. It was one of the best Old Testament pictures of the singularity of the person of the Lord yet, indicating the fulness of His glory while being a perfect human. It had three items in it: Aaron's rod that budded, which was a witness to the people's displeasure at God's appointment; the law which was a witness to the people's disobedience to God's exclusiveness; and the manna which was a witness to their dissatisfaction.

Court - Hangings of Fine Twined Linen:

The court hangings were suspended by the pillars which stood on sockets of silver. The linen curtain indicated the righteousness of God, and indicated a clear line of demarkation between redeemed man and God. It is a lesson needed to be retaught in these days regarding the casualness of addressing and witnessing for God.

Coverings : Badger Skins and Ram Skins Dyed Red:

Badger skins

Of all the coverings this is the most obscure and possibly maligned. Certain facts are unquestionable, such as, we do not know what sort of an animal it was and the colour of its hide. With such facts it is difficult to understand how it can be taught to indicate the Lord as One in whom there was no beauty. Due to its obscurity, it indicates the unknown Christ in all His beauty. This can be shown from the scriptures.

Ram Skins Dyed Red

The ram was the first animal specified in as a covenanting victim (Gen. 15:9), a substitutionary sacrifice (Gen. 22:13), and also used to illustrate Alexander in his ongoing unstoppable conquests (Dan. 8:4). Added to these facts, it is the only skin covering that was permanently changed from that which it has been while the animal was alive. Putting these truths together, they foreshadow the Lord as the One who was unstoppable in fulfilling the will of God to become a substitutionary sacrifice, who secured a covenant in perpetuity, and forever will carry the evidences of death.

Curtains of Fine Twined Linen (Tabernacle)

The word "tabernacle" is used in two senses. First with reference to the entire structure, and secondly it indicates this linen curtain alone (Ex. 26:1, 15). It was embroidered with not only colours but with cherubim. The curtain of the Tabernacle was two sets of five curtains, joined by loops of blue and clasps of gold, the glory of God in uniting all those who would be His dwelling place, into one. (Eph 2:14-22)

Curtains of Goats Hair

One of the many observations is the curtain of Goat's hair and the fact that it was two cubits longer than the linen curtain. Furthermore, these animals were particularly connected with the sin offering. In contrast to the gold clasps of the linen curtain, it has 50 copper clasps which could indicate 50 ways in which the sacrifice of the Lord is presented in the scriptures. Whatever else it teaches, it is clear the Lord is presented as the sacrifice for sins which covers all our transgressions.

Hangings of the Door of the Tent

This door was the entrance to the place of deeper communion. Within it was the Holy Place where man walked in the light (of the lampstand); feasted on the shewbread which was on the table, and was able to worship and intercede for others. In contrast to the vail, this door and the gate had no cherubim embroidered on it. It was approximately 15 foot square and was suspended by five pillars. It was referred to as:

- a) Door of the Tabernacle (Ex. 33:9; 40:28)
- b) Door of the Tabernacle of the congregation (Ex. 29:4)
- c) Door of the Tent (Ex. 26:36)
- d) Tabernacle door (Ex. 33:10)
- e) Hanging for the door at the entering in of the Tabernacle (Ex. 35:15)
- f) Hanging for the Tabernacle door (Ex. 36:17)
- g) Door to the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:5)

Mercy Seat

On top of the ark, covering the law, manna and Aaron's rod (See Ark of the Covenant) was the Mercy Seat. This magnificent top covering had on it cherubim which was an earthly parable of the Lord in Heaven dwelling between the cherubim. The truth of the Mercy Seat can be seen so richly in the uses of its root word "Kaphar", which is translated "reconciliation" (Dan. 9:24); "will be merciful" (Deut. 32:43); "Shall be dissannulled" (Isa. 28:18); "When I am pacified" (Ezek. 16:63); "Purge" (Ezek. 43:26); "forgive" (Jer. 18:23)

Pillars of the Court

It will be shown that the pillars can illustrate the believers who guard the King's person and hold up the righteousness of His character (Song of Sol. 3:7). They are separated from the world by copper, thus indicating separation of the world by judgement, and standing in judgment on the world as the two witnesses will do (Rev. 11:10). There is a division of opinion as to whether the "fillets" were silver connecting rods, or whether the Hebrew indicates nothing between. That will be discussed in the notes.

Tabernacle Structure

The Tabernacle structure consisted of 46 boards, each 10 cubits by 1.5 cubits and seemingly .5 cubit thick. It also had two corner boards which were for the alignment of the boards on the sides and back. Along the back were 6 boards and 20 down each side. Each board stood on two sockets of silver with each board having two hand like tenons fitted into the silver sockets. Along the outside of the sides and back went 4 bars, and either through the midst of the boards or along the center went another bar. They were standing up and united together. This was a structural illustration of that which God wants of His people today, standing up and standing together, upholding the person of the Lord (the Tabernacle).

Table of Shewbread

From eternity past it has been God's character and desire to be in a state of constant communion with Himself. Divine Persons communed together and even when man sinned it was after that God came as the Voice seeking to have communion restored. When the table was built it was to hold the Shewbread which having been before God all week was eaten by the priests. As they stood there partaking of that bread they were eating in fellowship with God. This study brings graphically to us the fellowship we can have with God not only daily but in particular at the Lord's Supper.

The Altar of Incense:

It must be observed that two of the Tabernacle furnishings are called “altar”, but while they are quite different they complement each other, and one without the other would be deficient. The brazen altar foreshadows the finished work of the Lord as Saviour, whereas the golden altar foreshadows His unfinished work as High priest. The brazen altar indicates His work on earth, but the golden altar indicates His work in Heaven.

The Boards of the Tabernacle:

It has often been presented that the boards of the tabernacle were solid, but there are physical and doctrinal reasons why this must be questioned. A plank of wood approximately 15 ft. x 3 ft. x 10 inches would be an enormous weight. It seems to me they were like ladders, standing on sockets of silver. On one level they indicate the believer standing on redemption ground and holding up the person of the Lord.

The Candlestick:

The central shaft of the candlestick was distinctly different from the other 6, and among other truths, manifested the preeminence of the Lord. He is preeminent in affection, position, judicial, governmental, and at least another 6 ways. As the Light, it indicates His character (Jn. 1:5), impartiality (Jam. 1:17), and at least another two aspects of His person.

The Gate of the Court:

The gate for entrance into the court was wide, but there were limitations. Thank God that the gospel is open to all, and it is not limited:

- a) In capacity of Heaven to receive
- b) The virtue of the sacrificial work of Christ
- c) The ability of Christ to keep
- d) Who can come.

But it did have limitations as does the gospel for it is limited to:

- a) Those who hear the gospel
- b) Those who hear and understand
- c) Those who are alive, for there is no transference of place after death

The Laver:

In Isaiah 52:11 the instruction was: “be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord”, and the word “clean” occurs in 39 verses, “cleansed” in 15 verses, and “cleansing” in 6 verses. Many of these have to do with the nation and quite a few with the priests. The slaying, flaying, and separating of the inwards of the animals would result with the priest’s hands being stained, and their feet soiled by the blood stained desert floor. How could they approach God? They washed their hands and feet in the laver. Clean hands are needed for strength (Job 17:9); and to ascend God’s Holy Hill (Psa. 24:4).

The Vail of the Covering:

The word “vail” is mentioned ten times in six different contexts in the New Testament. The vail of the Tabernacle can be considered from at least four viewpoints: materially, doctrinally, Christologically and theologically. It was beautifully embroidered in blue, purple and scarlet with cherubim. The cherubim would ever remind the High Priest, who entered there on one day of the year, that it was a sacred sphere into which he was moving and if all was not done according to God’s decrees, death would be the result.