

## Jesus in the Tabernacle Exodus 25-27 bible-sermons.org October 10, 2010

Last week we went over the descriptions of the tabernacle that God not only spoke but also showed to Moses on Mount Sinai. There are so many details in such a large portion of Scripture that we can be sure that God has filled it with spiritual truth to be discovered. We have already seen how it showed us the steps to intimacy with God. I pray that we will continue to make an honest assessment of how far we have entered in and what we need to do to go all the way in and then obey what we hear. We have seen how God came out to bring us in. (Hebrews 10:19-22)

Today I would like to take you through the tabernacle to show you how it points to Jesus. (Luke 24:27) When Jesus rose from the dead, He told His disciples, Luke 24:44 (ESV) ...*“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”*

The Apostle Paul tried to convince the Jews that Jesus was Messiah using the Law and the Prophets. (Acts 17:2) If Jesus is truly one with the Father and has forever been the plan of God to redeem the world as the Scriptures declare (Revelation 13:8) then we would expect God to prepare us to recognize Him by foretelling details of His ministry.

In most seminaries today, there is a trend to interpret the Old Testament as non-Messianic. In other words, these more recent professors are claiming that the original people that heard the text did not interpret it as referring to a coming Messiah. That simply ignores rabbinical writing, and Jewish history, but most of all Jesus' own words. (Luke 4:21)

When John the Baptist was imprisoned, he sent messengers to Jesus to ask if He was indeed the Messiah. Jesus answered by referring to things the prophet Isaiah said would be a part of the Messiah's ministry that were taking place right before the eyes of the messengers. (Luke 11:4-6) Jesus was saying, "How can you doubt it when you see the predictions about the ministry of Messiah taking place right before your very eyes?" Well, somehow, modern professors have educated themselves into stupidity. What is clear to any unbiased reader of the text has become obscure to them. (Jeremiah 5:21)

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of symbolism was taken to an extreme. Every word and object somehow said something spiritual. Because of that extreme, the church backed away from seeing metaphors or pictures of spiritual things that were not clearly stated to be such. In other words, the church swung back in the other direction. Today we are

**Commented [Paul Wall1]: Hebrews 10:19-22 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,  
<sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,  
<sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God,  
<sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

**Commented [Paul Wall2]:** Luke 24:27 (ESV) 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

**Commented [Paul Wall3]:** Acts 17:2 (ESV)  
2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

**Commented [Paul Wall4]:** Revelation 13:8 (ESV) 8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain.

**Commented [Paul Wall5]:** Luke 4:21 (ESV)  
21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

**Commented [Paul Wall6]:** Matthew 11:4-6 (ESV)  
4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:  
5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.  
6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

**Commented [Paul Wall7]:** Jeremiah 5:21 (ESV)  
21 "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not.

still affected by the move to correct the extreme of seeing some spiritual thing in everything in that we avoid even some of the more obvious pictures God painted for us.

I give you that background as an introduction to warn you that some of the message today is what I have personally seen. I think it is a reasonable conclusion but for those pictures not clearly described in other passages as such, you must discern for yourself. I can't imagine that God the Father would not fill the Tabernacle with pictures of Jesus, the Son.

The author of Hebrews tells us that the earthly tabernacle was a copy of true things, heavenly things. (Hebrews 9:23-24) He calls the tabernacle and its rituals a shadow of the good things to come. (Hebrews 10:1) The good things are Jesus and His ministry.

Isn't it interesting that John used the word associated with the tabernacle to describe Jesus' physical existence! The Word became flesh and tabernacle among us. (John 1:14)

Jesus referred to Himself as the Temple that was modeled after the tabernacle. John 2:19-21 (ESV)<sup>19</sup> *Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."*<sup>20</sup> *The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"*<sup>21</sup> *But he was speaking about the temple of his body.* When it comes to seeing Jesus in the tabernacle, we can be sure we are seeing the same truth that Jesus saw and taught.

So let us begin looking at the tabernacle from the place God begins, the Ark of the Covenant. The ark itself was made, like most of the furniture, of acacia wood. Only this piece was covered within and without with hammered gold. Acacia wood grew in the wilderness and is common even today. It is a tough tight grained wood, but it is just wood. Our Savior came in a human body just like yours and mine, flesh and bone. The great difference is what was on the inside and outside. He was golden on the inside and so His every word and action (the outside) was golden. (John 5:19)

Gold represents holiness and glory. The word for glory in Hebrew (*kabod*) also means heavy or weighty. Jesus is glorious within and without. He declared that His only motivation was to please the Father. (John 8:29) He said His every action was at the direction of the Father. He was the only one that could ever ask if anyone could find any fault in Him and have silence as the response. (John 8:46) His was the only human body golden within and without.

Inside the box were three items, the tablets of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, and a golden jar of manna. John the Beloved wrote that Jesus is the Word made flesh.

**Commented [Paul Wall8]:** Hebrews 9:23-24 (ESV)  
23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.  
24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

**Commented [Paul Wall9]:** Hebrews 10:1 (ESV)  
1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

**Commented [Paul Wall10]:** John 1:14 (YLT)  
14 And the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth.

**Commented [Paul Wall11]:** John 5:19 (ESV)  
19 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

**Commented [Paul Wall12]:** John 8:29 (ESV)  
29 And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."

**Commented [Paul Wall13]:** John 8:46 (ESV)  
46 Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

(John 1:14) He is the incarnation of those commandments. Not only did He live in accordance with them in every way, but in a mysterious way, He is God's word. The Word was with God and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

**Commented [Paul Wall14]:** John 1:14 (ESV)  
14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The jar of manna is a wonderful picture as well. It is a golden vessel like the Ark but it contained God's miraculous provision that had begun to fall each day a short time before the building of the tabernacle. Jesus interpreted this one for us. John 6:32-33 (ESV) *32 Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."* Jesus was explaining that the manna was a physical picture of Him. The use of the word "true" points to a Greek idea of things in this world being a shadow of a spiritual reality (the true thing). The Hebrews saw things in the same light, that is, physical pictures pointed to spiritual realities.

**Commented [Paul Wall15]:** John 1:1 (ESV)  
1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The other object in that box was Aaron's staff. When the tribal leaders had argued about God's choice of Aaron as the High Priest, God had them put their tribal staff before the veil. (Numbers 17:2-4) Each staff would be very unique with the clan name carved into it. The next morning, Aaron's staff (Numbers 17:8b (ESV)) *had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.*

**Commented [Paul Wall16]:** Numbers 17:2-4 (ESV)  
2 "Speak to the people of Israel, and get from them staffs, one for each fathers' house, from all their chiefs according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs. Write each man's name on his staff, 3 and write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. For there shall be one staff for the head of each fathers' house. 4 Then you shall deposit them in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you.

This was the proof that God had selected Aaron's tribe, the tribe of Levi, to be the priests. A staff that was dead and dry for generations had come to life and was fruitful. The author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus has become our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14) after another order, not the passing order of Aaron, but an eternal priesthood, that of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 5:5-6) **And what was the proof of God's choice for our Great High Priest but life out of death.** Jesus rose after three days in the grave and that verified God's acceptance of His sacrifice. (Acts 17:31)

**Commented [Paul Wall17]:** Hebrews 4:14 (ESV)  
14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

In fact, the author of Hebrews goes on to say that Jesus entered the Holy of Holies in heaven and sprinkled His own blood there on the atonement cover on our behalf. (Hebrews 9:11-12) **His blood came between the presence of God over that atonement cover and the Law that condemns us underneath it.** And you better say, "Thank you Jesus!" that it did.

**Commented [Paul Wall18]:** Hebrews 5:5-6 (ESV) 5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; 6 as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

**Commented [Paul Wall19]:** Acts 17:31 (ESV)  
31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

The next item as we move out from the Ark is the veil. It was a four-inch thick curtain of red, blue and purple linen. It was so heavy that 100 Levites were assigned to carry it when the tabernacle moved. Josephus, the historian, had written that horses couldn't pull it apart.

**Commented [Paul Wall20]:** Hebrews 9:11-12 (ESV) 11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) 12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Again we turn to the author of Hebrews to find out that the veil represented Jesus' body. (Hebrews 10:19-20) Like the veil, Jesus body was torn that we might enter into the very presence of God. I suppose that when Moses went into the tabernacle to ask God questions about how to resolve issues that he knelt in front of that curtain. The voice of God thundered from the Shekina and instructed Moses. The voice came through the veil. The voice came to us through Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 1:2)

**Commented [Paul Wall21]:** Hebrews 10:19-20 (ESV)  
19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

When Jesus died, the veil was torn from top to bottom. (Mark 15:38) The temple Herod remodeled had a 60-foot high veil. Through the forgiveness offered to us in the blood of Christ Jesus, we can come boldly to the throne of grace. (Hebrews 4:16)

**Commented [Paul Wall22]:** Hebrews 1:2 (ESV)  
2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

**Commented [Paul Wall23]:** Mark 15:38 (ESV)  
38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

It is interesting that the New Testament changes the name of the Ark of the Covenant to call it a Throne of Grace. Once the work of atonement was accomplished, there no longer needed to be the separation between a holy God and man, for Jesus made a way for man to be holy. Clothed in Christ Jesus we can boldly go in without fear and ask for help in time of need. (Romans13:14)

**Commented [Paul Wall24]:** Hebrews 4:16 (ESV)  
16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The next item of furniture was in the Holy Place. It is the Altar of Incense. The incense was always to be kept burning as a picture of prayers always going up to God. Hebrews 7:25 (ESV) *25... he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.* Here is a wonderful thought. The author was telling us that the priests had a limited life span and so priest after priest served. But Jesus lives forever to intercede for us. I see this as Jesus always before the Throne of Grace bearing the marks that purchased my freedom. The penalty has been paid. My sins are no longer on the record. (Psalm 103:12) Is there a more comforting thought? Jesus is there right now interceding for you and for me.

**Commented [Paul Wall25]:** Romans 13:14 (ESV)  
14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Then we move to the lampstand that lit the tabernacle. It was made of pure gold, symbolizing complete holiness (Exodus 28:36), and was the only light in the tabernacle. Jesus answers this one for us. John 8:12 (ESV) *12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* John 12:46 (ESV) *46 I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.* Just as we saw with the true manna, so Jesus is called the true light by John the Beloved, one of Jesus' closest disciples. (John 1:9) That means the light in the tabernacle was only a shadow that pointed to the reality of Jesus.

**Commented [Paul Wall26]:** Psalm 103:12 (ESV)  
12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

**Commented [Paul Wall27]:** Exodus 28:36 (ESV)  
36 "You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, 'Holy to the LORD.'

**Commented [Paul Wall28]:** John 1:9 (ESV)  
9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

It has been suggested that each flame represents an attribute of God, holiness, justice, righteousness, loving kindness, faithfulness, mercy, and grace. Jesus' life was ablaze with those attributes. They were never seen so clearly as in His life. (Colossians 1:19)

**Commented [Paul Wall29]:** Colossians 1:19 (ESV)  
19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

Then there is the Table of Showbread. It tells us that God is the great provider. The Apostle Paul helps us with this one when He tells us that all our need is supplied in Jesus. (Philippians 4:19) He is the loaf for the spiritual hunger of every tribe. **By saying He is the true food and drink, Jesus was saying that He is the reality behind the loaves and drink offerings.** (John 6:54-55) He tells us in John 6 that we must eat and drink of Him. We must take Him in to meet our spiritual need. John 6:35 (ESV) <sup>35</sup> *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*

**Commented [Paul Wall30]:** Philippians 4:19 (ESV)  
19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

**Commented [Paul Wall31]:** John 6:54-55 (ESV)  
54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.  
55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.

Stepping out of the tabernacle and into the courtyard we see everything of bronze where judgment is meted out. If justice were not served, God would not be holy. The largest of all the furniture in the tabernacle was the brazen altar. The blood of the lambs was sprinkled there. Their lives were consumed here as substitutes. But God was never pleased with the blood of bulls and goats. (Psalm 40:6) They just told us of the seriousness of sin.

**Commented [Paul Wall32]:** Psalm 40:6 (ESV)  
6 Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

When you realize that all pain and suffering in our world is the result of sin, if you've traveled the third world and seen any of it, or visited a prison or hospital, you've barely begun to see the high cost of sin. Consider also the wonderful fellowship with God that was lost when Adam sinned! What can cover it? **What is justice for all that pain?** Is a financial payment enough? Is a life of service enough? Nothing short of life would be equitable justice, and our life is in our blood. (Leviticus 17:11) God wanted us to understand the severity of sin and the real price necessary to atone for it.

**Commented [Paul Wall33]:** Leviticus 17:11 (ESV)  
11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

**Commented [Paul Wall34]:** John 1:29 (ESV)  
29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John the Baptist declared, *"Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world."* (John 1:29) Jesus' blood was poured out like that of all the lambs that pointed to Him. He was both the scapegoat that was taken outside the camp bearing our sin (Hebrew 13:12-13), and the sacrificial one, whose blood was sprinkled on the atonement cover. It took two goats to represent what our Savior would do for us.

**Commented [Paul Wall35]:** Hebrews 13:12-13 (ESV)  
12 So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.  
13 Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.

**Commented [Paul Wall36]:** Titus 3:5 (ESV)  
5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

Then we come to the bronze basin, or laver. After we accept the work of Jesus' atonement, He washes us with the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5) We can look into that reflection and see a new creation. (2Corinthians 5:17) That's when we realize Jesus has made us priests unto God. (1Peter 2:5) We enter into the Holy Place and find Him to be a light in our darkness. (John 3:21) He illumines our path. We eat His word and drink of His Spirit. We rely on His intercession for us and go through the torn veil and fellowship with God. What the high priest could only do once a year, we have the privilege of doing many times every day. Do we grasp the magnitude of that blessing? (Romans 11:33) We begin to see Him in everything, His hand in the

**Commented [Paul Wall37]:** 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)  
17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**Commented [Paul Wall38]:** 1 Peter 2:5 (ESV)  
5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

**Commented [Paul Wall39]:** John 3:21 (ESV)  
21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God."

**Commented [Paul Wall40]:** Romans 11:33 (ESV)  
33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

orchestration of our days. (Psalm 139:16) We offer up sacrifices of praise and live to serve Him. (Romans 12:1)

Yes, when God gave the details of the tabernacle to Moses, He had His Son in mind. That's because the heart of God has always been to resolve the distance between His holy being and our sinful nature. There was only one way. Jesus. No one comes through the gates into the presence of the Father in the Holy of Holies but through Him. (John 14:6)

#### Questions

- 1 Why should we look for Jesus in the Tabernacle?
- 2 Why should we see Old Testament texts as Messianic?
- 3 Why did interpreters pull back from seeing symbolism?
- 4 How can we see Jesus in the Ark? It's contents?
- 5 What are the implications of a "true" object in Greek and Hebrew?
- 6 Of which objects is Jesus called the true reality?
- 7 How is Jesus pictured in the Holy Place?
- 8 What is the Ark called in the New Testament? Why?
- 9 How is Jesus the veil?

**Commented [Paul Wall41]:** Psalm 139:16 (ESV)  
16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.

**Commented [Paul Wall42]:** Romans 12:1 (ESV)  
1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

**Commented [Paul Wall43]:** John 14:6 (ESV)  
6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.