

## **Tabernacle in John 03-02-03**

John 20:19-23

Let's open our Bibles to John 20:19-22 (NIV) *19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*

I'm going to take an excursion that will make you wonder if I forgot the text for this message. Though I wander far from this text, I will not be wandering far from the subject. That subject is receiving the breath of the Spirit. I must give credit to Sidlow Baxter for much of this message today. I usually do not preach another pastor's material unless it seems to be heaven sent to our need at a particular time. In our Wednesday night Bible study we are going through the Gospel of John. This sermon is such an insightful addition to that study and so timely for our need that I decided to make an exception.

In the book of Exodus, we read that when Moses was on Mount Sinai communing with God, God gave him the design for a tent of worship. That worship center was called the Tabernacle. It had three areas. There was an outer court in which every Jew was allowed to worship. Then there was a covered inner court called the Holy Place. The priests ministered to the Lord there. The innermost court was the Holy of Holies. It was there that God dwelt among His people. A priest entered only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Throughout these three courts of the Tabernacle were pieces of furniture. Do you know how many pieces there were and the names of each? There were seven altogether. The first piece you would see when you entered that outer court, straight ahead of the entrance was the Brazen Altar. It was a cube of brass with a grate inside upon which the sacrifices were burned. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the sides of the altar. Behind it was article number 2. It was a brass washbasin called the Brazen Laver of Cleansing. The priests used it to ritually cleanse themselves.

As you entered the inner court on the right, that is the North side, was the third piece of furniture, the Table of Showbread. Upon this table were drink offerings and the Bread of the Presence. Opposite the table, on the south side of the room was the Golden Candelabrum. It had seven arms that held oil wicks, giving the light of seven flames to illuminate the Holy Place. It was made of pure gold. Article number 5 is just in front of the curtain that closes off the Holy of Holies. It was a gold altar for incense. Upon the altar were golden bowls that held the incense that filled the Holy Place with a sweet fragrance.

Behind the great curtain in the center of the room was article number 6, the Ark of the Covenant. This box was overlaid with gold inside and out. Inside, it contained the tablets that Moses received, the covenant between God and man. The last article was the covering of the box. It was also covered with gold. On each side was a golden cherub with wings that covered the Ark, meeting in the middle. The lid of that ark was called 'The Mercy Seat'.

To explain why that last piece is called The Mercy Seat, I must describe one other thing in the Holy of Holies. It is not a piece of furniture. The Israelites called it The Shekinah Glory. It was a ball of light like fire that hovered over the lid of the Ark, under the cherubim wings. Shekinah means, 'God is in it'. God cannot be confined to a location and yet this ball of light did more than represent God, it was a manifestation of His immanent presence. That place should have been the seat of judgment, but because the priest sprinkled the blood of sacrifice, that foreshadowed the blood of Jesus, it was the Mercy Seat. It is there, because of the blood shed for us, because of the great mercy of God, that man met with God.

Each of these articles of furniture was a symbol and a type. A symbol was a physical thing that represented a spiritual thing, material that represented the immaterial. A type is a symbol with a great Gospel truth, which at that time was yet to be revealed. Now, let's look at the symbol and type that each piece of furniture represents.

The Brazen Altar represents atonement through the blood. It is the place of reconciliation with God. The just penalty for sin is death. The blood represents the life paid for the sin. The Laver of Cleansing was symbolic of inner spiritual cleansing. The priests knew this. As they washed their hands, they thought of the cleansing of the mind and heart. The Table of Showbread, with its drink offerings and the bread of the Presence is symbolic of spiritual sustenance on our journey through life. The Golden Candelabrum is symbolic of heavenly light for our earthly walk. The Altar of Incense is symbolic of prayer, acceptable because of the blood on the altar. Then, inside the Holy of Holies, the Ark of the Covenant is symbolic of our covenant relationship between man and God. Finally, the Mercy Seat is symbolic of access to God by reason of the blood of the atonement sprinkled upon it. Did I go too fast?

Now we will go a bit deeper and see the type in each. The Brazen Altar speaks of the greatest sacrifice, the one that paid for all our sins, that of the Lamb of God. The Brazen Laver is inward renewal by the Holy Spirit. It is a type of the transformed heart and mind. The Table of Showbread points to Jesus as drink and food for our spirit. The Golden Candelabrum points to Jesus as the light of the world. The Golden Altar of Incense is a type of the prayers of the redeemed, as they pray in the name of Jesus, prayers authorized and directed by the Holy Spirit. The Ark of the Covenant is a type of the New Covenant in Jesus' blood. The Mercy Seat is pointing to our access to God by a new and living way, our eternal Savior.

Don't forget, there was something else there, more than furniture. It was symbol and type and yet much more! The Shekinah! It is a type of the Holy Spirit.

Remember, at Pentecost the ball of flaming tongues of fire came into the room? (Acts 2:1-4) It had been missing for centuries, but now the Shekinah had returned. Something that never happened before happened that day at Pentecost. The Shekinah separated into 120 little flames and came to rest on each person there. The presence of God entered man. The new tabernacle was made of living stones. It was just as Jesus had promised, *16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.* (John 14:16-18 NIV) The Apostle Paul wrote that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, which you have of God (1 Corinthians 6:19). The word Paul used for temple, 'naos', is that of the inner sanctuary where the Shekinah dwelt. The word 'have' is 'sched' (to be bound to) which reminds us of shekinah (indwelt).

**Commented [notes1]:** 1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.  
2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.  
3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.  
4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 1 Cor 6:19 (NIV)

We must remember that before our opening text in the end of John's Gospel is the whole book of John. It is the most amazing document ever written. Every time you read it you see more and more. I don't know if John realized it, but his Gospel is arranged like the tabernacle furniture. It would make perfect sense, for the Tabernacle plan was given to Moses, modeled after the real one in heaven. (Hebrews 8:5) The life of Jesus would naturally follow the heavenly pattern too, for He came down from heaven. It is His pattern. His life among us was described by John as a tabernacle. (John 1:14)

**Commented [notes3]:** 5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. 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 you on the mountain." Heb. 8:5 (NIV)

In John chapter one, you have a prologue of the eternal existence of Christ, but then you begin the story with verse 19. After 400 years without a prophetic voice, the final prophet of God shouts in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord. Fill every valley; level every mountain. Make a straight path for the coming Kingdom of Heaven." The crowds came out into the wilderness, drawn by their hunger to hear a fresh word from God. Then suddenly, he stops and points. "Look there, there He is, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world!" Where are we in the tabernacle? We have walked up to the Brazen Altar. We are speaking of the sacrificial lamb.

**Commented [notes4]:** 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. John 1:14 (YLT)

We continue in that famous chapter, John 3, in which Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and the spirit. Marvel not that I say to you, you must be born from above. We have come to the Laver of Cleansing. There has to be a heart change, a cleansed heart. In John 4-6 we enter into the Holy Place. Jesus sits at Jacob's well. He asks for water from the Samaritan woman. She is shocked that a person of a culture that so despised her culture would even talk with her. Then He tells her that He could give her living water, which if a person drinks will become a well of water springing up into eternal life. Moving on to chapter 6 you have Jesus telling the crowds that He is the Living Bread that came down from heaven. Yes, we are at the Table of Showbread with its drink offerings and bread of the Presence. Are you following?

Then in chapters 8 and 9 we see the seven stick Golden Candelabrum. "I am the light of the world. He that follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life!" Could anyone who ever lived dare make such a statement? Would

Mohamed or Gautama Buddha dare to have said such a thing? In those chapters He proves it by touching the eyes of the blind and restoring their sight. Jesus is the sevenfold light of the world!

In chapters 14 through 16 Jesus instructs the disciples to ask anything in His name and promises He will do what they ask. Seven times in these chapters we have specific instructions for prayer in the name of Jesus. This is the Altar of Incense. Now we enter into the Holy of Holies. At that last meal He tells His disciples, "This is the blood of the New Covenant." (1 Corinthians 11:25) We see the Ark of the Covenant in its type. Finally we come to the new Mercy Seat, the cross, sprinkled with His blood. These take place in John 19. It is there that we find mercy. The veil into the earthly Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom. You need no mediator but Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5) That was in our message last week. We don't need a prophet, or a priest, indeed, we have become a nation of priests. We can access God through Christ Jesus.

**Commented [notes5]:** 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 1 Cor. 11:25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. 2:5 (NIV)

What about the Shekinah? We have come back to our text in John 20. When I was in Jerusalem, we went to an ancient building that was very much like the upper-room of Jesus' day. When you're there you can imagine it a bit more vividly. I can hear the 10 disciples as they express their concerns. "Do you think the women were right when they said the body was gone? The Romans will think we stole it and come looking for us. But who did take it and why? Can we make it out of town without being caught?"

Then suddenly, there is another presence in the middle of the room. He looks like Jesus. Terrified they shrink back to the walls. Then they hear a voice, a sweet voice they have missed so much say, "Peace be unto you." He shows them His nail-scarred hands. He opens His cloak and shows them the hole in His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw that it was the LORD. Now He says again, "Peace be unto you", not to ease their fears but to control their ecstasy. "Touch me and see, a Spirit does not have flesh and bone as you see I have. As the Father has sent me, so send I you." He knew that they were thinking that they could not do it without Him. They had been scared and helpless since His crucifixion. How could they go out and live like He did? Then He breathed on them. Not one long breath but to each one. Haaaaaa, and then to the next, haaaaaa, and the next till each one was breathed upon. "Receive the holy breath." What did He mean? His breath had not entered into them. It was symbolic of what was going to happen in fifty days, perhaps in that very room.

Did they not yet have the Holy Spirit? Were they not already believers? Had they not said they believed He was the Son of God? Had they not been empowered to heal and cast out demons? Had Jesus not pronounced them clean a few days earlier? (John 15:3) They had been to Calvary, but they needed to go on to Pentecost. It is true of many believers.

**Commented [notes7]:** 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. John 15:3 (KJV)

You see, Calvary is what has been done for us. Pentecost is what is done in us. Calvary is the love of God to us but Pentecost is the love of God through us to others. Calvary speaks of redemption. Pentecost speaks of inward renewal.

Calvary speaks of the blood that cleanses and Pentecost of the fire that purifies. Calvary cleanses from guilt while Pentecost purges us of inbred sin. Calvary is the exodus from Egypt while Pentecost is entering the Promised Land. Calvary is the new access to God. Pentecost is the witnessing power in the earth. We might say that Calvary is the Brazen Altar, but Pentecost is the Laver of Cleansing. All true believers have been to Calvary but have you experienced the breath of the Spirit? It is one thing to be born of the Spirit and another to be filled with the Spirit. Every believer has the Holy Spirit indwelling him or her, but Pentecost is about the Holy Spirit having all of you. Don't get hung up on doctrines. Yes, you have all of Jesus at your new birth, but what I'm asking is this, does He have all of you? Is He really LORD? Is He your life, your strength, and your joy? (Acts 4; 8; 19)

Is your spiritual life a high point followed by long low points, in continually repeating cycles? Then you need that deeper work of the Spirit to break the patterns of the flesh. It is not about a volcano of emotion or a continual emotional high. Our fragile systems couldn't take that. Emotion is the shallow, changeable part of our nature. The working of the Spirit is much deeper and more abiding. In our psyche the intellect is king and the will is the prime minister. That is what the Spirit gets a hold of. Do you think the Spirit would do His deepest work in the shallowest part of our being? He transforms our very personality, the way we think, an awareness of His presence, and gives us a deep down unquenchable joy. It affects our emotions, but it is a much deeper work than just emotions.

Those disciples had to wait 50 days for the promise, but you don't have to wait. The only waiting is for your will to surrender every area to His control. **Luke 11:13** tells us that the Father longs to give us the Holy Spirit if we will just ask. We must recognize our deep need for His life in every area of our life. We don't really ask without that recognition of how great our need is. We find out we really can do nothing. Our habitual sin, our constant surrender to the flesh, drives us to a deep heart cry that God is waiting for. He doesn't give such a precious gift to those who don't value Him or see their desperate need for Him.

**Commented [notes8]:** 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"  
Luke 11:13 (NIV)

In every gathering of Christians there are some that have been to Calvary, but have not gone on to Pentecost. It is so easy to have religion and yet not have an intimate, personal relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Do you spend time letting Him speak to your heart as your dearest friend? Do you have the fruits of the Spirit's presence, love, joy, peace, patience...? If not, you need to ask for what you recognize you do not have. He longs to fill you if you will, in recognition of your great need, surrender to Him. Then the glory of God will live in you. The tabernacle of God will be with men. Then you will have the power to be a witness of Him. Receive the Holy Breath.