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Exodus Tabernacle Meaning (Part 2)



Exodus - Steve Gregg

The Tabernacle in Exodus had many different elements that held spiritual significance, such as the walls made of boards, the showbread, and the altar of incense. These items were symbolic of Christ's body and represented aspects of his ministry and relationship with his followers. The Tabernacle also served as a representation of the self-church and individual believers in whom God dwells. John's Gospel references the Tabernacle in emphasizing the symbolic nature of Jesus' ministry. Ultimately, the Tabernacle was a symbol of God dwelling among His people.

Transcript

Okay, we're going to look at the Tabernacle a little more now. We talked about how the courtyard was where a person would come and offer an animal sacrifice to God. The priest then would wash himself in the laver, in the basin of cleansing.

And if his duties so required, and some priests did and some priests did not, he would also go into the Tabernacle. Now, the Tabernacle is the building itself, the sanctuary. We saw that this sanctuary was 15 feet tall, constructed of a large number of boards, about 50 boards actually, that were standing on end.

The boards were 15 feet tall, or long, I should say, each. And they were 27 inches wide, and they were upright on silver sockets, and bound together into like a solid wall by cross beams, or poles really, that went through hooks and loops to keep the boards from teetering, and they would stand together. Now, inside this building, if you were inside it, you would have to first of all go through the door of the building, which was a hanging curtain.

And the door was like the gate of the courtyard, it was blue and purple and red in color. And you'd go inside there, and on your right and your left would be walls of solid gold, or they'd look like solid gold, they were really wooden walls that were overlaid with gold, they'd be pure gold walls. If you go into a house, you know, where they've got one wall maybe is all mirrors, you can see how much light it brings, and how much bigger the space looks, you know, when someone has a wall that's a mirror.

That's what it'd be like to have mirrors on both sides. You ever been to one of those places where there's mirrors on both sides, and it looks like an endless, you know, series of replicas of the room? It'd be something like that, I would think. And so having gone in, you'd have the door behind you and have the veil to the Holy of Holies in front of you, and the gold walls on either side, and above you, you'd see that portion of the linen covering that would be visible, you know, between the tops of the walls.

You would not be able to see this, but above that would be another curtain of goat's hair, and then above that a tarp, a leather tarp of ram's skin dyed red, and above that another tarp of some kind of sea mammal skin. You would not be able to see that from inside, but what you would probably notice inside would be the furniture inside, and on your right would be this table of showbread, and it is described in chapter 25 of Exodus, verses 23 through 30. It says, You shall also make a table of acacia wood.

Two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. Now, a cubit being 18 inches, the length of this table is three feet, two cubits. Its depth is one cubit, or 18 inches, and its height is 27 inches, just two feet, three inches high.

It's not very tall, and it has on it 12 loaves of bread. But the table is made out of acacia wood, and you shall overlay it with pure gold and make a molding of gold all around. That molding of gold probably refers to sort of an ornamental ridge, as you can see in this particular picture of it, that molding.

It says, And you shall make it for four rings of gold, make for it four rings of gold, put the rings on the four corners that are on the four legs, and the rings should be close to the frame as holders for the poles to bear the table. And you shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold that the table may be carried with them. And you shall make its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring.

You shall make them of pure gold, and you shall set the showbread on the table before me always. There'll be more to be said about the showbread later on, but you'll notice that this table had things, pitchers and bowls and dishes and so forth associated, and they were pure gold, whereas similar things, shovels and spoons and forks and so forth in the brazen altar were made of brass. So inside the sanctuary, all the furniture looks gold.

It's made of wood, most of it, but it's overlaid with gold. And so we also have the table described in chapter 37, essentially the same information in verses 10 through 16. I'm looking over to see if there's anything really new there.

I think not. It's just the same information. It just describes them making it and gives the same dimensions and all that.

OK, and then so as you come into the tarot, you've got this table on your right that's got

these 12 loaves of bread that represents the 12 tribes of Israel. On the left, you would see this candelabra, this menorah, which had seven branches. Now, the height of this is not given.

We don't know its actual size. We know that it was made from a talent of gold, which is 60 pounds of gold. So I don't know exactly how tall a golden lampstand like this would be from 60 pounds of gold.

Traditionally, it is thought to have been four foot six inches tall. I'm not sure where that was gotten, but that's what they think. Four foot six inches tall.

As you can see, it's primarily one post that goes from the floor to the middle lamp. And then there are three branches coming out from either side and curved up so that they also have lamps, oil lamps, at the top of each one. These lamps, of course, have to be tended.

They had to have the oil replaced. They had to have the wicks trimmed. This was kind of a high maintenance item.

And the table of showbread had to have the bread replaced only once a week, though. So there was some work involved in this, but not an awful lot. But the golden lampstand is described in Exodus chapter 25, verses 31 through 40, where it says, You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold.

The lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs and flowers shall be of one piece. And six branches shall come out of its sides.

Three branches of the lampstand out of one side. Three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. Three bowls shall be made like almond blossoms on one branch with an ornamental knob and a flower.

And three bowls made like almond blossoms on the other branch with an ornamental knob and a flower. And so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand. I used to teach from the King James, and it always says candlestick.

So I kind of read in my mind candlestick. But it's not a candle. It's a lamp.

On the lampstand itself, four bowls shall be made like almond blossoms, each with its ornamental knob and flower. And there should be a knob under the first two branches of the same, a knob under the second two branches of the same, and a knob under the third two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. Their knobs and their branches should be of one piece.

All of it should be one hammered piece of pure gold. You shall make seven lamps for it.

And they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it.

And its wick trimmers and their trays shall be of pure gold. It shall be made of a talent of pure gold with all these utensils. And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

Once again, the emphasis on that. Now, I don't see on that picture where the bowls are. Of course, that's not a very clear picture.

But the bowls would be for the reservoirs of oil that would be burned in the lamps on the top. And they were somehow attached there to each of the branches of the candle of the lampstand. Excuse me.

The description of the lampstand is given again in a shorter version in Chapter 37. Once it is made. Chapter 37, verses 17 through 24.

OK, we won't read that again because it's the same information. But just so you see, that's where you find it described that they actually made it. In addition to that, we have Chapter 27, a couple of verses about how the lampstand was to be maintained by the priest.

In Chapter 27, verses 20 and 21, it says, and you should command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light to cause the lamp to burn continually. In the tabernacle of meeting outside the veil, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his son shall tend it from evening till morning before the Lord. It shall be a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.

Now, when it says they shall tend it from evening to morning. Some commentators have thought that the lamp only burned at night and that they didn't have it burning in the daytime and that there would be a little bit of natural light coming in during the daytime through the through the cloth doorway. And that'd be the only light they'd have.

But I don't think so. I think what he's saying is the lamp is to keep burning continually. It does say that in verse 20 and the tending of it.

I think it emphasizes they had to from evening to morning and make sure it kept burning. That is, they had to burn all the time, but they especially to make sure it didn't burn out at night. So from evening to morning, they had to pay special attention because it was, you know, mostly sleeping.

The oil could run out if they didn't give it proper attendance. Now, one other thing I want to mention that will talk the meaning of these things in that same room called the Holy Place. There was the altar of incense.

Now, this was not an altar where animals were sacrificed, but where only incense was

burned. It's a different kind of an altar. And we have the description of it in chapter 30, verses one through 10.

And it says, you shall make an altar to burn incense on. You shall make it of acacia wood. A cubit shall be its length and a cubit its width, and it shall be square and two cubits shall be its height.

Its horns shall be of one piece with it. Now, it had horns. No, there was never any need to tie an animal to it.

The horns in this picture are depicted as having blood on them because that was part of the ritual. They would take the blood of the sacrifice outside and bring the blood in and touch the horns of the incense altar with it. But the horns were mainly for looks on this.

They were not necessarily - nothing had to be tied to these horns. But it probably had horns so that it would resemble the altar outside. It would have, you know, sort of the consistency of design.

And it says, you shall overlay its top. Well, by the way, the size, in case you didn't figure it out, it's three feet tall and a foot and a half square on the top. You shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold.

And you shall make for it a molding of gold all around, sort of like with the table of showbread. You've got that in the picture there, too. Two gold rings shall you make for it under the molding on both sides.

You shall place them on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And you shall put it before the veil that is before the Ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony where I will meet with you.

Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning. And when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it.

Now, here it looks like he's lighting the lamps as if they've gone out. And yet, probably what that means is that each lamp, each individual lamp on the lampstand, had to be put out while the wick was being trimmed and while it was being attended to. The other six would be burning, but one lamp at a time would have to be trimmed and so forth.

So that lamp, the fire would have to be put out on that lamp. But the lampstand was not extinguished. There were still six lamps burning.

And then he'd have to relight that. So when he would relight the lamp, it says at that time he would burn incense on the incense altar. Verse 9, you shall not offer strange

incense on it or a burnt offering or a meal offering, nor shall you pour a drink offering on it, only incense.

And Aaron shall make atonement for its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement. So he brings in that place on the day of atonement. He brings the blood from the sacraments outside in and puts it on the horns.

And I don't know if you can tell from this picture, but they've got they got those horns bloodied. Once a year, he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the Lord.

We have the description of the making of this altar then in chapter 37, verses 25 through 28. A rather brief description says he made the incense altar of acacia wood. Its length was a cubit, its width a cubit.

It was square and two cubits was its height. Its horns were of one piece with it. He overlaid it with pure gold.

Its top, its sides all around its horns. Also made for a molding of gold all around it. Made the two rings, made the two poles and so forth.

So, you know, he did it. He did what he was told to do. Now, with these three items, they are associated with the holy place.

I said that when a person enters into a holy place, it's like entering into the fellowship of the saints into the body of Christ. In fact, even the building itself has that suggestion, it seems to me, because the building is made of individual boards that are bound together into walls. Peter said that we're like living stones built into the walls of a temple.

But if you shift the image to a tabernacle instead of a temple, and it's not made of stones, it's made of boards. We are like individual boards. These boards stand upright like human beings do.

They even have two feet. As they are described in Exodus, they have two what they call tenons. A tenon is an extended part that goes into the metal sockets.

Some translations say pegs. Two pegs go into these holes on the sockets to hold them in place and to hold them with each other. But it's interesting that these are boards with two feet, as it were, standing upright like people.

And yet they're bound shoulder to shoulder with each other. And they have these these poles that run through that bind them into a single wall. There are individual boards.

They are one wall. They make one building. And so as Christians, we are individuals, but we are one body in Christ.

We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We're like stones built into like living stones built into a holy temple, Peter said in 1 Peter 2, 5. So this building, I think, represents the body of Christ. And when you come into the body of Christ, after you've been atoned for at the cross, after you've been baptized at the labor, you come into a new set of experiences.

Everything in there is gold, not bronze. You've passed into a realm of greater value, greater preciousness of everything. And there you find the bread, the light, and the incense altar.

And these things, no doubt, represent aspects of being in Christ's body. There you find spiritual sustenance as the bread sustains life. You are sustained spiritually fed.

Jesus said man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. In the body of Christ, or at least through the agency of the body of Christ, we receive the word of God. The Bible was written by members of the body of Christ.

It is through our contact with them, if only through their writings, that we receive the word of God. In Hebrews chapter 13 it says, remember your leaders, those who have led you, who have spoken unto you the word of God. It means the church leaders.

In the church we encounter the word of God. In the outer court you don't. In the outer court you just have the natural light of the sun.

But inside you have food, spiritual food, spiritual sustenance, which is represented by the table of showbread. You've got spiritual illumination there, which is represented by the lamp. And you have the place of incense.

Now what is incense? Incense in scripture, the offering of incense, is a picture of offering prayers to God. This is true both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. For example, in Psalm chapter 141, Psalm 141 verse 2, David says, Let my prayer be set before you as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Now David was not a priest. He couldn't go into the tabernacle and burn incense there. He was not a priest.

He didn't offer the sacrifices like the priest did. But he said, I'll do that which is the spiritual counterpart of that. My prayers will ascend to you as incense.

The lifting of my hands in worship will be like the offering of the evening sacrifice. And what he's saying is that just as incense has a pleasant smell, so our prayers are pleasant, like a pleasant aroma to God. Our worship, not just our prayers, but also our worship.

You know, in Acts chapter 10, when Cornelius had not yet heard the gospel, but he was

doing good deeds and worshiping the God of Israel, it says in verse 2 of Acts 10, verse 2, that he was a devout man, one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people and who prayed to God continually. And it says in verse 4, when an angel came to him, the angel said in the middle of that verse, your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. So his prayers had ascended to God as something God noticed, like the smoke of incense coming up from the altar of incense.

In Revelation, we have this connection made very directly. In Revelation chapter 5 and verse 8, it says, now when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. The golden bowls of incense are the prayers of the saints.

Now this is in heaven, but it corresponds to the incense burned in the tabernacle. So incense represents prayer. And in the body of Christ, in the fellowship of the saints, we have these things.

We are spiritually fed, we are spiritually illuminated, and it is a place of prayer. Now, interestingly, of course, you can pray alone if you want to. Even heathens offer prayers from time to time.

But the Bible would indicate that the prayers of the church, the corporate prayers of the church, are those things which are most effective and pleasing to God. Jesus said to the disciples, where two or more of you agree, and nobody is touching anything, it will be done, as if corporate prayer has a special potency and a special place in God's pleasure, when two agree, because it is the body of Christ, unified, presenting its requests to God, not just every individual praying about his own concerns. When Jesus taught us to pray, all of the first-person pronouns that we are supposed to pray are plural.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

It is us, us, us. It is not I, I, I. The requests we make to God are corporate requests made by the people of God. We read in Acts chapter 4 that when the disciples were threatened, we saw that they prayed.

We looked at their prayer the other day in another connection, when we were comparing it with Moses' intercession. But it says in Acts chapter 4, in verse 24, it says, So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said, Now, the prayer is given. Obviously, that prayer had to be uttered by one person on behalf of everyone.

I mean, unless each person was throwing in a line here and a line there, and the prayer was kind of a makeshift of different people adding their own concerns. But it seems to

flow as if one person offered this prayer. But they were all praying.

That one person who spoke must have been praying for them all, and they were all in one accord. They were all in agreement. The prayers of the saints are to be corporate.

And that doesn't mean we're not allowed to pray as individuals. Like I say, everybody prays as individuals, Christians, non-Christians. Everyone prays as individuals.

But when the church prays, when two or more of the saints gather together in agreement to pray, Jesus indicated there's something more to that, because we're two or more gathering. My name is there. I am in their midst, he said in Matthew chapter 18.

So, in the fellowship of the saints, we are fed, we receive light, we offer our corporate prayers, and this is part of our approach to God. Notice that the prayer is the nearest to the entrance of the Holy of Holies. The incense is right by the entrance.

The table, showbread, and the lampstand are there in the room. But as you go to the incense altar, you're actually approaching the Holy of Holies. Now, the average priest did not go into the Holy of Holies, even though he went daily in and offered incense.

But he got closer to the Holy of Holies when he was praying, or when he was offering incense, than when he was doing any other thing. And so, we come next to the Holy of Holies. The interesting thing that I found, although I've taught on this many times before, I just had never noticed before, is that the Holy of Holies does not receive its own special description.

In fact, anyone who is familiar with this knows that the Holy of Holies is 15 by 15 by 15 feet, cubed, but it doesn't say so. So, where do we get that idea? I'll tell you where we get the idea, but I was surprised to find it wasn't here, in Exodus. The only thing we have about the Holy of Holies in Exodus is in chapter 26, verses 33 and 34, when it's actually talking about the Ark of the Covenant being placed there, behind the veil.

You have the entire discussion of the Holy of Holies, really, is in verses 31 through 34. It says, You shall make a veil, woven of blue and purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen thread, and it shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood, overlaid with gold.

Their hooks shall be of gold upon the four sockets of silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the Ark of the Testimony in behind the veil.

The veil shall be a divider for you between the Holy Place and the Most Holy, which is the Holy of Holies, between the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies. And you shall put the mercy seat upon the Ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy Place. So we have reference to the Most Holy Place.

It is not called the Holy of Holies in Exodus, but that's what it came to be called, also, by the Jews. And all that's described is the veil as a divider between the two portions of the building. The building, we know, is 45 feet long and 15 by 15 feet the other dimensions.

But we are not told that the veil was hung 15 feet out from the back wall, which would make a cube-shaped dwelling. So where do we get the idea that it was that size? Well, actually, that comes a reasonable deduction from 1 Kings 6. Now, in 1 Kings, we have Solomon building the temple. And everything that he built in the temple was twice the size.

The temple was twice the dimensions of the tabernacle. And so when it talks of the Holy of Holies, we read in 1 Kings 6, verse 19 and 20, he prepared the inner sanctuary, that's the Holy of Holies, inside the temple to set the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord there. The inner sanctuary was 20 cubits long, that's 30 feet, 20 cubits wide and 20 cubits high.

He overlaid it with pure gold and overlaid the altar of cedar. So the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple was 30 feet by 30 feet by 30 feet cubed, whereas the overall length of the building was 90 feet long by 30 by 30. So we can see that in Solomon's temple the Holy of Holies was one third of the size of the building itself.

So that the sanctuary, the holy place was two thirds of the building and the last third was the Holy of Holies. Since Solomon's temple was double size of the tabernacle, and we read that Solomon's Holy of Holies was 20 by 20 by 20 cubits, then we have to reasonably assume that the Holy of Holies in this tabernacle was 10 by 10 by 10 cubits, that's 15 feet cubed. And so it was the place where the Ark was put.

Interestingly that the Holy of Holies, it receives no special focus, except that it's the place where the Ark is placed. The Ark and also the mercy seat on top of it. I said at the beginning there were seven pieces of furniture and someone asked me during the break, I see only six and that's because the Ark and the mercy seat I was counting as two.

They look like one because the Ark is a box and the mercy seat is its lid. However, they're made from different stuff. The box was made of wood overlaid with gold.

The lid is solid gold, so it's a separate item. It serves as a lid, it actually serves as a throne. It doesn't look like a throne, but it is where God was traditionally viewed as dwelling and meeting.

Actually, God said to Moses in chapter 25 and verse 22 of Exodus, He said there, meaning over the mercy seat, I will meet with you and I will speak with you above the mercy seat. So God meets with him there. The description of the Ark, which is in the Holy of Holies, it's not in chapter 25 and it's actually the first thing that Exodus describes when describing the bits and pieces of the tabernacle.

The Ark receives first attention. And we take it last because we're moving from outside

to the inner sanctum. But apparently because the Ark is the most important piece, it gets first attention, although the other things are given in a rather random order, it would seem.

But in verses 10 through 22 of chapter 25, it says, They shall make an ark, which means a box. And this is not the same word in the Hebrew as Noah's Ark. Noah's Ark also means a chest or a box, but they are different Hebrew words.

They shall make an ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. It would actually, therefore, be three feet, nine inches long. Three feet, nine inches.

It's like, what, 45 inches long or 1.1 meters. It'd be two foot, three inches or 27 inches high and deep. So a little more than two feet high and close to four feet long is the size of this Ark.

Pretty good size box. Now, the size of it was mainly, we would presume, determined by having to accommodate its contents. And its contents were originally simply the stone tablets.

I don't know how big the stone tablets were, but Frank and I were talking about this, I think yesterday, about how Moses was trekking up and down the mountain an awful lot. Mountain climbing takes a lot of energy, and he was an old man. And some of the time he was carrying stone tablets.

He carried stone tablets down once, then he carried new stone tablets up, and then he carried those stone tablets down again. And stones are heavy. You ever try to carry a big rock like those rocks are on that tree there? Carry those up a mountain? It's pretty amazing.

Now, we usually picture the stone tablets as, you know, real large because of the, I don't know, the artwork depicted. Imagine how heavy a slab of stone would be if it was even, let's say, two feet tall and an inch thick. It would be incredibly heavy.

Although it might have been thinner than an inch. I don't know. I don't know how thin God cut these.

But the thing is that the stone tablets could be somewhat large in their dimensions, though maybe very thin, judging from the size of the Ark. It was a good size box. But anyway, it says, You shall overlay it with pure gold.

In verse 11, Inside and out you shall overlay it. You shall make on it a molding of gold all around. And you should cast four rings on the four corners.

It's got four rings for the poles to go through, of course. You should make poles. Verse

13, A vacation would overlay them with gold.

Verse 14, You should put the poles into the rings on the sides of the Ark, that the Ark may be carried by them. The poles shall be in the rings of the Ark. They shall not be taken out of it.

Now, these other all the furniture was carried by poles, which were shoved through rings and carried on the shoulders of the priest. But it would appear that when the other items were in their place, they'd remove the poles and wouldn't put them back in until it's time to move things again. The archiver would keep the poles in there all the time.

That's probably significant. I don't know what the significance of it is, but it's ready to move all the time. They've got the poles they leave in there.

Verse 16, And you shall put into the Ark the testimony, I mean the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, which I will give you. And you shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. That's the slab on top.

It's not wood overlaid with gold, but it's pure gold. Two and a half cubits shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its width, which is, of course, the right size to fit over the top. And you shall make two cherubim of gold, of hammered work.

You shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end. You shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it, of one piece with the mercy seat.

And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another, and the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat. You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim, which are on the ark of the testimony, of all the things that I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

So that's what the ark was about. The ark was about a place to meet with God. The mercy seat was where he dwelt.

He dwelt between the cherubim, as the Psalms sometimes spoke of God. Now, cherubim, by the way, you can see from this picture, they look like angels. However, that's probably not what cherubim looked like.

Now, whenever you see artist's renditions of the ark, they always make the cherubim look kind of like angels. But cherubim are only described in detail for us in one place in the Scripture. And that's in, well, two places, both of them in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel chapter 1 and Ezekiel chapter 10. And I would turn your attention to Ezekiel 10, because that's where he tells us that this is a description of the cherubim. He describes them in chapter 1 without, I think, telling us that they are cherubim.

But now, in chapter 10 of Ezekiel, he does mention that they are cherubim. Verse 20. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Keban.

And I knew they were cherubim. Each one had four faces, and each had four wings. And the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.

And the likeness of their faces was the same as the faces which I had seen by the river Keban. Their appearance and their persons, they each went straight forward. Now, the description of their faces, actually the description of them, is in verse 12 and 13 of the same chapter.

Their whole body with their back, their hands, and their wings, and the wheels that the four had were full of eyes around. I'm sorry, this is describing the wheels. But it says in verse 14, each one had four faces.

The first face was the face of a cherub, which means an ox in this case because we know that from comparing chapter 1. The second face was the face of a man. The third face, the face of a lion. And the fourth face, the face of an eagle.

You've got a lion, a man, and an eagle. And in this case, the first face is said to be the face of a cherub. But that is standing in for the word ox.

Or a bull. Because they are described earlier in chapter 1. And it says in chapter 1 of Ezekiel 10, as for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man. Each had the face of a lion on the right side.

Each had the face of an ox on the left side. Each had the face of an eagle also. So these were the four faces that he saw.

But in chapter 10 he tells us that they were the cherubim. He says, I knew they were the cherubim. How did he know that? Maybe by revelation, or maybe by the fact that he was a priest.

Because Ezekiel was a priest. Maybe he had seen the cherubim, not on the Ark of the Covenant certainly, but the embroideries of cherubim that were on the veil and on the curtains in the tabernacle. Maybe he'd seen what they looked like there.

But they didn't look like this. They looked really weird. They had four wings, human arms and bodies.

Each one had four faces. The face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle. That's what the cherubim looked like according to Ezekiel.

Now, between the cherubim was this golden slab which was thought to be like the throne of God. He sat there. He dwelt there.

And therefore the Holy of Holies, where the Ark and the Mercy Seat were, was considered to be God's dwelling place. Now, the Holy of Holies, of course, represents immediate closeness to God, immediate contact with God, intimacy with God. So that it represents a different dimension of one's relationship with God than one would have in the outer court, or than one would have in the holy place even.

Because in the outer court, as I said, one depends on pretty much nature for one's light and enlightenment. In the holy place, one depends on other Christians to a large extent for sustenance, for light, for corporate prayer. But in the Holy of Holies, that's a place where one person goes alone.

Only one person at a time can go there. It's a place of personal communion with God. Now, we wouldn't see this as something that we participate in necessarily if it wasn't for the writer of Hebrews that tells us that we do.

The writer of Hebrews says we go boldly into the holy place, into the holiest place of all, which is the Holy of Holies in Hebrews 10, 19. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter into the holiest, meaning the Holy of Holies, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he consecrated for us through the veil, that is his flesh, we draw near to God into the Holy of Holies. Now, the writer of Hebrews tells us the Holy of Holies is a heavenly thing.

Remember, the tabernacle represented heavenly realities. God lives in heaven, not in a building, not in a square or cube-shaped room. God fills the universe and he dwells in heaven, but heaven is unseen by our eyes, just as the Holy of Holies was unseen by any eyes except for the priest who went there, the high priest.

And the main thing about the Holy of Holies was that it was entered one day a year. This was the most unused room, probably, in any worship center, because only once a year did anyone ever go into it. And that was the high priest.

And that was on the Day of Atonement. And he went in once a year to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat from the sacrifices that had been sacrificed out in the outer court. And those rituals that he did were there to cover for the sins of the nation for another year.

Now, this did not mean that the people were all saved. Not at all. This was a corporate thing.

The nation's sins would have brought the nation under God's temporal judgment, if not for some atonement being made. And so by the priest going once a year into the Holy of Holies and doing this thing, he was staving off the judgment of God on the nation of Israel as a whole. Now, individuals in Israel still had to be saved or lost on the basis of

their own private faith in God.

No one was saved just by being part of the nation of Israel and having the high priest do this for them. This was something that just spared the nation the judgment that would come upon it for its national sins each year. But Jesus, the writer of Hebrews tells us, has done something equivalent in that he has entered into the Holy of Holies, but it says, not the one made by hand.

The one we're looking at here in Exodus was made by human hands. Jesus has entered into a Holy of Holies that's not made with hands. The writer of Hebrews says, into heaven itself.

This is in Hebrews chapter 9, verse 11. Christ came as a high priest of good things to come with a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands. That is not of this creation.

And so Jesus has really gone into heaven and that is the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies represents that. And what the writer of Hebrews is saying is that the day of atonement foreshadows Christ, the high priest, having gone into heaven as the high priest would go behind the veil.

Jesus went through the clouds and he was veiled from the view of the disciples and still remains veiled from our sight. He's in the Holy of Holies now. There he's making intercession for us daily as the high priest did during the day of atonement.

And the writer of Hebrews says, we actually look for him to come out again. Of course, on the day of atonement when the high priest went in there, the Jews weren't sure that he'd come out alive because there was some question as to whether the priest would have done all the ritual correctly. And if he had not, he would drop dead in there.

There is a tradition, not stated in Scripture, but apparently in the Talmud, that the high priest, when he went in there, actually had a rope tied around his ankle so that the end of the rope was outside of the Holy of Holies. Now we know from the description of the priest's garments in Exodus that he had bells around the bottom of his robe. So when he was moving, you could hear the tinkling bells.

When he would go into the Holy of Holies, no one could see him. What if he dropped dead in there? No one could go in after him. They'd listen to hear if the bells were still tinkling.

If they were, he was still moving. If they stopped too long, he was dead. And they'd pull him out with the rope because they couldn't go in after him.

Now we don't read of any high priest ever being struck dead or being pulled out with a rope. In fact, the Bible doesn't even say that that rope was used. This apparently was a

tradition that Jesus later added.

Whether any priest ever did die in there, we don't know. But they certainly believed that it was a tenuous situation because so much ritual had to be done. The priest had to be quite worthy.

And if he went in there and came out alive, everyone was excited because they thought, oh good, God accepted it. We're atoned for for another year. And the writer of Hebrews essentially says, Jesus, he offered himself on the altar of the cross and he's gone into the Holy of Holies where he's making intercession for us, as it were, sprinkling his blood on the mercy seat there in heaven.

And we still wait for him to come out again. This whole age in which we live is the spiritual counterpart of the day of atonement. The period between the priest going in and coming out of the Holy of Holies.

Jesus is still in there. And so we have this application made in Hebrews 9, verse 23 to the end of that chapter. It says, therefore, it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

For Christ has not entered into holy places made with hands, which are the copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Like the high priest would appear in the Holy of Holies in the presence of God for the people. Not that he should offer himself often as the high priest enters the most holy place every year with blood of another.

Then he would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world. But now once at the end of the ages he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed for men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.

And to those who eagerly wait for him, he will appear a second time apart from sin for salvation. Now, we are eagerly waiting for him like the Jews eagerly waited for the high priest to emerge from the Holy of Holies. And he will appear a second time as the high priest would come out eventually and they'd see him again.

So the writer of Hebrews has this picture that Christ has gone into the Holy of Holies. But the writer of Hebrews also says that Christ is our forerunner. In chapter 6, we saw that our forerunner has entered in behind the veil, which means that we go there too, just behind him.

In fact, it says in Ephesians 2.6 that we are in Christ, seated in heavenly places. In a sense, we're positioned there too. We have the presence of God as our privilege as he appears there for us.

We go into the Holy of Holies to the writer of Hebrews says, and we approach God. There's this metaphor mixes. Jesus is the high priest.

He goes in there. But in a sense, we're all priests. And when Jesus died, you remember the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the holy place tore from top to bottom.

It says that in Matthew chapter 27. And although Matthew doesn't tell us the meaning of that, I think any Jewish reader would easily understand what that significance was because that thick veil was what obscured and kept the presence of God from the average person. But when the veil was torn, the suggestion is, of course, that the reason it was is that God was signifying that he was opening the way back in there.

That is in chapter 27 of Matthew, verse 51. Matthew 27, verse 50 says, Jesus, when he cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom and the earthquake and the rocks were split.

So this veil that separated men from the Holy of Holies was torn by a divine act symbolizing that the way into the holiest, which had not been made manifest while the first tabernacle ascending was now made manifest in a new and living way into heaven itself, into the Holy of Holies itself for us, so that we approach God in prayer. We can commune with God directly in addition to what benefits we receive in the body of Christ from one another. Now, one thing I want to bring out about this is how John, in his writings, seems to use the tabernacle.

For one thing, John was caught up into heaven in the book of Revelation and he saw things in heaven. It would appear that among the things he saw was the heavenly tabernacle, which provided the pattern that was shown to Moses. Remember, Moses was shown a pattern on the mountain and he was to make the earthly tabernacle according to the pattern.

That pattern was, as the writer of Hebrews says, of heavenly things. In the book of Revelation, there are a number of things John saw that seemed to correspond with the earthly tabernacle, although the tabernacle was not standing. The temple was in John's day, but the tabernacle was not.

But nonetheless, we see, for example, in chapter 1 of Revelation, he sees the seven lampstands. Now, seven lampstands is not the same thing as one lampstand with seven branches, but it is obvious that there were seven lamps, in this case, seven churches. The seven lampstands are the seven churches.

And I'm looking for it here in Revelation. Revelation 1.12, it says, Then I turned to see the voice of him that spoke with me, and having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. The seven branch lampstand was in the tabernacle.

It was solid gold. Also in Revelation 4.5, Revelation 4.5, it says, And from the throne

proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices, and there were seven lamps. This time it's not seven lampstands, but seven lamps, just like there were seven lamps on the menorah in the tabernacle.

Seven lamps of fire burning before the Lord, before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. Don't ask me what they are, because that's hard to answer. But the point is, he saw seven lamps in heaven as one would have seen in the tabernacle if they were in the tabernacle.

In the sixth chapter of Revelation, in verse 9, it says, When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God in the testimony they held. These were martyrs. Their souls were seen at the foot of the altar.

Now they were sacrificed. This was probably the altar of sacrifice, the bronze altar, where animals were sacrificed. These were Christians who had been sacrificed.

And in the ritual of animal sacrifice, we will see in Leviticus, when an animal is sacrificed on the bronze altar, its blood was poured out at the foot of the altar. And here we have not their blood, but their souls poured out at the foot of this altar in heaven. But you see that the altar corresponds, it's a heavenly correspondence, with that sacrifice altar on earth.

The altar of incense is also found in Revelation. In Revelation chapter 8, beginning verse 3, Revelation 8 verse 3 says, Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. That's the golden incense altar.

And he was given much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints on the golden altar, which was before the throne. Now see, the golden altar in the tabernacle was before the Ark of the Covenant. In heaven, it's before the throne of God, which corresponds to the Ark of the Covenant.

And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. So we see, you've got the lampstands, the seven lamps, more properly. You have the brazen altar, you've got the golden altar, from the tabernacle here.

In Revelation 11, 19, it says, Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the Ark of His Covenant was seen in His temple. So, he now sees the Ark of the Covenant in heaven. Now, I believe that Revelation is symbolic.

I don't necessarily feel like if we died and went to heaven right now, we'd see this furniture up there. I believe that the Revelation is given in symbolic visions, and in the symbolism of the visions, these parts of the tabernacle are mentioned, because they have their heavenly counterparts. But we do see John, in Revelation, you know, is somewhat mindful of the tabernacle and its rituals, and the things that he sees.

But he also may have been mindful of it in the Gospel of John, which he wrote afterwards. I believe John wrote the Gospel of John after he wrote the book of Revelation. And I believe, perhaps, by being caught up in the heaven and seeing these things, it may have caused him to reflect more on the tabernacle.

And he may have even constructed his gospel around the ideas of the tabernacle. Some people think so. And I think it's an interesting thing, because as you move through the Gospel of John, you find in chronological order the things that you would find moving into the tabernacle.

First of all, we saw in John 1.14, he said, the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us. So right at the very beginning, John is associating the tabernacle with Jesus. He begins his gospel.

In fact, the very first reference he makes to the incarnation is of the tabernacle in John 1.14. And the first thing that one comes to in the outer court of the tabernacle is what? It is the altar where the animal is sacrificed, where the atonement is made. And in John 1.29, and only here in the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. Right in the very first chapter of John, he makes reference to the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb that would be slain for the sins of the world.

As one first enters the tabernacle, he first encounters the blood sacrifice at the brazen altar. But then, there is also reference in John 3 to regeneration, which I said that the labor of cleansing seemingly represents the, what did Paul call it, the washing of regeneration. Paul called it that in Titus 3.5. And so here in John 3, regeneration and water are both mentioned.

Because he says in John 3.5 to Nicodemus, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

You need to be regenerated. Paul refers to that as the washing of regeneration. And so also, Jesus refers to regeneration here, being regenerated, being reborn.

He even mentions being born of water and of the Spirit. So we've got the labor of cleansing and regeneration mentioned. You've got the atonement in the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

You've got regeneration in being born of water and of the Spirit. And as you continue through, John, we come in chapter 6, verse 33. Jesus says, The bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

And in verse 35, Jesus said to him, I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger. He who believes in me shall never thirst.

This could be seen to correspond to the table of showbread. Once you've come into the holy place, there's the table of showbread. And the priest would eat that bread, representing spiritual sustenance.

Jesus said, I am the bread. And also, of course, we saw that in that room there is also the lamp. And Jesus, as you know, makes reference to himself in John 8, 12.

In these terms, Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. So like the table of showbread, the lamp, John seems to associate these with Jesus.

As for the golden altar of incense, which represents prayer, there's a whole section in John, chapters 14 through 16, or maybe even including 17, if you have included Jesus' prayer. But in John 14 through 16, there are repeated references to whatever you ask in my name, I will do it. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it.

Repeatedly, he says that to his disciples in the upper room. That they will be able to pray in his name and it will get done. John 16, verses 23 through 24 would be one example of that.

And then when it comes into the direct contact with God in the Holy of Holies, that could be seen as corresponding to Jesus breathing on them, saying, receive the Holy Spirit. In John 20, verse 22. Receive the indwelling of God in yourself.

Receive the Holy Spirit. Be in intimate communion and contact with God personally. So it seems like all the different stages of the access to God that we find in the tabernacle are alluded to in the Gospel of John in the same order.

As you move straight through the Gospel of John. Now, I don't know if that's intentional or if that's just a coincidence. If two things were in the correct order, it might be a coincidence.

Even if three things were, it would be even a stranger coincidence. For like six different things to be in the correct order does not seem like a coincidence. And since John saw the Ark and the altars and all that in Heaven in the Book of Revelation and later wrote his Gospel, he may have been influenced by his reflecting on the significance of the tabernacle so that he begins his Gospel saying that Jesus tabernacled with us and then goes through telling selectively things about Jesus that would seemingly correspond in some ways with the tabernacle approach.

So the worship of God at the tabernacle has many layers of meaning. Like I said, the tabernacle itself is in some ways a type of Christ who tabernacled with us, God dwelling among us. It's a type of our own selves as the church or even as individual Christians that God dwells in us.

And it is a picture of one's approach to God, of worshipping God, of knowing God, of God dwelling among us. And our approach to Him is of course through Christ, through the Atonement, through cleansing and spiritual sustenance and spiritual illumination and prayer and then direct confrontation, direct contact with God. In the Holy of Holies, which we are encouraged to cultivate, especially by the writer of Hebrews.

And so that would be our overview of the whole tabernacle thing. Now there's more in that we have the priest's garments and the priest's consecration that we have not dealt with and we will deal with that. That's in chapters 28 and 29 of Exodus.

And then we also will have the actual erecting of the tabernacle in chapter 40. We have not talked about the donations that were made to make this thing or the craftsmen. They might seem like an anti-climax but actually this is interesting stuff too in a way, in its own way.

So we're going to have a few more lectures, probably I'm guessing maybe two more lectures in Exodus as we finish up that material. And we'll end the book of course with the tabernacle standing and with the glory of God filling it at its dedication.