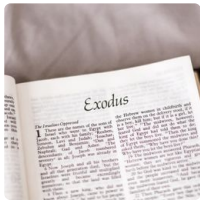


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Exodus Tabernacle Meaning (Part 1)



Exodus - Steve Gregg

This passage discusses the meaning and symbolism behind the Exodus Tabernacle, which was a portable worship space used by the Israelites during their time in the desert. The Tabernacle is described as having multiple components, including an outer courtyard, an inner sanctuary, and a veil separating the two. The various materials and colors used in the Tabernacle are explained to have symbolic significance, with Christian commentators often linking them to Christ's deity, humanity, and royalty. The ultimate significance of the Tabernacle is seen to be its representation of the progressive journey towards fellowship with God.

Transcript

So as we begin to look at the details of the Tabernacle, we need to start with the most outward things and move inward. The high point, of course, of the Tabernacle is the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant there, and the Mercy Seat, and the glory of God encountered there. But you get there from outside by going through certain stages.

And the very outermost part of the Tabernacle is what we could call the curtains of the Courtyard. The Courtyard was, now everything in the Tabernacle is measured in cubits. We're going to translate that into feet and inches.

Of course, lots of people would be more familiar with the metric than we are. I'm not as familiar with the metric, obviously, but none of us are very familiar with cubits. Cubits, it is generally believed, a cubit was about 18 inches.

It was an inexact measurement. In ancient times, people didn't have quite the same obsession with exact measurements as we do. Because we make high-tech things that have to be just the right shape and size and the pieces have to fit together perfectly.

In ancient times, they didn't have those kinds of concerns, and so gross measurements were often inexact. A cubit was considered to be the distance from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger. So, the forearm and the hand, the length of those combined was considered to be a cubit.

Now, not everyone's the same size, so obviously that would not be the same for everyone. But when that was standardized, it's generally believed it was standardized about 18 inches. So, a foot and a half is going to work as a conversion model for us.

And the courtyard is described in chapter 27 of Exodus, verses 9 through 19. And it is described as mainly a series of pillars and curtains, which, once they are hung in their proper places, provide a courtyard whose overall size is 100 cubits by 50 cubits, rectangular. The longer sides were on the north and the south.

The northern edge and the southern edge were the longer sides, and the western edge was short, of course, 50 cubits instead of 100. And the eastern one was where the opening would be toward the sunrise. The east would have the gate, which had what they called a screen covering it, which is just really a cloth curtain of some kind.

Now, 100 cubits by 50 cubits would be 150 feet long by 75 feet wide, if you could picture that. 150 feet would be as long as half of a football field, if you can have that idea in your mind. The 50 yard line from the touchdown line, so that distance would be how long the open courtyard was.

It is usually depicted with having white curtains, although it actually doesn't say what color the curtains would be, but they are described in verse 9 of Exodus 27. You shall also make the court of the tabernacle, for the south side there shall be hangings for the court woven of fine linen thread, 100 cubits long for one side, and its 20 pillars and their 20 sockets shall be of bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands shall be of silver. Likewise, along the length of the north side, there should be hangings 100 cubits long with its 20 pillars and their 20 sockets of bronze.

The sockets were the metal stands that these pillars would stand on, so they wouldn't tip over. And they were bronze, but the hooks and such that hook the curtains to the pillars were silver. Verse 12 and along the width of the court on the west side shall be hangings of 50 cubits with their 10 pillars and their 10 sockets.

The width of the court on the east side shall be 50 cubits, just like the west side. The hangings on one side of the gate shall be 15 cubits with their three pillars and their three sockets. And on the other side of the gate shall be hangings of 15 cubits, which is 22 and a half feet on each side of the gate.

Now, since the overall width of the eastern end is the same as the western end is 50 cubits and 15 cubits are on either side of the gate, that makes 30 of those 50 cubits are occupied by the sides that are to the sides of the gate. So the gate then is 20 cubits or 30 feet wide. It's a broad entrance into the courtyard.

And that is about 30 feet wide. It says in verse 16 for the gate of the court, there shall be a screen 20 cubits long, 30 feet woven of blue and purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen

thread made by a weaver. It shall have four pillars and four sockets.

All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver. Their hooks shall be silver and their sockets of bronze. The length of the court should be 100 cubits, the width 50 throughout and the height five cubits.

Now, five cubits is seven and a half feet. So the height of this curtain around was seven and a half feet. It'd be taller than any man would really be able to see over.

So it would obscure what's going on inside. Though it had this colorful screen in front that was blue and purple and scarlet. These three colors provide the dominant color motif in the tabernacle as well.

Both the screen, all three of the screen at the entrance of the courtyard and then the curtain that goes into the building and then the veil that separates the Holy Holy from the holy place. All of them have these three colors. With the exception of the veil inside, it has those colors, but also gold embroidered cherubim on it, images of cherubim.

And then we'll find that the building, when we get to it, has three or four coverings on it. And the one closest to the building, the one that you would actually be able to see from inside, is also blue and purple and scarlet. These three colors, Christians have tried to associate with Christ and maybe correctly so.

Blue, they say, is the color of heaven and therefore speaks of his deity. Red, they say, speaks of his humanity or his suffering. Purple, the other color, is of course a mixture of blue and red, blended.

So that they could speak of his deity and his humanity blended into the purple, which is the mixture of the blue and the red. And of course, purple is also a color of royalty. Christian commentators like to point out that these colors are significant with reference to Christ and perhaps that is intended to be seen that way.

So, verse 18 says, the length of the court should be 100 cubits, the width 50 throughout and the height five cubits woven of fine linen thread and its sockets of bronze. Now, this is not the only place, of course, that the court is described as being broad. We cannot have something described only once with reference to the Tabernacle, of course.

So we have chapter 38, verses 9 through 20, also gives this description. And essentially, it's, you know, we don't have to read it all because it's almost the same. It says he made the court on the south side.

Hangings of the court were woven of fine linen, 100 cubits long. There are 20 pillars for them on each side with 20 bronze sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands were of silver and so forth.

Now, since there are 20 pillars that had to span the distance of 100 cubits, that means that the curtains that stretch between these pillars were five cubits each in width. The pillars were five cubits apart from each other. I mean, the pillars were five cubits apart from each other.

And of course, they were basically for hanging curtains. So the curtains were five cubits wide, spanning the distance between the pillars, and they were five cubits tall. So the white, we'll say they were white since we don't know otherwise.

The linen curtains that made up the courtyard were five by five cubits, or seven and a half feet by seven and a half feet square. And so that's how it was made up. We don't really have to go into any more detail about that.

Now, the courtyard was open air, obviously. And therefore, it was open to natural light. It received its light from the sun.

When you go into the building, you'll find that there are no windows in the building. And therefore, when you go into the holy place, you needed artificial light. And that's what the lampstand provided.

Inside the holy place was the lampstand, or the menorah, as you can see in the picture there. That gave illumination inside the building in the holy place. But if you went through the veil into the Holy of Holies, there were not only no windows, but there was also no lamp.

It would have been pitch black with the exception of the light of God's glory. If God was present in the Holy of Holies, his kind of glory would illuminate it. Now, this difference between the courtyard and the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies, I know A.W. Tozer and perhaps others have made an interesting observation of this.

And that is that these correspond to three different levels of knowing God. And if we see the tabernacle as a picture of approaching God, getting into communion with God, into knowledge of God, then this is an interesting thing. Because in the courtyard, you are the furthest away from the Holy of Holies.

And you have the light of nature. If you go into the sanctuary, you have the light of the lampstand, and if you go into the Holy of Holies, you have the light of God's own presence, the Shekinah glory. And what A.W. Tozer brought out of this, and I think correctly, is that all people have the light of nature.

That is, they know from nature, from the things God has created. They know there's a God, but the knowledge of God that can be known from nature is limited. I mean, Paul said in Romans chapter one that the invisible attributes of God are clearly seen in the things that he has made so that people are without excuse.

But which invisible attributes, Paul says, well, his eternal power and his eternal deity. That is, one from just observing nature itself would receive knowledge, would receive light about God, as it were, illumination, but not specific information, just that there is a God and that he's very powerful. Paul says his eternal power and his deity are made known in the things that he's made so that, as the psalmist said in Psalm 19, verse one, the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows forth his handiwork and day and today utters knowledge and night unto night shows forth speech.

And so God is speaking, illuminating people through nature in the outer court, the person had the natural light. And that's when a person wishes to approach God, he begins there, he begins deducing from nature that there is a God, but he doesn't know very much about it now. Once he goes into the building, that's another story, because the building, if it represents the church in any sense.

It would seem to because the seven lampstands seem to have a connection to the churches, at least in Revelation, the seven lamps are the seven churches. And and therefore, when you come into the body of Christ, that's after you've been at the altar in the labor, that's after you've received atonement and cleansing and you come into the fellowship of the saints there, you receive light of a different sort in the holy place. The lamp gives light.

A person comes to know more about God in the fellowship of the saints, because the church is that and by that we mean the true body of Christ, the true fellowship of believers is is that agent of God's knowledge being transmitted to the world. The scriptures, for example, were written by the church. You learn more about God from the scriptures than you do from nature.

There is a much more detailed revelation of God, a different light. In the tabernacle than outside in the open air, but when one goes into the holy of holies there, the light of the lampstand is not providing any light there, there in the inner sanctum of the holy of holies, a person knows God other than by hearsay, knows God intimately, directly. And going in the holy of holies is the place of direct fellowship with God.

And of course, people might be at any one of those levels of their knowledge of God. They might even be not even in the courtyard. They may not even be believers in God at all.

But when one wishes to come to God, it says in Hebrews 11, six, they must first believe that God exists and that he's the reward of those who diligently seek him. When you go into the courtyard, you come to the place of approaching God at the very most distant point that men can approach him from illuminated only by the light of nature. But coming there to the altar of sacrifice and and so forth, then one enters into the fellowship of the tabernacle.

And then there is one can stand in the place where they're no longer dependent simply on deductions from the natural world and natural life, but can really become acquainted with the things of God through scripture, through the input of other members of the body of Christ. There's a different kind of knowledge of God that one reaches at that point, but even that is not the ultimate. Because the ultimate knowledge of God comes from knowing him personally, not just being in the church, but having direct communion with God.

And like you look over at First John, chapter one. I find it interesting that John, in his writings, makes more use of the tabernacle than most New Testament writers, although, of course, the right of Hebrews does so the most directly. The right of Hebrews speaks directly about the tabernacle more than anyone does.

But the ideas from the tabernacle come up in the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation frequently. And also here in First John, it would seem to me. Because John says in First John, chapter one, that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled concerning the word of life, meaning Jesus, the word of life has been seen, heard and handled by them.

He was manifested in the flesh. And John and his companions had had actual contact with him like this. He said this life was manifested and we have seen and bear witness and declare to you that eternal life, which was with the father and was manifested to us.

So Jesus was eternally with the father, but came to earth and was manifested in the days of the apostles. And they and they saw him for three that which we have seen and heard. We declare to you so that you also may have fellowship with us.

And truly, our fellowship is with the father and with his son, Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. Now, John says we, the apostles and others, had the opportunity to see Jesus in his earthly life.

You, our readers, did not have that opportunity, but we are declaring to you what we have seen and heard so that you may share in that fellowship that we have. You may have fellowship with us and our fellowship is nothing less than fellowship with God and with his son. Now, fellowship means a sharing in common.

The word is Koinonia here in the Greek fellowship. It also means communion. It means a blending and a mixing and a sharing of things.

The word fellowship, the word communion, these are both English words that translate the word Koinonia, which means oneness or a shared something. In this case, it's a shared relationship with God. He says we had this fellowship with Jesus and we tell you about it.

So you're going to fellowship with us in this fellowship that you can join into this with us. And he says in verse five, this is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. Now, if we say we have fellowship with him.

And walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth, but if we walk in the light. As he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. Now, when he says we have fellowship with one another, that line taken without any context might mean that you and I have fellowship with each other.

But he means we humans have fellowship with God and God with us. That's the one another. The fellowship between us and God.

How do I know that? Well, because that's the context. He said in verse six, if we say we have fellowship with him. And we're walking in darkness, then we're not then we don't have fellowship with him, we're lying.

But if we walk in the light, then we do have fellowship with him. We have fellowship with one another, we and God together and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son cleanses us from all sin. And he goes on to talk about if we don't if we say we don't sin, then we're lying, but if we do confess our sins, he forgives us.

The point here is that John says there is a fellowship with God. God, who is like God, who illuminated the holy of holies. He is the light that we want to walk in.

Now, we do have the testimony of people like John, which is like the light from the lampstands, the body of Christ illuminating us, telling us about God. We declare what we saw and what we heard to you so that you can share in the fellowship with us. But there is a fellowship that's not just with us, but with God himself.

And if you walk in the light. Then you can have fellowship with him because God is light and in him is no darkness at all. The light is a different different qualities.

There's natural light, there's artificial light and there's direct light from God, the glory of God. And I think that that is that the outer court represents, of course, the most distant place that a person can be where they only have nature giving light to them about God. Now, out in the in that outer court, there are two pieces of furniture.

The first that one encounters is a large sacrifice altar where animals are sacrificed. It is made of wood, overlaid with bronze. And then you have the labor, which is apparently solid cast bronze.

Now, these articles that are out in the courtyard are bronze, whereas the ones that are inside the building are gold. Bronze is replaced with gold when you go inside the building. And of course, there's silver in the tabernacle as well, too.

There's silver and there's bronze and gold. Bronze is the least valuable of these metals. Silver more so and gold, the most valuable.

And as you approach closer to God, everything is more gold. The mercy seat is solid gold. And outside it's bronze, which means its value is less.

It has value, but it's not as valuable as the things inside that are gold. And these two bronze items, the altar and the laver, are the place of sacrifice and of washing. Obviously, to the Christian, the altar of sacrifice is the cross itself.

Jesus offered himself as the Lamb of God there. The place of washing presumably corresponds to water baptism. And it's through these two things coming first to the cross and then to baptism that one enters into or at least qualifies to enter into the tabernacle, into the fellowship of the saints, into the body of Christ, which is the tabernacle or the temple of God.

Honor. Now, the bronze altar is described in Chapter 27 of Exodus verses one through eight. It says you shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad.

So seven and a half feet by seven and a half feet is the square shape of this altar. That's the same size as the curtains of the courtyard. The curtains are each five cubits square and the bronze altar is five cubits square.

And its height should be three cubits. So about four and a half feet tall, fairly tall. It has to be big enough to sacrifice whole bulls on.

You shall make its horns on its four corners. Now, horns apparently were like the horns of a cow. That's what is assumed.

You can see on this picture. That's how it's depicted here. Horns on the corners facing outward.

The purpose of these horns was not just ornamental. It was practical. They actually tied the animal to the horns of the altar.

They the the animal was, you know, you know, when you kill an animal, sometimes it still thrashes around a bit. And if it's a big animal, you don't want it getting thrashed around where you lose control of it. So they tied it down to the altar.

To the horns, and so they made horns on the corners of the altar and it's made of wood, but it's overlaid with bronze. Verse three, also, you shall make its pans and to receive its ashes and its shovels, its basins, its forks and its firepans. You shall make all its utensils of bronze.

You can see in the picture on the screen there that there's some other items besides the

named furniture. You've got some like we can see six tables there. Those tables are not mentioned in the Book of Exodus, but the assumption of the people made the model is that there had to be some work surface.

They had to put pans and shovels and forks and other things somewhere. They probably just didn't lay them down on the ground. So someone has assumed that there were tables.

The number of tables there in their position is not in the scripture, so we don't really know if that's quite accurate. But there must have been some other surfaces for putting things because there are a lot of things mentioned that have to be put somewhere, including these shovels and firepans and utensils of bronze. You shall make a grate for it, a network of bronze, and on the network you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners.

You should put it under the rim of the altar beneath the network, maybe midway up the altar. Now, what this means is that there has to be a grate to separate the fire below the grate with the meat that's on top of the grate. Remember, the altar was a barbecue, really.

They barbecued animals on it and the fire would be below the grate and the animal above the grate would presume. Or maybe the coals were on top of the grate and the animal was higher still. But the point is, there was a grate that was halfway between the bottom and the top inside.

It was a bronze screen or grid that was the you'd expect to find, you know, when you're going to have a barbecue, you've got to have something to separate the meat from the coals. And that's what that was. In verse six, you shall make poles for the altar poles of the Geisha wood and overlay them with bronze.

The pole shall be put in the rings and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar to bear it. You shall make it hollow with boards as it was shown to you on the mountain. So shall you make it.

So this picture does not really show the pole, but all these pieces of furniture, except for the lampstand and the labor, were moved by carrying on the shoulders of the priests. They had to be moved around and they had poles that were on the sides, one on each side, and they were connected to the piece of furniture by metal rings. You stick these poles through and the poles were made of wood, but they were overlaid with the same metal as the furniture itself.

So they looked like a part of it. And these poles would then be shoved in there and they'd carry the thing on their shoulders. And that's what these that's what that's referring to here.

The other reference to the bronze altar is in chapter 38, verses one through seven, but it's essentially the same information. We don't necessarily have to read it again, but it's chapter 38, verses one through seven gives that information when they actually made it. And then the bronze labor is described in chapter 30, verses 17 through 21.

And Exodus 30, verses 17 through 21, it says, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, you shall also make a labor that be a wash basin, essentially a labor of bronze and it's based also a bronze for washing. You should put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. So you can see that's an artist's depiction of it.

But if you look at the big picture, you've got the altar first, then the labor is between the tabernacle and the altar. That's where they sort of put it. And you should put water in it for Aaron and his son shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it.

When they go into the tabernacle of meeting or when they come near the altar to minister to burn an offering made by fire to the Lord, they shall wash with water, lest they die. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die, and it shall be a statute forever to them, to him who is and his descendants throughout the generations. Now, the person who washed here was the priest, not the worshipper.

The worshipper would bring an animal to the altar and the priest would offer the animal on the altar for him. And then the priest would go wash up because he just butchered an animal. He'd have blood on his hands and things like that.

And he'd wash up after that. And especially if he was the priest who was going to go inside the tabernacle. Not every priest who offered an animal would go into the tabernacle with it.

But some priest would every day and would burn incense. And he had to he had to wash before going in there. It says the other place the bronze labor is mentioned is simply in Chapter 38, verse eight.

Just one one verse mentions the making of it. Exodus 38, eight says he made the labor of bronze and its base of bronze from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle meeting. Now, apparently, these women had borrowed from the Egyptians or taken from the Egyptians bronze mirrors.

Now, that's the only kind of mirrors they had in those days. They didn't have glass yet. Glass was not in use and they didn't have glass mirrors.

So if someone wanted to groom themselves or look at themselves, they would have to have a highly polished bronze surface. That's how that's what they used for mirrors. That's why when Paul says.

In First Corinthians 13, for now, we see through a mirror darkly or vaguely, he's referring

to the fact that mirrors did not really give a crisp. Reflection, they weren't glass mirrors where you could see a really clear reflection, they were kind of hazy. It's the best they had.

And women with their mirrors, of course, it would be they'd be attached to those because of their desire to groom themselves. And these women donated their their brass mirrors, their bronze mirrors. And these apparently were melted down and they were made into the labor of cleansing.

Now, I mentioned, of course, that these things are symbolic of the cross and of baptism. I believe maybe to put it differently, we could say that the animal sacrifice represents atonement. Which is what we receive at the cross.

Atonement is when an innocent victim has been. Has paid the price for a guilty party. Actually, atonement doesn't mean that, but that's how atonement is made in the Bible.

Atonement means to cover over iniquity. It means to make it OK, in a sense, not to make badness OK, but to make the state of the person committed the bad act OK. For that person to be, as we would say, justified to be declared innocent.

That's accomplished through the atonement of Christ. In the Old Testament, the blood of animals was used for this purpose, although the writer of Hebrews tells us that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. So the sacrifices that were offered in the tabernacle did not really take away sins.

What does take away sins? Well, Abraham believed in the Lord and it was counted to him for righteousness. Genesis 15, six says, and that's what Paul tells us has always been the means through which we become righteous, not by offering animal sacrifices. However, a sacrifice did have to be offered.

But that sacrifice was that of Christ. Christ's sacrifice and our faith in his sacrifice is what brings atonement to us. But what was then the purpose of the animal sacrifices? They pointed forward to Christ.

They anticipated Christ. They symbolically were teaching lessons about the need for Christ's sacrifice. As the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world.

And so the altar communicates the need for a blood sacrifice, a blood atonement. Now, did God forgive people in the Old Testament when they repented and believed? Yes, he did. Abraham believed God, it was counted in for righteousness, though Jesus had not died yet.

But you see, in the Old Testament, I believe God, because he knew he was going to send Christ to die, he would forgive those who had faith and forgive those who repented and forgive those who were following him on credit sort of, you know, there had to be a price

paid, but he put it on the tab and then Jesus would pay the tab when he would come. So God, knowing that Jesus was going to come and make the payment for all the sins of the world, would actually forgive people in the Old Testament based on Christ's sacrifice. Like I said, he kind of did it on credit and then Jesus came and paid the tab.

So this altar represents atonement, blood atonement. And we saw that there are some references to this blood atonement in the book of Hebrews. In Hebrews chapter nine, verses 11 through 14, it says that 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, not with the blood of goats and calves, as in this case, but with his own blood, he entered the most holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. Now, the writer of Hebrews, when he talks about the tabernacle, is mainly thinking about the day of atonement. Now, the tabernacle is used for worship every day in Israel.

But there was one day that was the most important day that was used, and that was the day of atonement, when the priest would actually go into the holy of holies. So when the writer of Hebrews wants to talk about the tabernacle, he mostly wants to talk about it in connection with what was used for on the day of atonement. And the priest would sacrifice a great number of calves and such and goats on this brazen altar.

And he would take the blood from that sacrifice and go ultimately into the holy of holies, and he would sprinkle that blood on the mercy seat in the holy of holies. That was the ritual of the day of atonement. That was the once a year.

They call it Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur means day of atonement. That was what he did.

So the writer of Hebrews is thinking about this altar and the sacrifices are not just in terms of all the sacrifices that were offered there day in and day out, but specifically sacrifices offered there by the high priest on the day of atonement, because he says that Jesus entered the most holy place like the priest does on the day of atonement. Not with the blood of bulls and goats and so forth. Or the ashes of a heifer, he says, the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh.

But how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Now, therefore, it points out that the tabernacle made use of animal sacrifices, but they were the sacrifices of goats and calves and bulls and so forth. But it looks forward to Christ's sacrifice of himself, the better sacrifice, the better blood and better tabernacle.

In chapter 10 of Hebrews, verses 11 and 12, it says every high priest, excuse me, I'm

sorry, every priest and at this point, he's not thinking of the day of atonement, but the daily use of this altar by the regular priest, he says, every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sin. But this man, meaning Jesus, after he'd offered one sacrifice for sins once forever, sat down at the right hand of God. Now, the point that writers making here in Hebrews 10, 11, is that the altar of sacrifice, which we're looking at here, was used every day.

The ordinary priest stood there every day. No, there's no chair there. They didn't sit down.

They stood offering the same sacrifices every day, he said. Now, the fulfillment of that was Christ. And there is a difference in that Christ does not stand offering the same sacrifice every day.

He offered one sacrifice one time and for all and sat down at the right hand of God. Now, this is significant. The writer of Hebrews wants us to see the significance of this.

In the old covenant, the priest didn't really sit down. They had there's always another sacrifice offer. They could never rest from their work.

They offer sacrifice today for today's sins, but there's going to be tomorrow's sins again to offer sacrifices for that, too. There's never an end to it. There's never any resting from it.

There's never any completion. But by contrast, Christ offered one sacrifice of himself that was adequate for all time. And his work is complete.

He then sat down, signifying he's done. He sat down at the right hand of God, unlike the priest who have to keep standing at the altar. He's done.

He offered one sacrifice. The atonement has been made once for all. That's what the writer of Hebrews is telling us about the fulfillment of this.

Now, the labor of cleansing also comes up for consideration in Hebrews chapter 10. I mentioned already earlier, verse 22. Hebrews 10, 22, it says, Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

That's referring to the blood from the altar. But in our case, the blood of the cross, Christ's blood sprinkling our hearts from an evil conscience. We just saw in chapter nine that it was the blood of Christ that purges our conscience to serve the living God.

But also, it says, in having our bodies washed with pure water. Now, I'm sure that the right of Hebrews is thinking about baptism here, though he's not necessarily talking about all the senses in which baptism is significant. He's now connecting it with the tabernacle imagery.

As you approach God, you come into the outer court. You come to the altar where the blood is shed. You're sprinkled with his blood and now you're washed.

Now, he's considering us to be like priests because the regular worshiper in the tabernacle didn't go wash himself in the laver. The priest did. But we are a kingdom of priests.

Christ is our high priest and we are priests. And so we enter the tabernacle. We have priestly privileges.

So the priest would at the altar get sprinkled with blood almost inadvertently. He was sprinkled with blood deliberately at the time of his installation as a priest. That ritual we find in chapter twenty nine of Exodus, but daily as he offered his sacrifices, there would be splattered blood all the time.

And so he's covered with blood. He goes to the laver and he washes himself before he goes into the tabernacle. And so the writer says that's a picture of our drawing near to God.

We've been sprinkled with blood. We've washed at the laver. And those are, of course, the means by which a person enters the kingdom of God, enters the church, the body of Christ, enters the tabernacle, enters Christ by being cleansed.

That is atoned for, justified of sin and then being washed. Now, the washing, I believe, although baptism is the picture of that. The spiritual thing that it represents is, I think, regeneration and cleansing.

And we see Paul. I think alluding to that in Titus chapter three, verse five, in Titus chapter three. Verse five, Paul says, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

So it says we've experienced the washing of regeneration. Regeneration is when you pass from death into life, when you are recreated, when you're born again. That's what regeneration is.

He says that's a cleansing, that's a washing. And there are two aspects of becoming a Christian. One is that you get justified and the other is that you get regenerated.

And the washing of regeneration is the putting off of an old life and the putting on of a new life at the brazen altar, the bronze altar. We have the picture of that atoning blood that justifies us through our faith and then at the laver, the regenerating washing, the washing of regeneration. There are many Christians who believe that baptism regenerates, they believe in baptismal regeneration.

I don't believe that the Bible teaches that, but there are certainly things in the Bible that sound like there is an association in the mind of the early Christians of being born again through going through the water. But that's only because they did baptize at the same time that they believed. I mean, they got they believed and they were baptized the same within moments.

Generally, that was the normal procedure. So they didn't necessarily separate. They just knew that the whole process of repentance and baptism brought them into Christ, gave them justification and regeneration.

And so that's what these rituals of the outer court, I think, represent. Now, of course, then one goes into the sanctuary, into the building, the sanctuary itself. The building is described in Chapter 26.

And it's quite elaborate, a whole chapter describes the building. Now, the building itself has walls, board walls on three sides, but it does not have a roof. It's the building itself would be an open air structure, if not for these coverings upon it.

And there were four coverings and they are described in the order that they're placed on it. The first is a linen covering, a linen curtain. The second one is a covering of goat's hair, which would be matted into something like what we call felt, like a felt covering.

In one sense, it would provide some insulation from heat and from cold outside the building. I mean, not great insulation, but provide some. But the felt is not very attractive and therefore under the felt and where someone could actually see it from inside, you have this fine linen curtain over the building that is blue and red and purple, the same colors that are on the veil and the screen and the door of the tabernacle.

But this covering of linen would be first, so that'd be all that would be visible from the inside of the building. That would provide the ceiling that a man would look up and see. The blue and the purple and the red tapestry there, or maybe it wasn't tapestry, maybe it's just linen.

But above that, which would not be visible to anybody, would be a covering of goat's hair, which would probably be like a thick felt covering. And over that, there was a covering of ram's skin, which had been dyed red. So it'd be like a leather covering.

But there's another leather covering over that, which is said in the New King James to be made of badgers skin in verse 14. Badger skin, that's pretty much following the King James Version. There's no scholar today who believes it's talking about badger skin.

What the animal is, is not always agreed upon, but most believe it's a reference to some kind of seagoing mammal. Some believe it should be translated dolphin skin or seal skin. Or probably more believe it should be dugong skin.

Dugong is a sea cow that was in the Red Sea, is in the Red Sea. Now, whatever the animal was, whether it was seals or dolphins or sea cows, these creatures would not be easy to catch. I mean, I don't know where the Israelites would get the skin of a sea cow or the skin of a dolphin.

Since they didn't have ships and so forth to go out at sea, you don't catch those by swimming after them. But in all likelihood, they got these from the Egyptians and the Egyptians imported stuff from all over the place. So these leather coverings would not necessarily be the result of the Israelites catching or skinning these animals.

But rather, these materials had been brought with them out of Egypt. And apparently Egyptians had had some of this dugong skin or seal skin or whatever it was. The seal skin or the dugong skin, whatever that outer covering is, it's called badger skin here.

Elsewhere in scripture, it is referred to as the stuff of shoe leather. Because elsewhere in the Bible, it talks about this same animal skin being the shoe leather that the Israelites wore. So it's a tough hide and because it's of a marine mammal of some kind, it's waterproof.

So it provides a waterproof tarp over the top of the tent. Now, it wouldn't be very attractive. It'd be some bland color like gray or tan or something like that.

So that the outside of the tabernacle would not look very fancy. It would look just like, you know, earth tones. It'd be a tough leather covering.

Now, these coverings have been given significance by Christian commentators in various ways. Sometimes they say that the goat skin, which is over the initial linen covering, represents sin. But that the ram skin dyed red, which covers it, is like the blood of Christ covering sin.

And that the tough seal skin exterior is simply representing the plainness, the plain ruggedness of Christ, really. That he was not much to look at from the outside. But inside, if you look inside, you see this beautiful blue and red and purple fine linen.

And therefore, some say, well, the tabernacle is like Jesus and that from the outside, he looks very plain, very ordinary. Nothing very ornate about him. He had no beauty or comeliness that we would desire him, it says in Isaiah 53.

Yet inside, once you're in Christ, you see him entirely differently. He's beautiful to those who are in him. But I don't, you know, some of this is conjecture as to what these meanings are.

In fact, all of that is. But it's possible that these meanings are correct. Now, the describing of these things, in case it was confusing to you in chapter 26, was that when it talks about the first covering, which is the fine linen of blue and purple and scarlet.

And it had designs of cherubim woven or embroidered in it. This curtain was to be overall 42 feet by 60 feet, but it was made of 10 pieces. Each piece was 42 feet long and six feet wide.

Likewise, with the covering of the ram's or of the goat's hair, it was to be like 45 feet by 66 feet overall. But the each individual piece was 45 feet by six feet. That is for these large coverings that were made of cloth rather than the leather ones.

They had to be woven. And they were made in six foot wide strips, which were attached, sewn together to make, in the case of one, 10 of them made a 60 foot long tarp and the other one 66 feet long. But it doesn't say why it was that they made them in six foot strips.

And some commentators just think that the largest loom available, you know, that was the maximum size of a bolt of cloth that could be woven on their loom six feet wide. So if you needed something that was 45 feet by 60 feet, you had to make 10 six foot wide things and sew them together to make it 60 feet long. You can make it as long the other direction as you wanted, but the width of the loom would perhaps limit it to a six foot width.

So the linen covering was to be overall enough to cover the whole tabernacle over the roof and down the back and on the sides, all the way to almost to the ground, to within a cubit of the ground. Because once you would take these 10 sheets that were six foot by 42 feet, the 42 foot length would go across, laterally across, and the 60 foot length would go lengthwise. Now the tabernacle was 45 feet in length from front to back, plus it had a 15 foot drop in the back.

So the 60 foot length would cover the top and the back. The 45 foot length of the building puts the 15 feet down the back. The other length of it was 42 feet.

Now across the top would be 15 feet and down each side would be 15 feet. So if it were to cover entirely the building down to the ground, it would have to be 45 feet, that dimension, but it was only 42 feet, which means it came to within a foot and a half of the ground on either side, which is no doubt to protect the linen from the mud. And the linen, which would be a fine sheet, they didn't want it dragging on the ground, especially if there's rain or anything like that, it'd get muddy, it'd be hard to clean.

So it didn't hang all the way to the ground. It came to within a foot and a half of the ground on either side. So this linen curtain covered the entire top and all the way down in the back, but on the sides it came, it covered the top and went down almost to the ground, but not quite, within 18 inches of the ground on the sides.

Now the goat's hair curtain was larger. It was 66 feet in length, so it covered the same distance, but it had extra length in the front. And that was doubled back, it says, the six

foot length in the front was doubled over to make sort of a, you know, a lip in the front for some reason.

Maybe it's just for aesthetic purposes, I don't know. But it was also, its overall length was wider. It wasn't 42 feet, but 45 feet.

So the goat's hair curtain would cover the top and then down the sides all the way to the ground. But the goat's hair was black, it was not attractive, they weren't trying to keep it pretty, and therefore it didn't matter if it touched the ground. It did cover entirely the linen covering and more, because the linen covering didn't come all the way to the ground, but the goat's covering, goat's skin, goat's hair covering, not goat's skin, but goat's hair covering, reached the ground line over it.

And then we have to assume that the ram's skin dyed red and the dugong skin or seal skin, we're not told the size of them, but the assumption is they covered the whole thing, so they protected it from the weather. And the walls of the building then are discussed in verses 15 through 25, or even a little further, just a little further down than that, I guess down through verse 30, more like. And the walls were, as we know, 15 feet tall and the length of the building is 45 feet.

Now, this was made of individual boards, because the building had to be portable, they had to be able to take it down into movable sized pieces. Even so, the boards were extremely heavy because they were coated with gold, and gold is very heavy. And these boards were made of acacia wood, and their actual size, each board was 15 feet long and 27 inches wide, so more than two feet wide and 15 feet long, and they were erected upright, side by side, touching each other.

And there would be 20 for each side of the building, of the longer sides, and so 20 of them would make a total length of 45 feet, as they're standing upright, edge to edge. They were standing on top of bronze sockets, or excuse me, silver sockets in this case, the outer pillars were on bronze sockets, these were on silver sockets. They would like to provide the foundation for these boards.

And the boards were covered with gold, which means that when they were put next to each other and made the inner wall of the building, the walls would look like solid gold. And therefore, the lamp light would reflect brilliantly on this building that was gold on two sides. Of course, the top was linen, and then there was the Holy of Holies separated by a veil at one end, but two sides of it were solid gold, so it would be this very reflective of the light.

And there were five crossbars that held them so they wouldn't get squirrely on each other, they had to be held like they were a solid piece. And so they had rings on them, and they had five poles that they'd shove through these rings that would go along the edges so that it would hold the boards in place with each other as if they were one wall.

And that's what is described there.

But of course, when it came time to tear it down, they could take out those poles, and each board would be a separate board. They could pack it up and move it much more easily than moving a whole wall would be done. And that's how that's described.

So that's how the building is described for us, the sanctuary, and the actual building of it is again given in chapter 36, verses 8 through 38. It is the same detail that's given in chapter 26. So we don't really have to look at that right now.

We are going to have to take a break, however, and when we come back, we'll talk about the table of showbread, the lampstand, the incense altar, and hopefully we'll be able to deal with the Holy of Holies in detail also. And I want to talk about some of the ways that the New Testament obviously brings out the meaning of these things. But we'll have to interrupt ourselves at this point to break and come back for that.