

From Sinai to the Tabernacle: Lessons in Obedience & Worship

CHFD200.16

Exodus 24-40

Dec. 13-17

Are you ready for another exciting trip back to the days of Moses and Mt. Sinai? I hope so, because it just keeps getting better! We'll be learning about the ark of the covenant, cherubim, ephods, the Holy of Holies, and the tabernacle, and a little thing called "the golden calf" incident!

And fortunately for us, we don't have to go looking for this ark...it's not lost yet!



In our lesson for this week, we will be spending most of our time and attention on the tabernacle and its contents. We'll conclude with looking at the "golden calf incident". Let's take a look at our week's "details":

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to interpret the tabernacle and its contents as symbols and foreshadows of Jesus Christ • to memorize the layout of the tabernacle • to identify and define the contents of the tabernacle • to read the account of the golden calf idolotry
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Bible, Exodus 24-40 • this lesson
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take study notes

Because several students have asked for a day-by-day schedule to help them in pacing their work, I have provided the following 5-day SOE (sequence of events).

Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of these chapters • Preparation of the leaders and people; Ex. 24 - 25: 9
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions for and symbolism of the Ark of the Covenant; Ex. 25: 10 - 23
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tabernacle Elements; Ex. 25:23- 27: 21
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the Priests. Ex. 28: 1-43
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The golden calf idolotry. Ex. 32: 1-29 • The finished tabernacle. Ex. 40: 34-38

God has revealed this process in His design of the Tabernacle Moses built in the wilderness. God called Moses to come up into Mount Sinai. God not only gave Moses explicit instructions how to build the Tabernacle, He showed Him a pattern of the Tabernacle, and everything in the Tabernacle.

"And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." Exodus 25:40

The word pattern means "plan, form, construction". It also means "meaning". God revealed the meaning of His Tabernacle to Moses. As we come to an understanding of the meanings God built into His Tabernacle, then His way is opened unto us. The writer of Hebrews gives us further understanding of what God meant when He showed Moses the pattern for the Tabernacle.

"Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, 'See', saith He, 'that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.'" Hebrews 8:5

The Tabernacle was to serve as an example and shadow of heavenly things. The heavenly things are the Spiritual things revealed in the Tabernacle. We are to view the Tabernacle through Spiritual eyes so we may know and understand God's eternal plan of salvation.

While Moses was in the mount, God revealed all things concerning the Tabernacle:

- what to build
- how to build
- what materials to use
- the size of the Tabernacle
- which way it was to sit
- the skins to be used for the covering of the Tabernacle
- the color combinations for the decoration of the Tabernacle

God also showed Moses all the instruments of worship

- what size they were to be
- what materials they should be made of

God also showed Moses to make

- the snuffers
- the snuff dishes for the candlestick
- the pans for the ashes
- the shovels
- the basons
- the fleshhooks
- the firepans

Nothing was to be of Moses' design, and there was to be no earthly architect on the job. Everything was to be of God's design. God informed Moses:

"Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." Exodus 25:40

God not only showed Moses the design of the Tabernacle, and everything in the Tabernacle, He also showed him the completed product. One of the most interesting aspects of the Tabernacle is that **all the materials to build the Tabernacle had been brought from Egypt**. When Israel left Egypt, they spoiled the land. God had put it in the Egyptians hearts to give Israel everything they needed to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness. God informed His people before they left Egypt:

"But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians." Exodus 3:22

God knew Israel would need all these materials to build His Tabernacle in the wilderness. When it came time to build, God spoke to Moses to have the Israelites bring all the materials he had supplied to build the Tabernacle:

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, and goats' hair, And rams' skins dyed red, and badger's skins' and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense; Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate." Exodus 25:2-7

The Israelites were to bring everything needed to build the Tabernacle. Moses was instructed to only take the materials given with a willing heart. It is impossible to please God in anything we do or anything we give if it is not given with a willing heart. What was the result of the Israelites' giving?

"All the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make.

And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing." Exodus 36:4-6

More than enough materials were brought in to build the Tabernacle. The people gave until they were restrained from giving. When God's people are truly doing a work for the Lord, and they have a willing heart to serve Him, they will give until there is an abundance to complete the task.

As we study God's Word we come to the understanding that every number, every color, every metal, every direction, and every item used in the Tabernacle has a Spiritual meaning. As we discover the use of God's symbolic terms, we obtain a deeper insight into God's Word.

The Tabernacle is made in sets of threes. Three is God's number of completion. Everything is complete in three:

- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
- Yesterday, today, and tomorrow

- Sun, moon, and earth
- Animal, vegetable, and mineral
- Past, present, and future

All things are complete in three.

There were three metals used in the Tabernacle:

- Gold represents God
- Silver represents redemption
- Brass is the symbol of sin

There were three coverings on the Tabernacle:

- Rams' skins dyed red
- Badgers' skins
- Woven goats' hair

There were three divisions in the Tabernacle:

- The Outer Court
- The Holy Place
- The Most Holy Place

There were three entry ways into the Tabernacle:

- The Gate
- The Door
- The Vail

There were three colors used in the Tabernacle:

- Blue
- Purple
- Scarlet

There were three uses of oil in worship in the Tabernacle:

- Oil for light
- Spices for anointing oil

- Sweet incense

Israel had obtained more than enough of everything from Egypt to build the Tabernacle. They also had in their possession enough to do the worship service ordained by God.

As we view the Tabernacle through Spiritual eyes, God will reveal His process of drawing nigh unto Himself. It is God's desire we come into His presence, and stand clean before Him with clean hands and a pure heart.



Points of interest

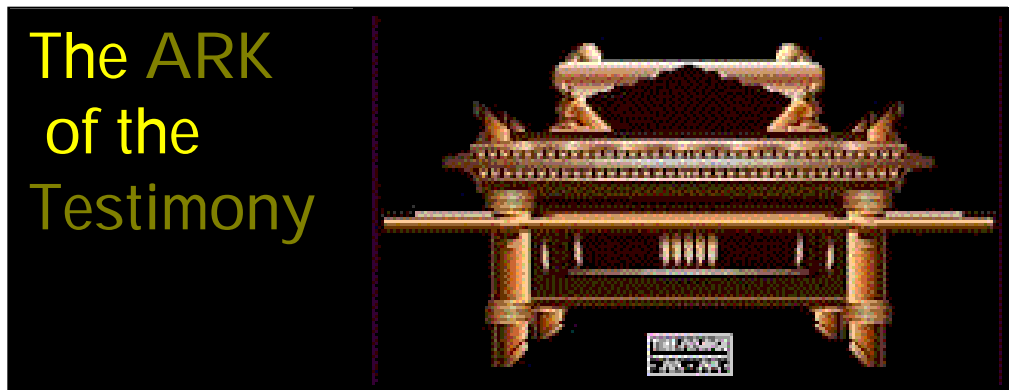
1. Ex. 24: 7 Notice the mentioning of this book, the Book of the Covenant. You'll see it again...and again 😊 Also note that it is a book of COVENANT; it is a book about a relationship that God is establishing with His beloved.
2. Ex. 24: 9-11 These men literally SAW the Almighty God!!! I don't know how this "fits" with Ex. 33: 18-23, but the point is that they SAW God and God did not "lay His hand" on these men, meaning that they were allowed to live after seeing Him.
3. Ex. 24: 13 Joshua is now Moses' assistant
4. Ex. 24: 18 Moses was on Mt. Sinai for 40 days and nights.

2. Tuesday

Instructions for and symbolism of the Ark of the Covenant

Be sure to read
Ex. 25:10- 23
now.

I will present the information concerning the ark in an outline format. I hope that by doing so I can make the information more organized and structured for ya'.



THE ARK:

I. IT'S IMPORTANCE

- A. **THE FIRST PIECE OF FURNITURE MADE** - The Ark is the first mentioned of Tabernacle vessels. It is therefore the most important of all. God began with the Ark, and proceeded outward. Man always begins with the outside and works inward. It was the only vessel in the Most Holy Place. The Ark and its Mercy-Seat really constitute one piece of furniture.
- B. **THE ARK ALWAYS LED THE CAMP ON THE MARCH**
 - 1. It was carried before the Camp of Israel. (Numbers 10:33) The staves were never drawn out until its final resting-place in Solomon's temple. (1 Kings 8:8)
 - 2. It typified the presence of God. See Exodus 33:15. Without the Ark, Israel was helpless and defeated. (Numbers 14:40-45)

C. THE ARK CONTAINED THE TWO TABLES OF THE LAW

1. These are called the "testimony". (v.16) So the Ark is known as "the Ark of the Testimony." (v.22)
2. There was a temporary Ark. After Moses had broken the two tables of stone (32:19); he was told to make an ark of wood, and bring it with two fresh tables of stone up the Mount. (Deut. 10:1-5) The tables were put inside the ark---a temporary ark (like the temporary Tabernacle in Ex. 33:7).
3. The Book of the Law was placed beside the Ark. Moses wrote the "Book of the Law" (the whole Law). (Deut 31:24-26) This Book was placed beside the Ark. The tables were placed inside, and the book by the side of the Ark.

II. ITS STRUCTURE

A. ITS MEASUREMENTS - It was an oblong-shaped box or chest.

(See v.10.)

1. Its length was 2 1/2 cubits or 4 feet and 4 1/2 inches
2. Its width and height was 1 1/2 cubits or 2 feet and 7 1/2 inches

B. ITS MATERIALS

1. Made of Acacia wood, overlaid within and without with gold. (v.11) This speaks of the dual nature of Christ--deity and humanity. (John 1:1,14)
2. It had rings of gold and staves for transportation.
 - a. Staves were not to be taken out of the rings. (v.15)
 - b. It was ever in a state of readiness to obey the guiding cloud.
 - c. It was carried on the shoulders of the Levites. (Num. 7:9)

C. ITS CROWN OF GOLD - The ark had a crown of gold. (v.11) An ornamental rim.

1. Speaks of glory--Jesus rejected by men but crowned by God. See (Heb. 2:9)
2. Speaks of security - the crown kept the lid (Mercy Seat) firmly in place. God's mercy is eternally secured for us.

D. ITS ANOINTING WITH OIL - Like the other furnishings, the Ark was anointed with the holy Oil. (Ex. 30:26). Set apart for Divine service.

III. ITS CONTENTS - The contents of the Ark are enumerated in Hebrews 9:4-5. It contained the pot of manna, Aaron's rod and the tables of the covenant. These were placed in the ark beneath the Mercy Seat.

- A. **THE TABLES OF THE LAW** - These unbroken tablets were placed within the Ark of the Covenant and under the Mercy Seat, the type of the only One who every kept the whole law. These tablets were written on the back and front (Exodus 32:15).
- B. **THE POT OF MANNA** (Ex. 16:33-34) - God's provision for His people during their wilderness journeyings. Jesus is the bread that came down from heaven. (See John 6:32-55.)
- C. **THE ROD OF AARON** (Num. 16, 17) - In their rebellion some of the Israelites challenged Moses' and Aaron's leadership. God showed who was His leader by causing a dead almond rod to bud and bring forth fruit; a type of resurrection life. Jesus, the resurrected One has been made the head of the Church and its Chief Cornerstone.

IV. ITS MESSAGE

- A. **A MESSAGE OF GRACE** - The Ark bore witness against the nation's sinfulness, but it also provided a covering (the Mercy Seat).
- B. **THE ARK TYPIFIED CHRIST IN HIS INCARNATION**
 - 1. It contained the Law of God. - Christ ever had God's perfect law abiding within Him. (See Psalm 40:7,8.)
 - 2. It had the Manna. This manna always remained fresh and saw no corruption. Jesus was the Bread from Heaven. (See John 6:49, 51.)
 - 3. It had the Rod that budded. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. (See John 1:4.)

C. THE ARK WAS INCOMPLETE WITHOUT ITS MERCY SEAT

- 1. The removal of the Mercy Seat resulted in death and judgment. (1 Sam. 6:19) In removing the Mercy Seat, the people uncovered the

- Law, and incurred its penalty. An Ark, without a Mercy Seat, condemns. Legalism and licentiousness both lead to death and separation from God.
2. Christ's perfect life merely condemns our sinfulness. (See Luke 5:8.)
 - a. The Ark apart from the Mercy Seat typified the law. It offers no hope for the sinner.
 - b. The Mercy Seat typifies the result of Christ's Resurrection and the finished work of calvary. It offers mercy and pardon to the guilty.

V. ITS JOURNEYINGS

A. THE COVERING OF THE ARK

1. On the march, the Ark was wrapped in the Veil. (Num. 4:5.)
2. The Ark was then wrapped in badger skins, and then in a blue cloth. (Num. 4:6) The Ark was the only article that had an outside covering of blue. This further emphasizes Christ's entry into heaven. The badger skin covering speaks of "Jesus" (humanity) crowned; the Man Christ Jesus at God's right hand. The badger skin was probably more than likely a seal skin. It was the first thing the eye would see when looking at the covered Ark. The hidden glory of the ark was veiled in humanity. (See Isa. 53.) Some saw past the badger skin and beheld the glory (Jn. 1:14-15).

B. THE STAVES WERE NOT TO BE WITHDRAWN

1. Ready always to accompany them on their wilderness wanderings (vs. 14,15). Here we have Christ's abiding presence with His sojourning people. (Mt. 28:20)
2. The Ark had to be carried on the shoulders of the Kohathites. (Num. 7:9) David disobeyed by employing a new cart. (2 Sam. 6:3) Uzzah was slain for steadying the Ark when shaken by the oxen. God has ordained that the resting place of His presence be carried on the shoulders of the priests. No program or gimmick can take the place of God anointed men and women who have been called to follow the Spirit with the Ark of God.

As you learned from the above information concerning the ark, the mercy seat is an integral part of the ark, and in effect, completes the ark. Let's take a closer look at this mercy seat.



I. ITS APPEARANCE

A. THE MERCY SEAT WAS THE LID COVERING THE ARK

1. It had the same dimensions as the Ark
 - a. 2 1/2 cubits long (4 ft. 4 1/2 in.)
 - b. 1 1/2 cubits wide (2 ft. 7 1/2 in.)
2. More than a lid, it was the most important article in the Tabernacle.

In First Chronicles 28:11, the Holy of Holies is described as "the place of the Mercy Seat." Also, see Leviticus 16:2.

B. IT WAS A SOLID SLAB OF PURE GOLD - It was fitted into the crown of gold encircling the Ark.

C. AT THE ENDS WERE TWO CHERUBIM OF GOLD

1. Their wings were outstretched over the Mercy Seat (vs. 18:20)
2. They overshadowed the Mercy Seat. (See Heb. 9:5.)

II. ITS TYPICAL TEACHING

A. IT ACTED AS A COVERING

1. The Hebrew word for Mercy Seat means "Covering" - to cover over sin. The Mercy Seat shielded Israel from the judgment of the Law.
2. Without this covering, Divine judgment must inevitably follow. Whenever the lid was removed, death was the result. (See First Samuel 6:19.)
3. It was a perfect covering. None of the Ark's contents were

exposed. Christ's atoning sacrifice completely covers our sins. (See Rom. 4:7,8.)

B. IT WAS A PROPITIATORY (a place of appeasement).

1. The Mercy Seat was blood-stained (Lev. 16:14,15), by the blood of the national sin-offering. Apart from the blood, the Mercy Seat would have been a throne of judgment.
2. **Our Mercy Seat is Christ Jesus.** (cf. Rom. 3:24-26.) The Greek word for Mercy Seat means "propitiation". The Ark represents Christ in His life--the Mercy Seat, Christ in His death.
3. The sprinkled blood constituted the propitiation. Christ's atoning blood is the only propitiation for sin. It is "through faith in His blood" (Rom. 3:25). God's wrath had to be appeased. Christ met God's claims for justice, paying sin's penalty by pour out his life for us. (See 1 John. 2:2.)
4. The atoning blood was taken right into God's presence. High Priest sprinkled the blood into the very Shekinah. Christ Jesus entered heaven with His own blood. (See Heb. 9:12,24.)
5. The Mercy Seat conveys the thought of a finished work. There was no "seat" among the Tabernacle furniture--the work of the priesthood was never finished. Jesus made one sacrifice for sin and then sat down, for it was a finished work. (See Heb. 10:11,12.)

III. ITS CHERUBIM

A. FIRST MENTIONED - Our first encounter with Cherubim is found in Geneses 3:24 - "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

B. THE MERCY SEAT UPHELD THE CHERUBIM

1. Believers are sustained or upheld by the power of Christ. (See Jude 24.) We are seated in heavenly places, "in Christ Jesus."
2. The mercy Seat was also their Foundation. They rested upon it. We rest upon the finished work of Christ. (See 1 Cor. 3:11.)
3. The Mercy Seat came between the Cherubim and God's law. Christ's atoning sacrifice comes between the believer and the Law with its terrors. (See Rom. 7:4.)

D. THE DIRECTION OF THE CHERUBIM'S GAZE - The faces of the Cherubim were toward the Mercy Seat. (v. 20b) They were ever gazing at the atoning blood. We must keep our gaze upon Christ's sufficient sacrifice.

IV. THE GLORY CLOUD

A. THERE WAS CLOUD ABIDING UPON THE MERCY SEAT -

1. It was the cloud of Jehovah's manifest presence. (See Lev. 16:2.)
2. Here was Jehovah's throne. (See Ps. 80:1; 99:1.) It was connected with the Cloudy Pillar visible above the Tabernacle.

B. THE BLOOD-STAINED MERCY SEAT WAS THE PLACE OF COMMUNION

1. It was from here that God spoke to Moses. (See Ex. 25:21-22; 30:6,36; Num. 7:89.)
2. Communion with God is now possible for all believers.

C. THE RENT VEIL HAS GIVEN BELIEVERS ACCESS TO GOD AND TO HIS GLORY

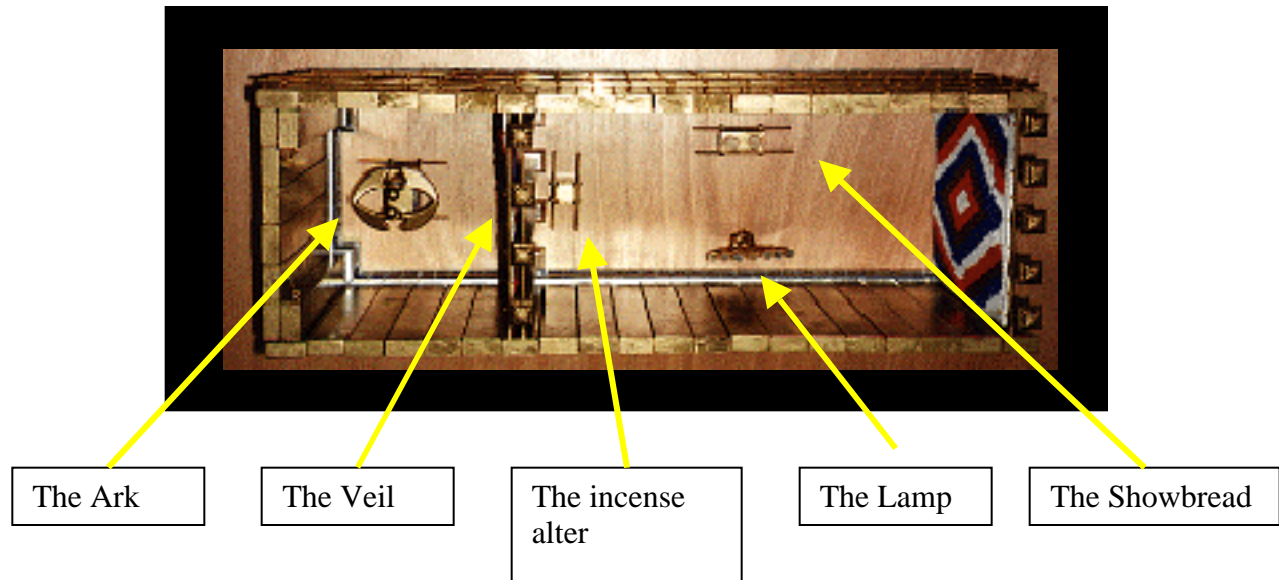
1. We may approach the Throne of Grace boldly. (See Heb. 4:16.)
2. We may behold the glory of God. (See 2 Cor. 3:18.)

Source for the outline:

John Carter, *God's Tabernacle in the Wilderness & its Principal Offerings*, pages 73-76.

In today's lesson, we are going to learn about 4 of the tabernacle elements: the lampstand, the showbread, the incense alter, and the veil.

The tabernacle sanctuary:



The structure of the Tabernacle Sanctuary building was made from wooden Boards overlaid with gold. There were two rooms:

1. the first room, on the East side (right), was called the **Holy Place**; the priests would enter the Sanctuary via the Entrance Door curtain on the East side (far right); the room contained:
 - a. the Showbread Table
 - b. the Lampstand
 - c. the Golden Incense Altar
 - d. the Veil which separated the Holy Place from the inner room
2. the inner room, to the West (left), was called the **Holy of Holies**, where only one man (the High Priest) once per year was permitted entry; this was where God's presence and glory resided over the Ark of the Covenant.

Let's take a closer look at each of these sanctuary items.

1. The lamp



The Lampstand was made of solid, pure gold, beaten out of a single piece. It was placed towards the left side of the Holy Place, the South side. Exodus does not give us either the dimensions or the pattern of the Lampstand, but we do know it had branches and that the bowls were to be formed like almonds in blossom. The lampstand was therefore like a tree of gold. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

The Lampstand was lit permanently, to give light inside the Holy Place. "The true light which enlightens every man was coming into the world" (John 1:9).

The priests in the Tabernacle were responsible, evening and morning, for topping up the seven lamps with oil and trimming their wicks. Jesus said "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Therefore, the lampstand points us to Jesus Christ Himself, the light of the whole world.

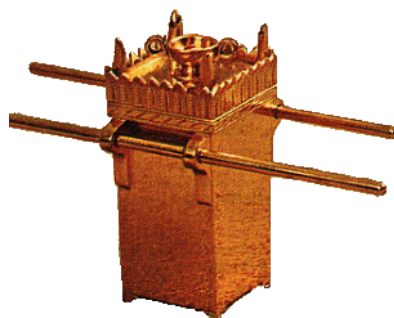
2. The showbread



On the Showbread Table were placed twelve loaves of unleavened bread, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The loaves were replaced every week freshly on the Sabbath (Leviticus 24:5-9): fresh food in the house of God for the priests, Aaron and his sons.

All the furniture in the tabernacle on the way to God speaks of Christ because He is the only way to God. The spiritual level must be established when studying the tabernacle. To the ancient Israelites it was a means of approach to God, a pattern of heavenly things, and a shadow of coming things. The bread of life is offered to satisfy the hunger for life. The table is the basis of fellowship with God.

3. The incense altar



The Golden Incense Altar was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was situated just in front of the Veil, the curtain which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. It was square: half a metre by half a metre wide, and one metre high.

The priest had to burn incense at this altar in the morning and at twilight (Exodus 30:7-8), as a perpetual fragrance before the Lord.

The burning incense signifies prayer (Psalm 141:2 Revelation 5:8) and points us to the prayer of the Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (John chapter 17, Mark 14:32-42).

Similar to the Showbread Table, the Golden Incense Altar had a golden crown round the top of it. This signifies "Jesus, crowned with glory and honour" (Hebrews 2:9). However, because the Golden Incense Altar is the place of prayer, the crown and the prayer together give us a hint of a kingly priesthood. This thought is developed in the book of Hebrews: the Messiah, Jesus Christ has become a priest according to the order of Melchisedek (Psalm 110:1, Hebrews chapter 7). He can sympathize with us as our great High Priest (Hebrews 4:15) and He is able to minister His supply of mercy and grace to us as the King of righteousness and King of peace (Hebrews 7:25,2; 4:16 Genesis 14:18).

4. The Veil



"The Veil shall be a divider between the holy place and the Holy of Holies" (Exodus 26:33). The Veil was made using the four colours blue, purple, scarlet and white (of the fine linen) that correspond with the four gospels. We have seen these four colours previously at the Door of the Outer Court, the Door to the Sanctuary, the Cherubim Embroidered Covering that forms the ceiling of the Tabernacle and on the Ephod the high priest wore.

The Veil is the final door to pass through, to enter into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies. Entry was forbidden to all except one, the high priest, and his access was not free: he was permitted entry once only per year, on the Day of Atonement, when he brought the blood of the sacrificed goat to sprinkle on the lid (called the Mercy Seat) of the Ark of the Covenant.

The Veil reminds us that we are excluded because "we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). However, just as the Passover lamb was slain for the redemption of the children of Israel in Egypt, and the goat was slain so that its blood could obtain God's forgiveness for the Israelites on the Day of Atonement, so Jesus "bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). As Jesus was hanging there on the cross, God "laid on Him the iniquities (the wrongdoings) of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). The final pangs of death came as Jesus cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Seconds later "He cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit" (Matthew 26:50). He cried "It is finished!" (John 19:30). He died.

The effect of the death of Jesus was dramatic: the earth quaked, rocks were split "and the Veil in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:51). "From top to bottom" indicates that God tore it, because the Veil in the Temple was 25 metres high. (Here in the Tabernacle the Veil was just 4.6 metres high.)

Matthew 27:54 and Luke 23:47 both record that the Centurion at the crucifixion site saw the Veil tearing in two. This means that this Gentile sinner could also see straight into the Holy of Holies. This is a picture to show us that it is now possible, on the basis of faith in Jesus' death for our sins, to stand in the presence of God as justified and forgiven people (Romans 5:1-2).

As Hebrews 10:19-22 shows, the way to the Holy of Holies has been opened up for us through the Veil of Jesus' flesh being torn on the cross. There is a 'new' (literally 'freshly slain') and 'living' way for us to enter. The Lord Jesus Christ is not just our freshly slain, dead offering; He is also the Living One (Luke 24:5 Revelation 1:18), risen from the dead and ascended, our great High Priest, with our names on His heart

(the Breastplate) and shoulders (the shoulder stones), going into the Holy of Holies, where God's presence is over the Ark of the Covenant!

In the veil, we also see (again) the cherubim. What is so special about these creatures? In Genesis, we read that God placed cherubim to guard the tree of life from Adam and Eve after their sin. Man was exiled from the garden, an act that prevented him from eating of the Tree of Life, lest he be locked in his sinful state forever. When we consider these angelic messengers, especially with flaming sword in hand, we tend to think of judgment. yet the cherubim were a provision of God's mercy.

We find next the cherubim in the tabernacle, symbolically woven into the veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. Certainly they were there to speak to the heart of the ministering priest, saying, "Do not enter here", but the veil also allowed God to be near His people. "Come this far, but no farther. God dwells on the other side." Yes, the cherubim kept men out, but allowed God to come near. The next scene involving the cherubim was the Mercy Seat. Here the cherubim were on either side of the Mercy Seat witnessing the offering of blood. Again this is a picture: the High Priest alone could enter the Most Holy Place, never without blood, He could enter, knowing that the blood would satisfy the claims of God and that the cherubim looked at God's provision, not at the priest.

We have learned quite a bit about the tabernacle and its contents. But what about those who ministered inside the tabernacle? What had God directed for these servants? Ah, so glad that you asked. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about three essential elements in the service of the priests: the ephod, the breastplate, and the holy turban (crown).

1. The Ephod



The ephod was a short garment from the shoulders down to the waist or perhaps a little lower. It consisted of two pieces, back and front, “joined together” at the shoulders by two “shoulder pieces”. It was held to the body by an artistically wrought girdle intertwining the same colors. Two onyx stones were to be set in sockets of gold on these shoulder pieces and in these were to be engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

2. The BreastPlate

The Breastplate was called the “Oracle of judgment” or the “breastplate of the (oracular) decision” (favorable or unfavorable). The Breastplate had 12 stones with names of 12 tribes. Levi's name was not mentioned because this tribe couldn't own anything, and they were appointed to be the priesthood. Joseph's name was removed and his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim are placed by blessing.

The Breastplate lists the names of the tribes by "blessing". Each stone had its OWN glory, place, and beauty. The Shoulder Stones listed the tribes by birth. The stones were the same without difference between one or the other. With the ephod, the names of the 12 tribes of Israel are born on the shoulders; with the breastplate, these same names are born on the priests heart.

3. The Holy Turban (or crown)

In verses 28: 36-38, we read of the holy turban or crown that the priest was to wear. This was a “plate of pure gold” fastened to the front of the turban so that the words, “Holiness to the Lord”, were ever facing upward toward heaven.

What symbolism do you see here in the ephod, breastplate, and turban? Here are my thoughts:

1. For the ephod: Jesus bears us on His great shoulders. The shoulder is the place of upholding power. Here, then, we see our mighty Savior’s all-sufficient power to uphold us and all of our concerns and sins.
2. For the breastplate: Jesus bears us on his heart. The heart is the place of love and emotions. As each of Israel’s tribes was named in those precious stones, so each blood-bought Christian is forever in the heart of Christ as He stands before God on our behalf.
3. For the turban: As the Lord represents us before the throne room of God, “Holiness to the Lord” flashes from His brow. The brow is the noblest and most distinguishing feature of man. Holiness must be written here, to be seen before all else as the High Priest enters the most Holy Presence. This is the first thing God beholds in our glorious High Priest in heaven. He bears it on HIS forehead that we may be accepted.

5. Friday **The Golden Calf and the Finished Tabernacle**

Be sure to read
Ex. 32: 1-29 and
40: 34-38 now.

I have to refer back to the movie, “The Ten Commandments”, for this part of the lesson. For those of you who saw this movie, do you remember this part where Moses is descending from the mountain with the two stone tablets in his hands and he throws the tablets on the ground in anger as he sees the golden calf and the Israelites worshipping it?

Here is a short summary of this chapter (32):

The golden calf was a representation of a young bull made by Aaron at the foot of Mount Sinai after the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 32). It consisted of a wooden frame with plates of gold obtained from melting the jewelry worn by the Hebrews. The bull was portrayed with strength and vigor, and it symbolized the principle of fertility. The worship of that symbol was associated traditionally with scenes which in modern times would be considered obscene, but in ancient times were simply "liturgical" requests for divine blessings upon crops and herds.

The calf was built because the Israelites became worried when Moses was delayed in coming down from Mt. Sinai. They asked Aaron to make them a god to worship as their deliverer from Egypt. Aaron listened to the people, gathered the gold, and shaped it into the calf. The Israelites worshipped the calf and made sacrifices to it. Yahweh became enraged at the actions of the Israelites and almost destroyed them. However, Moses saved the people by pleading with God to allow them to live. Moses was angered at the Israelites when he came down from the mountain. With the tablets of law given to him by God, Moses destroyed the idol and punished its makers.

Notice Aaron's weak excuse (similar to Adam's excuse in the garden) the strict punishment upon the people (vs. 28)!!!

We don't have time to go into detail concerning all of the other events recorded in chapters 33-40, but here are some highlights:

- Ex. 33: 3 This is the first time that the phrase, "flowing with milk and honey" is recorded.
- Ex. 33: 11 Moses spoke FACE to FACE with God!
- Ex. 33: 18 God allows Moses to see part of His Glory!
- Ex. 34: 29 Moses' face shines

Let's conclude our study of Exodus as Moses did...with the account of God filling His tabernacle with His glory! Read Ex. 40: 34-38.

In Summary

How do you possibly try to summarize such a MAJOR portion of scripture as this one? Instead of trying to summarize all of the points that we've learned this week, I wanted to summarize our lesson by stating that God gave the Israelites the "shadow of things to come" by giving them the tabernacle and its elements. They are a "shadow" because they "set the stage" for the coming messiah, Jesus. Everything symbolizes something about Jesus' life or ministry. The book of Hebrews is a great companion book to be read with this portion of Exodus. In parting, consider this: **the first five books of the Bible were written down by Moses; they are called the Torah, the Hebrew word for 'law'. Jesus said He had come not to abolish the law, but to fulfil it (Matthew 5:17). Jesus has fulfilled what the tabernacle and its sacrifices symbolized.**



There is no formal assignment for this week. We have had a lot of reading for this week's lesson, so you've been working hard already. But what you do need to do is to take notes on this lesson's information. I will be providing a review sheet (in week 17) for you to complete in preparation for your semester test in week 18. This test will cover just the lessons from Exodus.