

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Lesson 23: The TABERNACLE

&

The PRIESTHOOD – Part 3

Aim: To show how aspects of the work of Jesus in the heavenly Tabernacle can be seen in the Table of Showbread and the Altar of Incense in the Earthly Tabernacle.

Key Scriptures: Exodus 25:23-24, 30; 30:34-35. Leviticus 24:5-7. Psalm 141:1-2. Luke 1:8-13. John 1:14; 6:48-51. Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4.

Today is our third lesson on the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and the Priesthood that God established associated with it.

Q: Do you remember the 2 reasons God established the Tabernacle and the Priesthood?

A:

In our last lesson we saw how the **Bronze Altar of Sacrifice** in the **Outer Courtyard** pictured Jesus's work as the Sacrificial Lamb. When John the Baptist said of Jesus, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" he was referring back to the Tabernacle Ministry, and forward in time to Christ's death and future role as High Priest in the heavens.

Q: The other piece of furniture in the Outer Courtyard was the **Bronze Laver**. What was the purpose for that?

A:

Before the priests could enter the **Holy Place**, they had to first offer burnt sacrifices for their own sins, followed by washing their hands and feet at the bronze laver. They needed to be cleansed and holy before they could minister in the Holy Place.

Q: What did Jesus do on the night of the last supper to demonstrate to His disciples that in the future, He would be their High Priest, and what does this teach us?

A:

Jesus revealed to Peter and His disciples that if they did not allow Jesus to cleanse them of their sins, as typified in washing their feet, then they would have no part with Him in His Kingdom.

This same 'spiritual washing' takes place for us as we read and study the Word of God (*c.f. Hebrews 4:12*). We do not need to go to an earthly priest for cleansing and confession of sins as Israel did. Instead, we go to Jesus who is the Word of God, and our great High Priest in the heavens, who washes and cleanses us as we agree with what His word says about our sin. He is the only one able to bring about a cleansing from sin (*c.f. Heb.4:14-16*).

Finally last lesson we learnt about the **Golden Lampstand** inside the **Holy Place**. The Lampstand was made up of 7 individual lamps which were kept continually filled with oil by the priests to keep them burning. This was the only source of light in the Holy Place.

Jesus said in **John 8:12** that He is 'the light of the world, and those who follow Him will not walk in darkness but have the light that leads to life' - life in the Age to Come. **1st John 1:7-9** encourages us to 'walk in the light where Jesus is in the light' by confessing our sins and allowing Him to cleanse us. Then we can have fellowship with Him spiritually in the Heavenly Tabernacle where He is. To be in the light where Christ is then we will have passed through that which the bronze altar and laver typify.

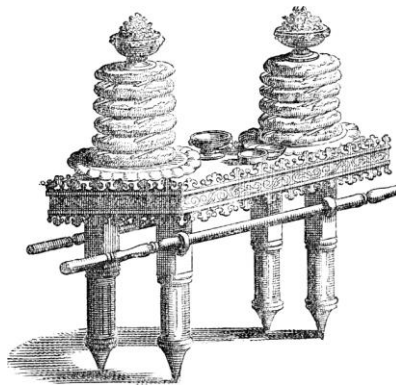
Today we will further study the furniture in the Tabernacle to see what it can teach us about Jesus. Look back at your plan of the Tabernacle. What do you see directly opposite the Lampstand on the north side of the Holy Place?

A:

Exodus 25:23 “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. 24 “And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around.

Ex 25:30 “And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.

The Table of Showbread



Leviticus 24:5 “And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. 6 “You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD. 7 “And you shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

The bread that was placed on the Table of Showbread was only to be eaten by the priests, Aaron, and his sons, because it was holy and they ministered before the Lord. And they were to eat it in a holy place because it was a most holy offering to the Lord from the Children of Israel. Then, every Sabbath the priests were to replace them with fresh bread. It represented God’s presence in their midst and in various translations it is referred to as ‘the bread of the Presence’ (*NASB, ESV, NIV*). The bread was to be a constant reminder

of the covenant God made with Israel and His marvelous provision of food for them.

Q: What food did God provide for Israel in the wilderness?

A:

For 40 years every day, God rained bread (manna) from heaven for them to collect and eat. On the 6th day of the week they were to collect twice as much because they were not allowed to collect the manna or do any work on the Sabbath.

Q: What do you think might be the significance of the instruction to make 12 cakes with frankincense on each row?

A:

Bread From Heaven

So how might the **showbread** in the Tabernacle, or the **manna** from heaven, tell us something about Jesus? What are your thoughts?

Jesus referred to Himself as ‘the bread of life’ in **John chapter 6**. He also said He was ‘the bread from heaven’. Let’s read it:

John 6:48 *"I am the bread of life.*

49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.

51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"

Notes:

53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

All those who ate the manna in the wilderness died, but Jesus was offering bread from heaven from which one could eat of and not die.

Q: According to **v. 51**, what exactly was the bread Jesus was offering?

A:

Q: When Jesus spoke of the connection between eating the bread from heaven and having life, what kind of "life" was he talking about?

A:

So how can we eat the flesh of Jesus in order that we might not experience death in the Age to Come, but rather have life at that time?

Or what does it mean in the Lord's prayer when we pray: 'Give us this day our daily bread'? Keeping in mind that Jesus is the bread of life, how would we do this?

The answer to these questions lies in understanding the significance of **John 1:14**:

***John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

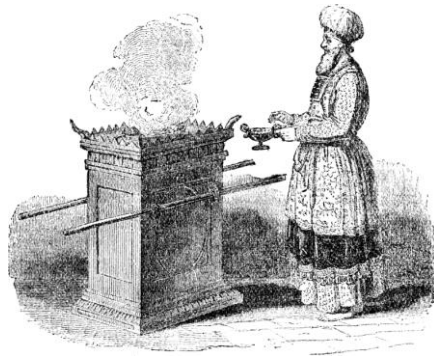
Jesus is the Word of God (*Rev.19:13*), the Scriptures made flesh. So to eat Jesus's flesh is to 'consume' the Word of God. We are to eat this 'bread' every day. As we do so, then the 'bread' that is Jesus's flesh brings nourishment to our spirit and soulical life for the Age to Come.

The Showbread as part of Israel's worship pointed forward to their Messiah Who would come as 'the bread from heaven', just as the Manna also came down from Heaven. And because of its connection with God's provision and the covenant, so it also pointed forward to the new covenant that God will make with them in the future. *(See Mat.26:26-28)*

Now that we have a deeper understanding of the significance of the **Showbread**, let's return to the Tabernacle and see how the **Candlestick** fits into the picture. The candlestick lamps were filed with **oil**, a type of the Holy Spirit. Their function was to provide the light which shone on the bread on the table opposite. Similarly, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to give us light, or revelation, as we read and study the Word, which is typified in the showbread and the golden candlestick. *(c.f. John 14:16-17, 26)*

There is still one more piece of furniture to study in the Holy Place. Let's look at that now. Find it on your plan of the Tabernacle.

The Altar of Incense



Incense is a mixture of spices that produce a sweet smell when burned.

The Incense Altar was in front of the Veil that separates the Holy Place from The Most Holy Place. Find **the Veil** on your plan also. God required that the priests burn a special sweet incense of mixed spices constantly on the Altar.

***Exodus 30:34** And the LORD said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with these sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. 35 "You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, and holy. 36 "And you shall beat some of it very fine, and*

put some of it before the Testimony [the Ark of the Covenant behind the Veil] in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

God was very specific as to what the recipe for the incense to be burned should be. It was only to be used in the Tabernacle, and if anyone made it for themselves then they would be killed ('cut off from the people' according to v.38). Aaron or one of the appointed priests would burn the incense on the altar every morning and evening. This was a special honor.

Incense & Prayer

In the NT, the priest Zacharias who was the father of John the Baptist, was in the Holy Place in the temple in Jerusalem performing this duty at the hour of incense with prayer:

***Luke 1:8** So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.*

Q: How was it determined in **v.9** who should have the honor to go into the temple and burn incense?

A:

Q: While this was taking place, what were the people outside doing?

A:

From these verses, we can see that there were specific hours of the day when the incense was burned and prayers were said. Continuing...

***11** Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.*

Zacharias's prayers at the hour of incense were heard with respect to his wife Elizabeth's barren womb, who eventually gave birth to John. We can see from these verses that the incense burning on the altar of incense is connected to prayers to the Lord.

There are two scenes in the Book of Revelation from within the Heavenly Tabernacle that reference the incense and prayers.

***Revelation 5:8** Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

***Revelation 8:3** Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

As we pray, so our prayers are offered up to God on the golden altar along with the burning incense in front of the throne of God in the Heavenly Tabernacle. Just as the sweet-smelling aroma of the incense rose up to God in the Tabernacle, likewise our prayers rise up and are heard by Him. Hallelujah!

In our final lesson on the Tabernacle, we will go "Beyond the Veil" to the **Ark of the Covenant** and the **Mercy Seat** where God dwelt.

Let's pray...

