

## JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### Lesson 24: The TABERNACLE – Part 4

#### Beyond the Veil

Aim: To demonstrate how the Ark of the Testimony and the Mercy Seat were the central focus of the entire Tabernacle ministry with God's presence dwelling between the cherubim in the Most Holy Place. We will also see how that ministry has now been superseded by a 'new and living way' through Jesus's flesh.

Key Scriptures: Exodus 25:10-22; 26:31-33; 34:34-35. Numbers 7:89; 12:7-8. Hebrews 4:16; 8:1-3; 9:11-12; 10:19-22.

In our final lesson on Israel's Tabernacle in the Wilderness, we will go 'Beyond the Veil' to where God dwelt in **the Most Holy Place**. We will also see how **the Veil** that separated the 2 sections of the Tent of Meeting was a significant part of the Tabernacle and its ministry. Then we will look at the parallels with respect to the Heavenly Tabernacle and Christ's current role as High Priest.

To begin, find **the Veil** on the plan of the Tabernacle.

**Q:** What was in front of the Veil that we studied last week?

**A:**

**Q:** What do you recall about this piece of furniture and its purpose?

**Q:** How does the significance of the incense appear in the New Testament?

**A:**

### **The Veil**

Having recalled the details about the Altar of Incense in front of the veil let's now look at some Scriptures that talk about the veil itself.

***Exodus 26:31** "You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim.*

*32 "You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver.*

*33 "And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy.*

**Q:** What was the purpose for the fine woven linen of the veil, and why was that necessary? (See Lev.10:1-3)

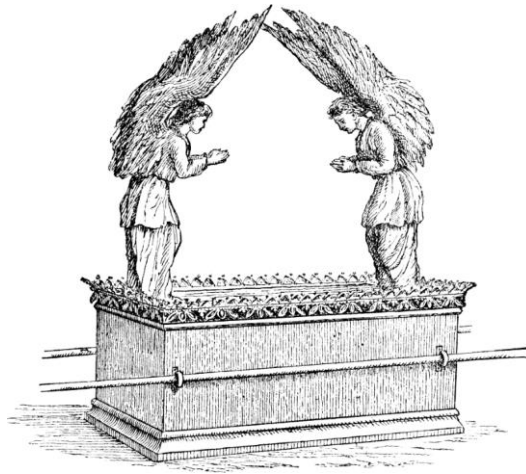
**A:**

**Q:** What was Moses told to put behind the veil?

**A:**

The Ark of the Testimony is also referred to elsewhere in Scripture as the Ark of the Covenant.

## The Ark of the Testimony & The Mercy Seat



*Exodus 25:10 "And they shall make an **ark** of acacia wood; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height.*

*11 "And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around.*

*16 "And you shall put into the ark **the Testimony** which I will give you.*

*17 "You shall make **a mercy seat** of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width.*

*18 "And you shall make **two cherubim** of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat.*

*19 "Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat.*

*20 "And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat.*

*21 "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you.*

*22 "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of*

*the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.*

These verses describe **the Ark**, and **the Mercy Seat** that was on top of it. Moses was instructed to put the Testimony that God had given him on the mountain inside the Ark. This would include the tablets of stone on which God wrote the commandments that Israel was to live by. In other Scriptures, it tells us that the Ark also included a pot of the Manna and Aaron's rod that had budded (*Ex.16:33-34; Num.17:10; Heb.9:4-5*).

The Mercy Seat included 2 cherubim of hammered gold with their wings stretched out towards each other. We first see cherubim in Genesis, after Adam and Eve sinned and were expelled from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). God placed them on the east side of the Garden to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

**Q:** In **v.22** what does God tell Moses He will do?

**A:**

The Most Holy Place that housed the Ark of the Testimony and Mercy Seat was the central focus of the entire Tabernacle. It was here that God spoke to the high priests from between the cherubim whilst they were in the Holy Place. However, the priests were not allowed to go beyond the Veil except once a year on the **Day of Atonement**, and then it was only the high priest who could enter, and he would sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat to atone (make amends) for the sins of all the people for the year (Lev.16:2; 23:27).

**The Veil** separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place where the Ark of the Testimony and Mercy Seat were, acted as a barrier between God and man. There was no opening of the Veil in the middle, so the priest would have to go around the side to enter the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement.

Moses regularly spoke with God, first from the midst of a burning bush, then on the holy mountain of Sinai, and then later in the Tabernacle once it was constructed.

### **God Spoke with Moses Face to Face**

***Numbers 7:89** Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.*

***Exodus 34:34** But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off [his face] until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. 35 And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.*

God spoke with Moses face to face (Num.12:8). That is an amazing thought! And after Moses came out from the presence of the Lord, his face shone so brightly from the glory of God that the children of Israel could not look at him, so he would have to put a veil over his face.

***Numbers 12:7** ... My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. 8 I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD.*

Moses' relationship with God was very special, and we already know that Moses was a type of Jesus Christ. His access to God was unparalleled even beyond that of his brother Aaron, who had the position of high priest.

So what does all of this say to us today, and how do we see Jesus through that which was the central focus of the Tabernacle?

## Jesus is our High Priest

The Book of Hebrews deals almost exclusively with a comparison between the Tabernacle in the wilderness where God dwelt with His people, and Christ's current role as High Priest in the heavenly Tabernacle.

*Hebrews 8:1* Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

*2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.*

*3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One [Jesus] also have something to offer.*

Jesus is currently seated at the right hand of God, referred to in **v.1** as the 'throne of Majesty'. At this present time He is also fulfilling the role of our great High Priest. And like all the priests in the Tabernacle ministry who had to offer gifts and sacrifices, Jesus also had to offer a sacrifice. Jesus's death on the cross and His blood that was shed was THE sacrifice. And because it was the very blood of God, and He was a perfectly spotless Lamb, this sacrifice only needed to be offered once for all time. This is completely unlike the animal sacrifices that were offered every day in the Tabernacle and later the Temple.

**Q:** Where in **v.2** is Jesus's ministry described as taking place?

**A:**

**Q:** How do the following verses describe the heavenly Tabernacle?

*Hebrews 9:11* But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

*12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*

**A:**

**Q:** Which part of the ‘more perfect tabernacle’ does it say Jesus entered once for all?

**A:**

### **We can go through the Veil!**

As a result of Christ’s sacrifice and His blood placed on the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place, we now have access to God in much the same way as the priest in the Tabernacle, such that we can now come boldly into His presence. These next verses describe how we are able to go ‘Beyond the Veil’, and yet not experience ‘death’.

*Hebrews 10: 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified...*

*19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest [the Most Holy Place] by the blood of Jesus,*

*20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,*

*21 and having a High Priest over the house of God,*

*22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

**Q:** According to **v.19**, how is it possible for us to enter the Holiest Place of all?

**A:**

**Q:** How was this access consecrated?

**A:**

The high priest in the wilderness could not enter the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle unless there had been a sacrifice, a shedding of blood for the sins of the people and for himself. He would have to sprinkle the blood of the sacrificial animal 7 times on the ground as he approached the Mercy Seat (Lev.16:14). And this he would have to do once a year on the Day of Atonement. But the writer of Hebrews tells us there is ‘a new and living way’ to approach the Mercy Seat, a way in which death for the one approaching will not take place.

The ‘new and living way that has been consecrated’ (which means to initiate, or inaugurate), that enables us to go beyond the Veil, is **the flesh of Jesus Christ** (v.20). Because Jesus is the ‘High Priest over the house of God’, we too can approach God, by faith, in good conscience, having allowed ourselves to be washed by the water of the Word.

*Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

## **Conclusion**

The priests and Israel saw the Ark of the Testimony/Ark of the Covenant as the holiest of all the pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle because it was a reminder of God’s presence in their midst, as He dwelt between the cherubim. They knew that **if** they obeyed God’s voice and kept the Covenant He made with them, **then** they would be a ‘special treasure to Him above all the peoples on the earth’ (Ex.19:5). However we know that they did not obey His voice; instead they broke the Covenant, and killed their Messiah.

God had ceased dwelling with His chosen people hundreds of years before that, during the Babylonian captivity when the glory of God was witnessed departing from the temple by the prophet Ezekiel.

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple in Jerusalem was torn from top to bottom (Mat.27:51), perhaps to reveal that the presence and glory of God was no longer with them. But more importantly Christ’s torn flesh, represented by the torn veil, revealed access to the mercy and Presence of God would now be through His Son’s torn and crucified body.



*Heb 10:1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.*

*Heb 9:11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.*

The Tabernacle and the Priesthood were a shadow of ‘the good things to come’, with the result that we can now ‘come boldly to the throne of grace’. It is ‘the hope set before us’ ‘which enters the Presence behind the veil’ where we can continue to receive mercy and grace. Hallelujah!

In the next lesson we will look at Moses’ servant **Joshua** who led the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Israel into the Promised Land, and we shall see how that action alone makes him a Type of Jesus Christ.

Let’s pray...