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12 Christ Foreshadowed in the Tabernacle



Search the Scriptures

📖 **Read Hebrews 9:6-15; 24-28.**

KJV Vocabulary

Use the definitions to enhance your understanding of the passage as you read.

ordained (v. 6): arranged; set in order

first tabernacle (v. 6): the first room of the tent with the showbread and the altar of incense

second (tabernacle) (v. 7): innermost room of the tent; the “holiest of all”

manifest (v. 8): made clear; explained

divers (v. 10): many different kinds of

carnal ordinances (v. 10): outward rituals

reformation (v. 10): the new order of things

dead works (v. 14): ineffective human rituals

Answer the questions.

1. What could the high priest’s gifts and sacrifices *not* do for the worshiper? See verse 9.

2. What did Christ obtain for us by His sacrifice? See verse 12.

3. How is Christ’s work like the service of the high priest in the Old Testament? See verse 24.

📖 **Read Leviticus 4:27-35 to learn how an Israelite of the Old Testament obtained forgiveness for specific sins he had committed. Answer the questions.**

4. What did the sinner bring to the tabernacle (verses 28, 32)?

5. Who killed the animal? _____

6. Who put the blood of the animal on the altar? _____

7. Who burned the animal on the altar of burnt offering? _____

8. Through whom did God forgive the sin? _____

Glimpses of Christ

Before the establishment of the Law and the tabernacle, the Israelites knew little about the God of their fathers. Their acquaintance with Him was very limited. God used the tabernacle to better introduce Himself to His chosen people.

The tabernacle in the center of their encampment represented God’s presence among His people

and showed them that His heart yearned for man. It assured them of God’s interest in and provision for their spiritual needs. It reinforced one of the first lessons they learned at Mount Sinai: we must come to God according to the way He has specified or we will die.

“I will dwell among the children of Israel.”

Exodus 29:45

The linen fence around the courtyard provided Israel's first line of separation from God. Yet God provided a way of access to Him. The one and only entrance on the east side foreshadowed the Lord Jesus, the only way to God. Jesus said, “I am the door” (John 10:9).

Each Israelite entering through that first gateway encountered the altar of burnt offering. He had only this place to offer his repentance and seek God's forgiveness. This place in the courtyard typified the cross where the Lamb of God offered Himself for our sin. As that altar was the only place of sin offering then, so the cross is the only place to find cleansing for sin now.

After the worshiper killed his animal at the altar of burnt offering, the priest had to take over. God didn't allow the average Israelite to make his own sin offering. In fact, all the rest of the tabernacle was off limits to everyone except the priests of the tribe of Levi. Jesus, of a priesthood better than that of Levi, gives us full access to God through Himself, our only Mediator.

From the altar, the priest advanced to the laver where he washed his hands and feet. The laver reminded the priest that cleansing is essential for entering God's presence and doing His work. We, too, must be cleansed by the “washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26).

Beyond the laver stood the tabernacle, the dwelling place of God among His people. The tabernacle was the shadow of the new covenant dwelling place of God in men's hearts.

Inside the tabernacle on the left hand shone the seven oil lamps of the golden candlestick. It served as the only light source of the holy place, just as the coming Redeemer would be the Light of the world.

On the right hand stood the table of showbread. The bread on it was not for God's nourishment; every Sabbath, the priests ate from that table. The priests' eating of the bread brings to mind Jesus' teachings about Himself as the Bread of Life in John 6.

Believers today remain alive spiritually only by continually partaking of Christ.

After trimming and filling the lamps on the candlestick, the priest stood before the altar of incense and offered to God the pleasing odor of burning incense. Ephesians 5:2 says that Jesus gave Himself as a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God for us.

Behind the altar hung the veil, the barrier to the holy of holies, showing that the way to God was not yet freely available to all. But when Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn completely in two, providing a clear symbol that the way to God was now open. The torn veil reveals that through Jesus' offering of His body, we have full access to God and can now “come boldly unto the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16).

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the tabernacle alone, passing through the holy place into the holy of holies. Lighted by the glory of God Himself, the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant reassured him: “God is still with us!” Jesus is our Emmanuel: “God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

Reverently, the high priest presented his offering to the Most High, sprinkling blood on the mercy seat and burning incense. The shedding of an innocent animal's blood was God's temporary way of atoning for the Israelites' sin, reconciling them to Himself.

Kept beneath the lid (the mercy seat), the contents of the ark of the covenant also foreshadowed Jesus. In the tables of stone engraved with the Ten Commandments we see Jesus, the Word. In the golden memorial pot of manna we see Jesus, the daily, eternal Bread from Heaven. In Aaron's rod that budded we see Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life.

“And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.”

Hebrews 9:3, 4

Lesson 12

Did the Israelites realize they saw shadows only? Most likely not. Even so, God used all these symbols to rivet certain spiritual truths into their national and

cultural mind. When the promised One would come centuries later, God would reveal these truths about the Messiah.

Answer the questions.

9. God used the many details of the tabernacle for teaching His people more about what? _____
10. What did the tabernacle represent to God's people? _____
11. What was one of the first things the Israelites learned about God at Mount Sinai?

12. What was God's temporary way of atoning for Israel's sin?

Glimpses of Christ

Match each attribute of Jesus with a comparison from the tabernacle.

- a. Jesus is the Light of the world.
- b. Jesus is the only "door" to God.
- c. Jesus offered Himself as a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God.
- d. Jesus, the Lamb, was sacrificed on the cross for us.
- e. Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us."
- f. Jesus washes our hearts from sin.
- g. Jesus, the Bread of life, keeps believers alive spiritually.
- h. Jesus' body was offered so we could come boldly into God's presence.

13. ____ The tabernacle had only one entrance.
14. ____ Animal sacrifices were made just inside the entrance on the altar of burnt offering.
15. ____ The priest washed himself at the laver before entering the holy place.
16. ____ Seven oil lamps burned in the golden candlestick to give light to the holy place.
17. ____ Bread was displayed continually on the table of showbread.
18. ____ The priest burned incense to God at the altar of incense.
19. ____ A heavy veil separated the first room of the tabernacle from the holy of holies.
20. ____ God's presence was seen as a glorious light shining above the mercy seat.

Answer the question.

21. What attribute of Jesus might each of these items kept in the ark of the covenant represent?
 - a. Two tables of stone engraved with the Ten Commandments _____
 - b. A golden pot of manna _____
 - c. Aaron's rod that budded _____

Memory Work Focus

Complete the memory selection for this section, including the reference.

22. I am _____ with _____: nevertheless _____; yet _____, but Christ _____ in _____: and the _____ which I now _____ in the _____ I live by _____ of the _____ of God, who _____ me, and _____ himself for _____. Galatians ____:_____

Complete the sentence about the memory selection.

23. Christians live *in* the _____, but *by* _____.

Review

Circle T if the statement is true and F if it is false. If the statement is false, correct the italicized part.

24. T F God asked His people to build Him a sanctuary so He could *dwelt among them*.
 25. T F God met His people above the *table of showbread*.
 26. T F The first thing one encountered when entering the courtyard of the tabernacle was the *laver*.
 27. T F *Only the high priest* could offer incense and blood before the ark of the covenant.

Answer the question.

28. What two things were significant about the placement of the tabernacle in the center of the camp?
