

THE TABERNACLE

"ENTERING GOD'S PRESENCE"

The tabernacle, which God instructed Moses to construct, is a powerful lesson for us. Tonight we can learn an enormous amount about how God wants us to enter His presence. Then next time, we can learn how to stay in His presence. So

ENTERING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

This is a journey into the presence of God. We enter God's presence by way of His Tabernacle, God's tent of Meeting. As we examine this incredible structure, we will see how every point of the God's Tabernacle points to Jesus.

Of what possible importance could an old, dusty animal skin tent in the midst of a Nomadic, wandering migration of people camping across the Sinai's trackless desert have in this ultra modern 21st century life in which we live? Can a tent constructed 3500 years ago give any light to the dark, sin-stained path we often must tread? Join me as we look at the tent and its meaning and find strength in Christ for our lives today.

Stretching in Tulsa terms from 161st Street East (Elm) to Lewis Avenue west (9miles) and from Admiral on the north to 91st Street on the south the camp of Israel was at least 81 square miles just for 600,000 fighting men and their families! The Exodus march at 5 people wide would have stretched 225 miles long. If they traveled 50 wide they would have been 22.5 miles. For a missions note, our world of 6 billion would be @ 100 wide 45,000 miles long!

If we were to top a hill in the Wilderness of the Sinai peninsula 3,400 years ago we would first see one of the largest encampments of people ever on the planet. There were 600,000 families who came out of Egypt. With 5 per family that is 3 million folks. With just a normal campsite it would take 81 square miles of territory for this many people. That would equal from Lewis on the West to Elm on the East, from 31st on the North to 121st on the South. So on a lookout spot we would see a huge encampment.

Then we would see it, the Tabernacle. In the center of the Camp, with smoke slowly rising from the altar and with the 12 Tribes in an ordered arrangement around it around. Looking intently we would note a long, black, unattractive tent of porpoise skins. But when we traveled through the loud, smelling and busy camp and made it to the Tabernacle we would find a much different sight.

- ✓ When we came inside, we would find ourselves surrounded by shining gold:
- ✓ looking up to the curtained roof, we see the wings of the cherubim woven in; blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen.
- ✓ The light of the golden candlestick would softly shine and reveal all the beauty within.

So it is with Christ Himself. The natural man, beholding Him, sees no beauty that he should desire Him. But to those who know the Lord Jesus Christ, His beauty satisfieth their souls.

Going back outside, if we were to draw a straight line from the center of the Tabernacle's Gate of Entrance to the Mercy Seat in the center of the Holy of Holies, we would see a picture of salvation and God's wonderful plan for us. You go through the Altar, through the Laver, through the Door; you pass the Table of Showbread on your right hand and the Golden Lampstand on your left; through the Altar of Incense, through the Veil, to the Ark, covered by the Mercy Seat, in the Holy of Holies. This is the true Pilgrim's Progress from the camp outside to the immediate presence of God.

Old Testament Worship centered on the Tabernacle and then the Temple. Divinely designed liturgy was carried on for 1,500 nearly unbroken years in the way Moses was told by God to do it on Mt. Sinai.

The epicenter of that worship was the Holy Place. In the front half of it stood the Altar of Incense, Golden Lampstand and Table of Showbread. A curtain divided the room. This curtain was actually a finely woven rug 4 inches thick, 60 feet high and 40 feet wide. Massive and towering and declaring one clear message STAY OUT. No natural light ever penetrated its dark depths. Even the light of the ever-burning Lampstand never reached behind the veil.

In better times the Shekinah Glory of the Presence of God made the Holiest of Holies behind the veil brighter than noonday. In all of Israel's history probably no more than 50 men had ever gone into the holy of Holies. David never went in, Daniel and Jeremiah never went in. Only the High Priest and then only once a year.

Inside that room was a box covered with gold, containing the stone tablets of the Law, a pot of manna and Aaron's Rod that budded. Above that Ark of the Covenant stood two golden cherubim with wings shielding the mercy seat. Their faces gazing downward forever focus upon the blood.

When that day came for the High Priest to pass behind that veil. He was wearing bells on the hem of his garment to let the other priests know he was still alive as he was inside; garbed carefully in the God directed robes and priestly garments. With trembling hands cradling a basin of blood, veiled by a cloud of smoking incense burning in a pot he carried - the High Priest would enter.

Sprinkling the blood on that mercy seat on behalf of all the people of God and hastening out. Why? The only purpose of the Veil was to keep people out of the Holy Presence of God. God was saying I AM HOLY. YOU ARE NOT. STAY OUT!

On the day Christ died can you imagine the scene those officiating priests must have beheld? They came in to trim the lamps, pour a handful of incense over the fire on the altar and change the bread on the Table. Then perhaps at that very moment Christ touched the Veil.

With an unearthly sound that massive curtain was violently torn from top to bottom. Aghast, as for the first time in nearly 1,500 years common people looked upon the ark and the mercy seat and God's throne of grace and mercy. As God said ANYONE WHO WISHES MAY COME IN NOW. YOU ARE WELCOME ANYTIME. Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (KJV) Aren't you glad we live on this side of Calvary?

HOW CAN WE ENTER BOLDLY? BECAUSE OF JESUS!

Stand with me to read John 1:14-18

The Tabernacle teaches us so much about the wonders of our Matchless God. Here are just a few of the lessons about the Lord.

THE TABERNACLE IS GOD'S PORTRAIT OF CHRIST "TENTING" JOHN 1:14 AMONG US

1. **THE TABERNACLE:** GOD WANTS US LIVING IN HIS PRESENCE.
2. **THE BRAZEN ALTAR:** GOD WANTS US APPROACHING HIS HOLINESS (The Doctrine of Satisfaction)
3. **THE LAVEN OF BRASS:** GOD WANTS US CLEANSING OUR SINS (The Doctrine of Sanctification) The Three Entrances (McGee)
4. **THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND:** GOD WANTS US WALKING IN HIS LIGHT
5. **THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD:** GOD WANTS US NOURISHED BY OUR SAVIOR
6. **THE ALTAR OF INCENSE** (30:1-10, 34-38) : GOD WANTS US PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT
7. **THE VEIL WHICH WAS RENT:** GOD WANTS US ENTERING HIS PRESENCE WITH BOLDNESS
8. **THE ARK OF THE COVENANT:** TRUSTING HIS PROMISES
9. **THE MERCY SEAT:** RESTING IN HIS SACRIFICE

Now, for our lesson on entering the Presence of God this morning, I call these –

EXPERIENCE THE 9 STEPS INTO GOD'S INTIMATE PRESENCE

1. **DISCOVERING THE TABERNACLE:** GOD WANTS US LIVING IN HIS PRESENCE.
2. **DISCOVERING THE BRAZEN ALTAR:** GOD WANTS US APPROACHING HIS HOLINESS (The Doctrine of Satisfaction)
3. **DISCOVERING THE LAVER OF BRASS:** GOD WANTS US CLEANSING OUR SINS (The Doctrine of Sanctification)
4. **DISCOVERING THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND:** GOD WANTS US WALKING IN HIS LIGHT
5. **DISCOVERING THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD:** GOD WANTS US NOURISHED BY OUR SAVIOR
6. **DISCOVERING THE ALTAR OF INCENSE (30:1-10, 34-38) :** GOD WANTS US PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT
7. **DISCOVERING THE VEIL WHICH WAS RENT:** GOD WANTS US ENTERING HIS PRESENCE WITH BOLDNESS
8. **DISCOVERING THE ARK OF THE COVENANT:** TRUSTING HIS PROMISES
9. **THE MERCY SEAT:** RESTING IN HIS SACRIFICE