

THE TABERNACLE

by
Mrs. Jet Witherspoon Toole

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FORWARD

It is my good pleasure to be able to recommend to the reader the course of study entitled *The Tabernacle*. Mrs. Jet Witherspoon Toole shares with us from an exhaustive background of nearly fifty-five years in the Pentecostal ministry. She spent twenty of these years dedicated to the teaching of Bible school students as a Bible college instructor. Her textbook commentary regarding the Tabernacle is not meant to be a complete and exhaustive treatise on the subject. However, it is presented with the desire in mind that many will gain a greater insight toward the Tabernacle and the typology thereof.

It is hoped that you, the student of the Tabernacle, will recognize, and I'm sure will be impressed by, the many scriptural cross-references supplied by the author. Truly this is characteristic of her style and reveals the broad general knowledge of the Word of God from which she writes.

Many hundreds have been privileged to sit in her classroom as students and listen to her lectures regarding various doctrinal subjects from the Word of God. Their lives and ministries have been enriched by the exposure she gave to them from the pages of the Holy Bible. There are multitudes of pastors, evangelists, and missionaries who have been influenced by her teachings and writings.

Mrs. Toole is now spending the twilight years of her life writing for the Overseas Ministries Training Course of the Foreign Missions Division of the United Pentecostal Church. She has written several other books for the series and her contribution has already become invaluable to the overseas work.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of the wilderness Tabernacle begins in Genesis 12:1-3 at which time God made a covenant with Abraham. This covenant was passed on to Abraham's son, Isaac (Genesis 26:1-5); and then to Isaac's son, Jacob (Genesis 28:10-15), whose name was changed to Israel at the time he was conquered by the angel of the Lord (Genesis 32:25-30). The covenant was later inherited by Jacob's descendants who became known as the children of Israel.

God promised Abraham that He would give his descendants the land of Canaan, an area which was then inhabited by a number of heathen tribes. God told Abraham that although his seed would dwell in a land that was not theirs, and would be afflicted, they would return to the Promised Land in their fourth generation (Genesis 15:1-21). And God, by the hand of Moses, did lead the children of Israel out of Egypt as He had vowed (Exodus 12:40-42).

God planned that the Tabernacle, a tent structure in which He dwelt among His people, would not only lead them back to Canaan, but also back to the faith of Abraham. The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness forty years. Finally, after the death of Moses, Joshua led them across the Jordan River into the Land of Promise.

Almost three months after God delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery and Pharaoh's army by the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, they arrived at Sinai (Exodus 19:1, 2). This was the same mountain - also called Horeb-where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and called him to return to Egypt to lead His people out of bondage (Exodus 3:1-12).

Immediately after this great company had camped before Mount Sinai, God began to commune with Moses from the mountain top. He instructed Moses to prepare the people for a very special manifestation of His glory on the third day. He would at that time begin giving His law by which He would govern Israel (Exodus 19:3-17).

At the appointed time Moses brought the people out of their camp to meet with God. Even though they stood at the foot of Sinai, they did not touch it, for God had instructed Moses to set a boundary for them. A thick cloud settled over the mountain. Thunder, lightning and smoke, as from a furnace, rolled from its top, and the whole mountain quaked violently. Many centuries later the Apostle Paul referred to this occasion when he said, "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" (Hebrews 12:21).

The voice of the Lord blared from the peak as the sound of a great trumpet. It sounded long and grew louder and louder. When the people saw the mighty

manifestations of the Lord, they trembled and moved back until they stood afar off (Exodus 20:18). As recorded in Exodus 20:1-17, the Lord spoke the Ten Commandments. The people then said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exodus 20:19).

Moses took the words of the people to the Lord. God said to him:

Thus, shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shall ye go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon (Exodus 20:22-26).

God spoke these words to Moses for the children of Israel to impress upon them the seriousness of disobeying His commandments and the certainty of His blessings for their obedience. He told them they must build their altars of earth or of unhewn stone to teach them that they could not justify themselves by their own works. In verse 26 He seems to have shown that their disobedience would be as nakedness, or guilt, probably referring to the disobedience of Adam and Eve.

God gave many laws and instructions to Moses for the people. As recorded in Exodus 21-23, Moses wrote all His words in a book of the covenant. Moses then built an altar and called the people together. He sent young men to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. He reserved half the blood of the sacrifices in basins and sprinkled the other half on the altar (Exodus 24:4-6). He then read all the words of the Lord from the book of the covenant to the people. When they had promised to obey (Exodus 24:7), he sprinkled the remaining blood on them and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exodus 24:8).

Chapter I

MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI

Exodus 25 - 31

Accompanied by Joshua, Aaron, and Aaron's sons, Moses went part way up the mountain where they saw the Lord in His glory, as sitting on a pavement of sapphire stones. The Lord then called Moses into the mount where he remained forty days and nights (Exodus 24:12-18). During this period God wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of stones and gave Moses His plans, patterns, and full instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle. He also instructed Moses to receive free-will offerings from the people of all the materials that would be needed for the building of the Tabernacle, its furniture, and its services (Exodus 25:1-9).

God's Purpose for the Tabernacle

God's initial purpose for the Tabernacle is stated in Exodus 25:8: "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." But His far-reaching purpose, as revealed in types and shadows, involved the Tabernacle's carefully outlined plan and every item of material that went into its construction. We shall see this more clearly from a thorough study of its plan and construction.

The Scriptures indicate that God's reason for creation was His desire to have a people with whom He could dwell and have fellowship. He walked in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve until their disobedience broke this fellowship. However, our great omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God knew before creation that humanity would fail. He, subsequently, foreordained His plan of redemption in Christ by which He would bring men back into His fellowship. As He was now seeking to bring the people of Israel into His fellowship, He planned the Tabernacle where He would manifest His presence in its Most Holy Place, separated from them by the inner veil. There they could contact Him for their needs by repentance and sacrifices.

We learn from studying the Scriptures that God's greatest purpose for the Tabernacle was that it should present, in types and shadows, a clear plan of His spiritual kingdom to be created in Christ (Ephesians 2:10; 4:22-24). In His spiritual kingdom the partition would be removed and His obedient children would again have blessed fellowship with Him. We shall search out this typical picture of the Lord's spiritual kingdom after we have made a thorough study of all the materials used, the plan of its construction, its furniture, and the services of its priesthood.

Israel Worships the Golden Calf

After forty days and nights in the top of Sinai in the presence of the Lord, God sent Moses back to Israel's camp. Jehovah commanded, "Go, get thee down; for thy people,

which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them" (Exodus 32:7, 8). The Lord then said to him, "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation" (Exodus 32:10).

God was not only condemning Israel, but He was testing Moses, the man whom He had chosen to be the mediator between Himself and the sinful people. Moses' intercession with the Lord on behalf of the children of Israel did not indicate that he was more merciful than God. No human could possibly be as merciful as God. But until there was a reconciliation between God and men, there had to be a mediator between the Creator and His creation.

Moses proved his faithfulness in the position to which God had called him. He interceded with God for these people each time they murmured and rebelled against the trials of their wilderness wandering. He continued to do this till he finished his course on Mount Nebo and was buried by God (Deuteronomy 34:1-8). By doing so, Moses proved that he was more concerned for Israel's salvation than becoming the head of a great nation.

Sinful men cannot contact God except by a mediator. God used faithful men in Old Testament times to fill this position until His true Mediator could be revealed to bridge the gulf between sinful men and Himself (Hebrews 8:1-6; I Timothy 2:5, 6; John 1:51).

Job, in the midst of his great trials, felt helpless when he could not get through to God in his prayers. He said, "For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" (Job 9:32, 33). Jesus is that Daysman through whom all people may come to God (I Timothy 2:5).

At Mount Sinai, Moses showed his love for the nation of Israel through his mediation. "And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?" (Exodus 32:11). God heard him and yielded to his intercession.

God cannot change because He is ever perfect and right. He cannot repent in the sense that men must repent (Exodus 32:14). Yet His actions often depend on the actions of men. And consequently, He yielded to Moses' intercession for Israel. Moses then went down the mountain to deal with the people who had so quickly broken their vow to obey all the words of God.

When Moses saw those who had so recently been delivered from Egyptian slavery and saved by the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea dancing as heathens around the

golden calf, his wrath waxed hot. He threw down the tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments, breaking them into pieces.

The broken commandments were no problem for God. After the people had been thoroughly punished-first by their leader and then by the Lord (Exodus 32:15-35), and after God had reassured Moses that He would surely lead Israel to Canaan (Exodus 33:1-17)-He recalled Moses into the mountain for another forty days and nights. He instructed him to bring two tables of stone on which He would write all the words He had written on the first stones (Exodus 34:1-4).

God also granted Moses' petition to again see His glory (Exodus 33:18-23). He revealed His glory to Moses in the declaration of His name. He proclaimed:

The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation (Exodus 34:6, 7).

This proclamation is a true picture of the glorious character of our great God and Savior.

When Moses came down from the mountain after the second forty-day period in the glory cloud of God's presence, his face shone with the glory of God. As Aaron and the people were afraid to come near him, he put a veil over his face in order to speak to them all the words of the Lord. However, when he went to talk to the Lord, he removed the veil (Exodus 34:29-35).

Moses Taught the People

Immediately after Moses descended from the mountain, he gathered all Israel together to give them the words of the Lord. Jehovah had told Moses to write all His words, which would inform and enlighten the people concerning the covenant He had made with them (Exodus 34:27, 28). The Lord Himself had written the Ten Commandments on the first tables of stone (Exodus 31:18; 32:16), and He had promised Moses He would write them again on the second (Exodus 34:1).

Moses first taught the people the law of the Sabbath. The keeping of the Sabbath required all Israel to honor God and it seems to have been a cornerstone commandment of the covenant. Moses emphasized that it must be a holy day to the Lord and that all their attention and worship must be given to Him (Exodus 35:1-3).

The second subject on which Moses taught was the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was of utmost importance in God's dealing with the children of Israel. It would be a place

where they would recognize His presence as dwelling among them. By means of the Tabernacle services of the priesthood, God would demonstrate to the people their dependence upon Him and their responsibilities to Him.

God gave priority to the Tabernacle as Israel's first matter of business. He commanded Moses to receive free-will offerings from the people for all the material to be used in the Tabernacle's construction, furniture, and services. Each item, no matter how small, was very important to the total structure, as well as to the typology of the whole plan.

Moses introduced the subject of the Tabernacle by calling for a free-will offering as instructed by God. He itemized everything that would be needed to build this sanctuary for the Lord to dwell among them. He listed the materials as: gold, silver, brass, blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, badgers' skins, shittim (acacia) wood, oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil, sweet incense, onyx stones, stones to be set for the ephod and the breastplate. The Lord not only called for all these materials, but also for willing service from all who were skilled in various workmanships (Exodus 35:5-19).

The Lord made it very clear to Moses that he was to receive only gifts and voluntary services which were given freely from the heart. It appears that practically the whole congregation responded to this call.

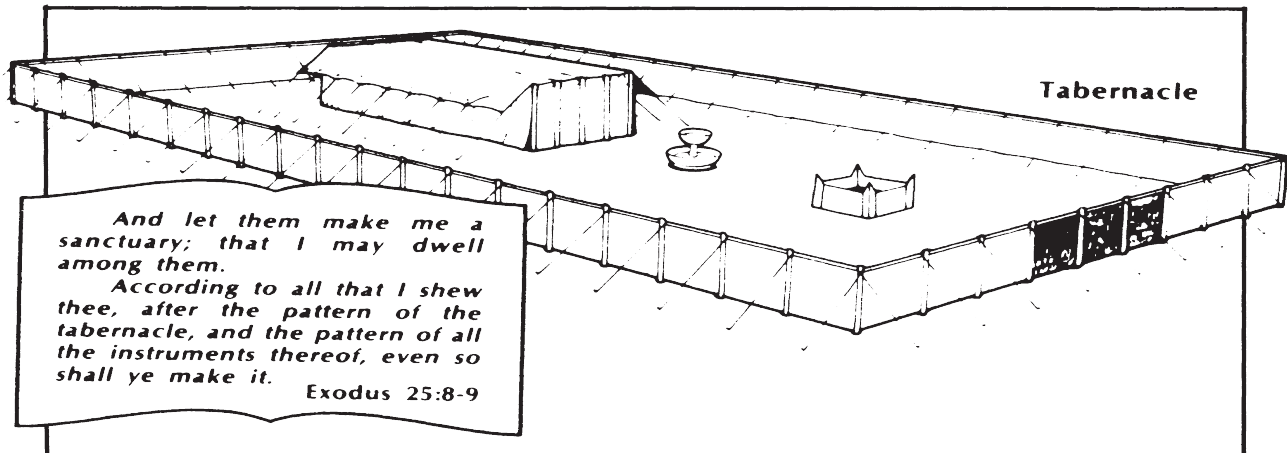
And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him up, and everyone whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.

And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered an offering of gold unto the Lord ... And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair (Exodus 35:20-22, 25, 26).

The rulers of the people brought the rich stones needed for this work. They also brought the oil for the light, the spices for the anointing oil, and the sweet incense (Exodus 35:27, 28). The people responded so generously that soon they had too much of everything, and Moses sent word throughout the camp that they should not make any more work or bring any more material (Exodus 36:5-7).

Chapter 11

BUILDING THE TABERNACLE



The Lord called Bezaleel, a grandson of Hur, by name. He was apparently skilled in many crafts and endowed by the Lord with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in all these things. He seems to have been appointed, with the help of Aholiab, to teach others also to do this work (Exodus 35:30-35).

Bezaleel probably assigned the various jobs to craftsmen skilled in specific areas. One group would work on the curtains and coverings for the Tabernacle (Exodus 36:8-19) while another made the boards for the walls, the bars that held them together, and the silver sockets which formed the foundation for the walls (Exodus 36:20-34). Perhaps the same group that made the coverings also made the veil which formed the partition between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle.

The Walls of the Tabernacle Exodus 36:20-34

All of God's instructions to Moses concerning the building of the Tabernacle and all that pertained to it are recorded twice in Exodus. The patterns, materials, and directions concerning the production of each item were given to Moses during his first stay in the mountain with the Lord. These are recorded in Exodus 25-31.

However, the actual construction of the Tabernacle waited until after his second period on Sinai with the Lord and after Moses had received the free will offerings. This is recorded in Exodus 36-39.

When erected, the Tabernacle was thirty cubits long, ten cubits wide, and ten cubits

high. The length of the ancient cubit was the measure of a man's forearm. It is now assumed to have been about eighteen inches. This will help us estimate the approximate size of the Tabernacle, the court, and the various pieces of furniture.

The walls of the Tabernacle were formed of boards ten cubits long and one and one-half cubits wide. They were made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. Each board had two tenons (projections) in one end which fitted into two silver sockets. There were twenty boards each for the north and south sides of the Tabernacle, making it thirty cubits long. There were six boards and two corner boards, which extended one-half cubit at each corner of the west end wall, making it ten cubits wide.

There were five bars of acacia wood overlaid with gold for each of the three walls of the Tabernacle. The bars were slipped through gold rings on the outer side of the boards to hold them firmly together. One long bar was slipped through rings along the linear center and extended the full length of the wall. Above and below the middle bar were two short bars which were likewise slipped through rings.

The Tabernacle's front, always set up to face the east, hung on pillars and was made only of a curtain called the outer veil.

The workmen did not erect the Tabernacle as they progressed with the work. Instead, they simply made each needed piece exactly according to the pattern that God gave Moses. The Tabernacle had to be portable as the people would be traveling much of the time until they reached the Land of Canaan. It was designed so it could be set up and taken down with a minimum of labor and time.

The Tabernacle Coverings Exodus 36:8-19

Four different coverings were made for the Tabernacle. The first covering, which formed the inside ceiling, was made of ten strips of fine linen. Each strip was twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide. The ten strips were made into two separate sections of five strips each, the strips probably being sewed together.

Each of the two sections were twenty cubits wide and twenty-eight cubits long. They were to be coupled together by sewing fifty loops of blue material on one selva edge of each section. The loops were fastened together with fifty taches (clasps) of gold.

Coupled together, the two sections measured forty cubits long and twenty-eight cubits wide. When draped over the Tabernacle, the covering spanned the thirty cubits from the front to the rear with ten extra cubits to extend to the ground. The twenty-eight cubits covered the width of the Tabernacle with nine cubits to fall almost to the ground on each side. This fine linen covering was embroidered with cherubims in blue, purple, and scarlet (Exodus 26:1-6; 36:8-13; 35:35).

The second covering for the Tabernacle, which would be placed over the top of the fine linen, was made of spun goat hair woven into fabric (Exodus 35:26). This covering was made of eleven strips which were thirty cubits long and four cubits wide. The eleven strips were made into two sections, one of five strips sewed together, and one of six strips sewed together.

The two sections were then coupled together in the same fashion as were those of the fine linen covering, except their loops were fastened together with taches (clasps) of brass. The extra strip on one section was folded back over the doorway of the Tabernacle, and the covering fell over the other three sides to the ground,

The third covering for the Tabernacle was made of rams' skins, dyed red. The fourth, which was the outside covering, was made of badgers' skins (Exodus 36:19). There were no measurements given of the last two coverings, but it is presumed that they were large enough to cover the Tabernacle and drape over the walls, perhaps to the ground, as did the first two coverings.

These four coverings were certainly sufficient to protect the Tabernacle and its furnishings, and those who served within, from the weather, as well as from the eyes of all those on the outside.

The Inner Veil Exodus 36:35, 36

The inner veil was one of the most important items of the Tabernacle because of its location, purpose, and significance. It was a curtain of fine twined linen, embroidered with cherubims in blue, purple, and scarlet. It was as beautiful as the fine linen covering of the Tabernacle which formed the ceiling above it.

Hanging on golden hooks attached to four acacia wood pillars, the veil formed the partition between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The pillars, overlaid with gold, were set in silver sockets and placed ten cubits from the rear west wall, making the Most Holy Place a perfect cube of ten cubits.

The veil was said to have been hung under the taches (Exodus 26:33). This was where the two sections of the fine linen covering were coupled together with golden clasps through the blue loops. It was also the place where the two goat hair sections were fastened together with brass taches. One section of the linen covering reached from the doorway of the Tabernacle, on the east, to the place of the four pillars, on which hung the inner veil. The other section covered the Most Holy Place and hung over the west wall to the ground.

The Outer Veil Exodus 36, 37, 38

The curtain hanging across the east end of the Tabernacle formed its doorway. It

was made of fine twined linen, embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet, but not with cherubims. This curtain, called the first veil, was hung on five pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold, which were set in brass sockets.

A chapter is the upper part of a column or pillar. Here they seem to have been crowns on top of the pillars. The fillet was probably a band or molding beneath the crown. Both the crowns and fillets were overlaid with gold, and the curtain was hung on gold hooks from the pillars.

The Tabernacle Court Exodus 38:9-19

The court around the Tabernacle was one hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide. It was enclosed by a wall of fine linen curtains five cubits high. One hundred cubits of fine linen curtains were hung on twenty pillars for each of the north and south side walls, and fifty cubits of fine linen curtains were hung on ten pillars for the west wall. The east wall was composed of fifteen cubits of linen curtains which hung on three pillars from each corner, leaving twenty cubits in the center for the court gateway.

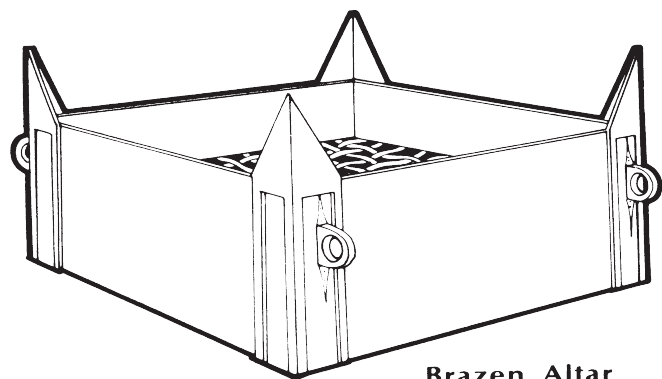
The curtain for the gateway was twenty cubits of fine linen, embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet. It was hung on four pillars.

All the pillars of the court walls had chapters and fillets overlaid with silver. Likewise, the hooks on which the curtains were hung were of silver. The pins and cords of the court (Exodus 35:18) seem to imply stakes driven in the ground on the outside of the court to which were anchored cords from the pillars to hold them steady.

The Brazen Altar Exodus 37:25-28

The brazen altar, on which all the sacrifices were offered, was placed inside the court, between the gateway of the court and the door of the Tabernacle. It was also called "the Altar of Burnt Offerings."

It was made of acacia wood overlaid with brass. It was five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high. On each of its four corners, it had horns which were also made of acacia wood overlaid with brass. Its grate was a network of brass with a brass ring in each corner.



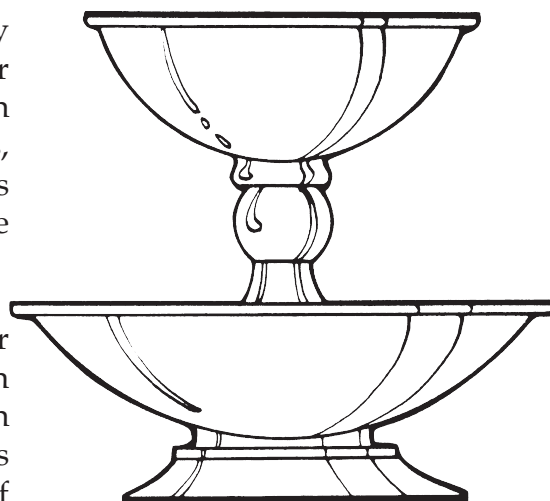
Brazen Altar

The inside of the altar was hollow, and it appears that the grate was placed inside about midway of its height, beneath its compass, or perimeter (Exodus 27:5, 8). As the rings on the four corners of the grate were for the purpose of inserting staves by which to carry it, they must have extended to the outside. Staves of acacia wood overlaid with brass were inserted in the rings on two sides.

All the vessels and tools used in the service of the brazen altar were made of brass. They were basins, shovels, flesh hook, fire pans, and pans to receive the ashes.

The Laver Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8

The laver was a large basin, presumably round, which rested on a pedestal. Both the laver and its pedestal were made of brass. The women brought an offering of their looking glasses, plates of highly polished brass that served as mirrors, of which the laver and its pedestal were made.



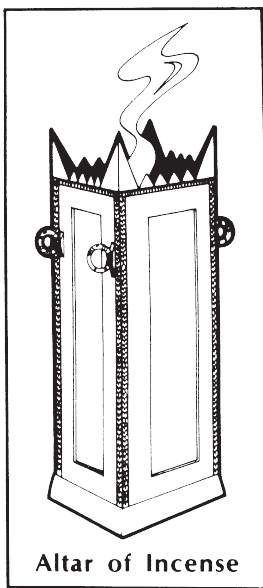
Brazen Laver

The laver was placed between the brazen altar and the door of the Tabernacle. It was filled with water, and the priests, after offering sacrifices on the altar of burnt offerings, washed their hands and feet before they could enter the Holy Place of the Tabernacle to perform the service of the Lord.

The Holy Place Exodus 26:33

The first room of the Tabernacle was called the Holy Place. It was entered from the court through the first veil, the curtain over the doorway. The Holy Place, being twenty cubits long, ten cubits wide, and ten cubits high, was separated from the Most Holy Place by the inner veil, the beautiful, fine linen curtain embroidered with cherubims.

The walls and ceiling of the Holy Place were the same as the walls and ceiling of the Most Holy Place: boards overlaid with gold and the fine linen covering over the Tabernacle. It was a beautiful room, and its beauty was enhanced by its three pieces of furniture: the golden altar of incense, the golden table of shewbread, and the golden candlestick (the lampstand with seven lamps). This room was also called the "Tabernacle of the Congregation" (Exodus 27:21).



Altar of Incense

The Golden Altar of Incense Exodus 37:25-28

On Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the patterns, in minute detail, for the Tabernacle and for each piece of furniture. He carefully instructed him to make each item exactly according to the pattern (Exodus 25:9, 40).

The altar of incense was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was one cubit square and two cubits high. It had a gold crown around its top edge with gold horns at each corner and gold rings on two sides, near the corners, just below the crown. Staves overlaid with gold were inserted through the rings for carrying it.

The altar of incense was placed near the veil, which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The priests were to continually burn incense on it. This was very special incense (Exodus 30:34-38) and could not be used for any other purpose. Its sweet aroma filtered through the veil into God's presence over the ark between the cherubims.

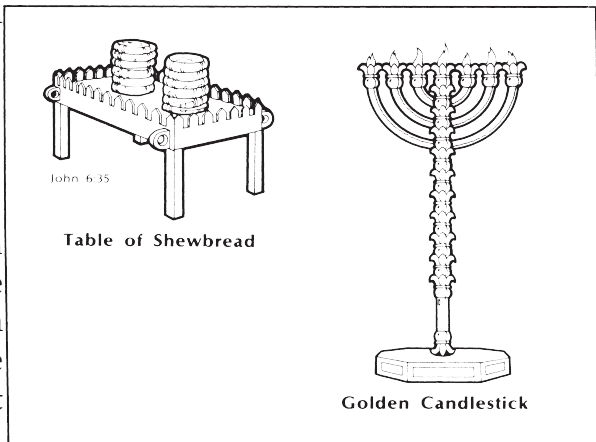
The Table of Shewbread Exodus 37:10-16

The table of shewbread was made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. It was two cubits long, one cubit wide, and one and one-half cubits high. It had a handbreadth border around its four sides, with a crown of gold rising above its top edge. It had rings of gold at each end of its two long sides, through which staves overlaid with gold would be inserted for carrying.

Its dishes, spoons, and bowls with covers, which were to be used in its service, were made of gold. The priests were to keep twelve loaves of bread, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel, on the table continually. The loaves were to be placed in two rows, with six in each row. The priests replaced the loaves with fresh bread each Sabbath and ate the loaves that they removed (Exodus 40:22, 23; Leviticus 24:5-9).

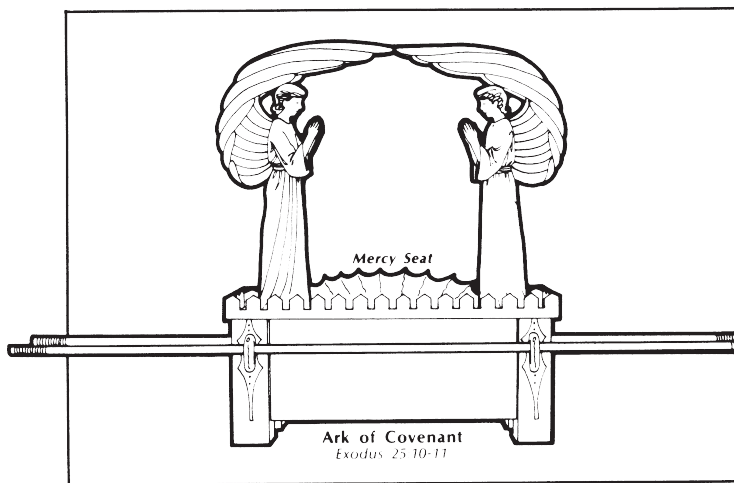
The Golden Candlestick Exodus 37:17-24

The golden candlestick was really a lampstand, having seven lamps which were fed by wicks from oil in its bowls. Made from one piece of pure gold beaten into an ornate form by skilled workmen (Exodus 31:1-6), it had a center shaft which rested on a pedestal



and six branches, three on each side. There was a knob (knob) where each two branches (one on either side) extended from the shaft. The seven lamps were at the top of the six branches and the center shaft. There were knobs and flowers beaten into the shaft and each of the six branches.

A very special and pure olive oil was prepared for the lamps (Exodus 27:20). One talent of gold was used to make the candlestick and its snuffers and snuff dishes (Exodus 37:23, 24). It was placed along the south wall of the room, across the room from the table of shewbread.



The Ark of the Covenant Exodus 37:1-9

The ark of the covenant was doubtlessly the most important item of the Tabernacle. Its contents indicate it was the emblem of God's presence. It was a chest, two cubits long, one and one-half cubits wide, and one and one-half cubits high, which was made of acacia wood and overlaid within and without with gold. It had a gold crown around its

top edge and gold rings at its corners on the two sides, through which staves, overlaid with gold, were inserted for carrying it.

The cover for the ark, the mercy seat, was made of pure gold with a cherubim of pure gold on each end. They faced each other, their wings spread and touching over the mercy seat. The Shekinah glory of God was manifested over the mercy seat, between the cherubims.

The Lord said to Moses, "And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee" (Exodus 25:16). In obedience to this command, the tables of stone on which God had written the Ten Commandments were put into the ark (Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:10, 11). The Lord gave Moses many words of His law which Moses wrote in a book and read to the people. When they promised to obey all God's words, he sprinkled the blood of their sacrifice upon them and confirmed the covenant they had made with the Lord. Perhaps this was also placed in the ark (Exodus 24:3-8) alongside the golden pot of manna which was a memorial of God's faithfulness to the people (Exodus 16:33-35). Also included in the ark was Aaron's rod that budded as proof to all the people that Aaron had been chosen of the Lord as their high priest, and also to condemn those who had rebelled against him and Moses (Numbers 17:1-11).

Chapter III

Aaron Chosen as High Priest

Exodus 28:1

Aaron worked with Moses throughout the whole conflict with Pharaoh. Later Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands while Joshua won the battle against Amalek (Exodus 17:8-13). And on the occasion of Moses' first forty days and nights on Mount Sinai, God told him to anoint Aaron as high priest and Aaron's sons to work with him in the priesthood (Exodus 28:1).

However, while Moses was on the mountain, Aaron yielded to the demand of the people to make them a golden calf (Deuteronomy 9:20). Both God and Moses were furious with Aaron for this great sin (Exodus 32:7-35). Nevertheless, Moses interceded before the Lord for his brother. By God's great mercy, Aaron was restored to favor, and he and his sons were consecrated to the priesthood.

The Priestly Garments Exodus 28:2-43

"And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty" (Exodus 28:2).

The costly and beautiful garments, carefully made according to the instructions of the Lord, were not for show, no more than were the beautiful pieces of furniture made for the Tabernacle. Only Moses and the priests were permitted to enter the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, and the high priest alone was permitted to go into the Most Holy Place once each year on the Day of Atonement. And they only wore these garments when they were serving at the brazen altar, in the Holy Place and during the service of the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Exodus 28:43).

Instead of being for show, the garments were made for their significant value to the people of Israel and for their typical value concerning the coming of God's spiritual kingdom. They were to impress upon Israel God's majesty, glory, and authority, and the importance of absolute obedience to all of His commandments. The whole Tabernacle service was designed to teach the people of Israel that the first concern of their lives was to worship and glorify their Creator, the Lord God Almighty.

The same skilled and willing workmen who made the Tabernacle and all that pertained to it were called to fashion the garments for Aaron and his sons. The garments for Aaron, the high priest, stood out as special in comparison with those of his sons. The high priest's garments consisted of an ephod, a breastplate, a robe, an embroidered coat, a mitre (turban), and a girdle. On the other hand, the priestly attire for Aaron's sons included coats, girdles, and bonnets (Exodus 28:4, 40).

The materials and colors for all these garments were gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. The colors seem to have been embroidered on the fine linen, except for the robe, which was made of blue woven material (Exodus 39:22). Short breeches were also fashioned as undergarments for both Aaron and his sons (Exodus 28:42, 43).

The Ephod Exodus 28:6-14

From its description the ephod seems to have been like a vest or sleeveless jacket. Its front and back sections were joined on the shoulders, with an onyx stone on each shoulder, set in an ouch (socket) of gold. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraved on the two stones, six names on each stone. The high priest always carried these names, which represented the whole congregation of Israel, on his shoulders to signify his strength when he went before the Lord.

The curious girdle seems to have been embroidered or adorned with needle work and was probably attached to the ephod at the waistline (Exodus 28:8). The gold was skillfully made into fine wire and embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet (Exodus 39:3).

The Breastplate Exodus 28:15-29

The breastplate, made of the same fine linen as the ephod, was embroidered in cunning work of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet. It was doubled to make about a nine-inch square, a span. It was adorned with twelve different stones which were set in four rows of three. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraved on these stones, one name per stone.

The breastplate was bound to the ephod by golden chains attached to gold rings in the top edge of the breastplate. The chains were then fastened by two ouches on the two shoulder pieces of the ephod. The lower edge of the breastplate was fastened to the ephod by gold chains in gold rings on the lower edge of the breastplate and attached to the ephod just above the girdle. It was never to be loosed from the ephod but always worn with it. This signified that each time the high priest went before the Lord to make the yearly atonement, he represented the whole congregation of Israel on his heart.

Urim and Thummim Exodus 28:30

The breastplate, being doubled, formed a pouch into which the Urim and Thummim could be placed. The Scripture does not state what the Urim and Thummim were, but the names mean "lights and perfections." They were used, in some way not clearly expressed, in determining the will of God for His leaders and His people.

It was the responsibility of the high priest of Israel to always be in contact with the

Lord so that he might guide and advise the king and the people concerning God's will in important decisions.

When Moses was nearing the end of his life, God chose Joshua to succeed him as Israel's leader (Numbers 27:15-23). The Lord said to Moses:

And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation (Numbers 27:21).

Aaron had died before the death of Moses, and his son Eleazar was now the high priest (Numbers 20:23-29).

Another example of the use of Urim and Thummim is found in Ezra 2:63, "And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim." This was after the Babylonian captivity, when Zerubbabel had led a group of Israelites back to Jerusalem. Zerubbabel was the governor (the Tirshatha), but only the high priest was authorized by the Lord to carry the Urim and Thummim in the pouch of the breastplate.

The Robe Exodus 28:31-35

The robe was made of blue, woven material (Exodus 39:22). It seems to have been made of a single strip of blue fabric. It probably was folded in half and a hole cut in the center of the fold large enough to slip over the head. The hole was then bound with a band of fabric so it would not tear. The sides of the front and back of the robe were probably sewed together under the arms, leaving an opening for the arms.

The ephod, with the attached breastplate, was worn over the robe, and the curious girdle of the ephod girded the robe at the waistline (Exodus 29:5-7).

The hem of the robe was decorated all the way around it with blue, purple, and scarlet pomegranates and golden bells. There was a gold bell between each pomegranate. The bells made a tinkling sound as the high priest walked. When he went in before the Lord to make the yearly atonement, those on the outside listened for the sound of the bells. So long as they heard the bells, they knew he was performing the ceremony and that his atonement was being accepted by the Lord.

The Holy Crown Exodus 28:36-38

The holy crown was a plate of pure gold on which was engraved "Holiness unto the Lord." It was fastened on the front of the mitre with a lace of blue. The mitre, made of fine linen (Exodus 39:28), was probably a turban, with the linen bound around the

head in turban style. This was the crowning touch of the high priest's ministerial attire. This signified that he, as the people's representative to the Lord, made atonement for their sins that they might be accepted of the Lord. It also indicated that he had been ceremonially sanctified and was considered to be holy.

Chapter IV

SETTING UP THE TABERNACLE

Exodus 40:1-38

The high priest's mitre was the last item of all the work of the Tabernacle to be finished. The Tabernacle had not yet been erected, but every article that went into its construction, its court, its furniture, and the priestly garments were complete, exactly as the Lord had instructed Moses. The skilled workmen and willing laborers had toiled faithfully for almost nine months. They now brought it all to Moses to be set up (Exodus 39:32-43).

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up (Exodus 40:1, 2, 17).

It had been almost a year since God, by the hand of Moses, had led the people of Israel out of Egypt. They had gone out on the fifteenth day of the first month of their new year, which was the day following their first Passover (Exodus 12:1-11, 29-36, 40-42). This was a new beginning for the children of Israel. And henceforth their calendar year would begin with the month Abib. They had killed the first Passover lamb on the fourteenth of the month Abib and had put the blood over their doors. At midnight the Lord had passed over all the first born of Israel when He smote the first born of all the Egyptians.

The death of the firstborns was the final stroke that had broken Pharaoh's stubborn will. He rose up in the night and demanded that Moses and Aaron leave immediately with all the people of Israel, their flocks and their herds.

"And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men" (Exodus 12:33). So, Moses, with all Israel, left Egypt on the fifteenth day of their first new year. This was 430 years after Joseph's family had moved to Egypt (Exodus 12:30-42).

After Moses had set up the Tabernacle exactly as the Lord had instructed him, the ark was placed within the Holiest of Holies, inaccessible to all but the high priest, who ministered before the Lord on the Day of Atonement (Exodus 40:18-21).

When the erection of the Tabernacle was finished, the Lord dedicated it. He manifested His approval of the obedience of Moses, the free will offerings of the people, and the faithful labor of all the skilled workers. "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able

to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34, 35).

From that time, so long as the people pleased the Lord by their obedience, His glory manifested itself in the Most Holy Place as a cloud over the mercy seat between the cherubims. And to all the host of Israel outside in their camps, He revealed His presence by the cloud and fire which hovered over the Tabernacle (Numbers 9:15-20).

The Tabernacle was very portable. It was necessary that it be easily dismantled and reassembled because the people would be traveling most of the time till they reached Canaan. As long as they camped, the cloud of the Lord was above the Tabernacle by day, and the pillar of fire was there by night. When the cloud lifted, they broke camp and continued their journey to the Promised Land, always led by the cloud and pillar of fire. When the cloud hovered, they camped (Exodus 40:36-38).

Chapter V

THE TRIBE OF LEVI CHOSEN FOR SERVICE

Numbers 1:1-54

One month after the Tabernacle had been set up, the Lord told Moses to number all the men over twenty years old of the congregation of the children of Israel who were able to go to war. They were numbered first by families, and then by tribes. The total who qualified as warriors was 603,550 (Numbers 1:1-46). By divine command the Levites were excluded from this number.

The twelve tribes of Israel came from the twelve sons of Jacob. In reviewing the names of the twelve tribes, however, we find no tribe named after Joseph. Before Jacob died, he told Joseph, "Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow (Genesis 48:22).

Joseph and his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, had visited his father who was now sick. Jacob told Joseph how the Lord had blessed and multiplied him. Then he said, "And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine" (Genesis 48:5).

He then blessed the sons of Joseph, and said, "God made thee as Ephraim and Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers" (Genesis 48:20, 21). So, in the course of time, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were numbered among the tribes of Israel, but there was not a tribe of Joseph.

The two tribes that came from Joseph would have swelled the number of the tribes of Israel to thirteen. But Jacob only had twelve sons and the tribes have always been numbered as twelve. God had other plans for the extra tribe.

He now revealed to Moses that He had chosen the tribe of Levi for the priestly tribe. This had been God's plan from the beginning, but He did not make it known till after the Levites had taken their stand with God in His judgment of Israel for worshipping the golden calf (Exodus 32:26-28). Consequently, the tribe of Levi, of which were Moses and Aaron, was no longer numbered among the other tribes (Numbers 1:47-49). God ordained that the priesthood should remain in the family of Aaron and that the other families of the tribe of Levi were to be helpers and attendants to the priests in the work of the Lord.

On the night of the first Passover in Egypt, when all the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain, God passed over all the firstborn of Israel because they had the blood of the

lamb over their doors. The Lord, by this act, bought Israel's firstborns to Himself for His service. However, when it was time to introduce and consecrate the priesthood, He revealed His plan to exchange the firstborn sons of all the tribes of Israel for the Levites (Numbers 3:11-16).

This might sound as if God had an afterthought, a change of plan, but the Lord has no need for an afterthought because He knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9, 10). He is always right, and He has planned everything from the beginning in relation to what He knows men's actions and choices will be.

After Moses and Aaron had numbered all the Levites and found them to be twenty-two thousand (Numbers 3:39), the Lord commanded them to number all the firstborn sons of Israel. The total of the firstborn sons exceeded the number of the Levites by 273. The Lord then told Moses to exchange the firstborn sons for the Levites, but to redeem the 273 firstborn sons above the number of the Levites by the payment of five shekels each. The redemption money was given to Aaron and his sons (Numbers 3:40-51).

Chapter VI

ARRANGEMENT OF THE CAMP OF ISRAEL

Numbers 2:1-34

Those who do not believe in organization in the work of the Lord need to study God's organization of the building of the Tabernacle, the services of the priesthood, the arrangement of the camp of Israel, the services of the Levites, and the formation of this vast group as they traveled through the wilderness. Throughout the Bible God is shown to be a God of order and organization. When any phase of God's work is properly organized according to His divine plan, everything will move smoothly. But without proper organization there is only chaos. The Lord used Moses, Aaron, Aaron's sons, the Levites, the heads of the tribes, and the heads of the families; but the plans and instructions came from Him. He gave His instructions to Moses; Moses passed His word on to the responsible group.

The body of Christ, the church, is one body of many members. If the members are obedient to the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Ghost, each one will find his place in the body according to the will and plan of God (I Corinthians 12:1-28; Romans 8:14).

The Lord gave Moses the design for the camp of Israel; Moses directed the people according to God's pattern. The Tabernacle, its Most Holy Place being the dwelling place of God, was the center of the camp and always erected to face the east.

Each of the twelve tribes of Israel had a captain over the entire tribe. He would set a standard, a center for his appointed camp, and the people would gather around his banner.

The twelve tribes were assigned to camp "far off" from the Tabernacle. This was to leave room near the court of the Tabernacle for the Levites, who had been assigned to do the work of the Tabernacle, especially in the matter of taking it down, in preparation to journey, and setting it up again when the cloud hovered over them as a signal to camp (Numbers 1:50-54).

God's instructions to Moses began with Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun who were assigned to camp on the far east side in front of the Tabernacle (Numbers 2:3-9). Reuben, Simeon, and Gad were to camp on the far south side (Numbers 2:10-16). Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin were given the far west side to the rear of the Tabernacle (Numbers 2:18-24). And Dan, Asher, and Naphtali were allotted the far north side (Numbers 2:25-30).

The Lord then appointed the Levites' places of encampment. There were three large family groups of the tribe of Levi, besides the family of Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons.

The three groups were the descendants of the three sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari (Numbers 3:14-17). The Gershonites, descendants of Gershon, were assigned to camp on the west side of the court, behind the Tabernacle (Numbers 3:23, 24). The Kohathites, children of Kohath, were allotted the south side of the court wall (Numbers 3:29, 30). And the Merarites, posterity of Merari, were apportioned the north side of the court wall (Numbers 3:35). On the east side, in front of the court, was the camp of Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons (Numbers 3:38).

The Levites' camp assignment was in relation to each group's specific duties. These responsibilities related specifically to the dismantling of the Tabernacle in preparation for journeying and its erection when they camped. The men of each of the three groups, from thirty to fifty years old, were assigned to do this work.

The Kohathites were given the charge of the holy things. This included those items pertaining to the ministry of the priests: the ark, the altar of incense, the table of shewbread, the candlestick, the laver, and the brazen altar, with all the vessels and tools used in the service of each.

However, only the priests were permitted to enter the area of these articles, and only the high priest was permitted to enter the realm of the ark. All the objects in these regions had to be dismantled and covered thoroughly by the priests before the Kohathites could enter to carry them out (Numbers 4:1-15). The Lord cautioned Moses and Aaron to carefully cover everything before the Kohathites entered, lest they should be guilty of causing them to be cut off from the Levites by death (Numbers 4:17-20).

The Gershonites were charged with the care and transportation of all the coverings of the Tabernacle, the inner and outer veils, the curtains of the court walls and the court gate, with all their cords, and all that pertained to these things (Numbers 4:21-28). Aaron and his sons appointed individuals to specific duties, and they served under the direction of Ithamar, Aaron's son.

The Merarites were charged with the care and transportation of all the boards with their bars and sockets, all the pillars of the Tabernacle and the court walls with their sockets, pins, and cords, and all the tools used in erecting them. They also served under the direction of Ithamar (Numbers 4:29-33).

After Moses had set up the Tabernacle and sanctified everything that pertained to it, and after the manifestation of God in the Tabernacle, each of the captains (princes) of the twelve tribes brought an offering from his tribe before the Lord. Collectively, they brought six covered wagons and twelve oxen. There was one ox from each tribe and one wagon from each two tribes.

The Lord told Moses to give the wagons and the oxen to the Levites, according to their

particular assigned services. Moses gave two wagons and four oxen to the Gershonites who cared for and transported all the coverings and curtains of the Tabernacle and the court (Numbers 7:1-7). He gave four wagons and eight oxen to the Merarites, whose charge included the care and transportation of all the boards, bars, pillars and sockets of the Tabernacle and the court (Numbers 7:1-8).

Moses was very fair in his disbursement of the wagons and oxen in relation to the burdens of the two groups. No wagons were given to the Kohathites because they cared for the holy things which were to be carried (Numbers 4:4-15; 7:9). These articles were to be borne by the Levites because of their relationship to the holy services of the priests. All the pieces of furniture had staves through rings on two sides, by which they were transported.

Chapter VII

THE CLOUD LIFTED FROM THE TABERNACLE

Numbers 10:1-36

Before the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, the Lord said to Moses, “Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps” (Numbers 10:2). It would have been very difficult for Moses to direct the tribes of Israel as they camped and journeyed without the trumpet signals. The trumpets could be heard in the most far off camps of the tribes. The Lord also advised Moses concerning the various signals, and to which particular group each signal should be directed. Moses, in turn, informed all the people concerning the meaning of the various trumpet signals. The trumpets were also used for other occasions, but perhaps they were most helpful in directing the movements of this vast company in its journeys.

The trumpets were used to assemble the whole nation or to call the captains of each tribe for any necessary purpose. They were used in case of war, and on certain occasions, in worship (Numbers 10:9; 29:1; Leviticus 23:24; Psalm 81:3). The blowing of the trumpets by the priests was an ordinance of Israel throughout their generations (Numbers 10:8, 10; 31:6; I Chronicles 15:24; II Chronicles 13:10-12).

And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran (Numbers 10:11, 12).

Israel’s journeying was organized according to the arrangement of their camp. Moses, with the silver trumpet, signaled to each group when it was to move. The three tribes camped on the east side, in front of the Tabernacle, were ordered to move out first with Judah leading the way. Each tribe followed their captain.

With the three eastern tribes leading the way, the Gershonites, with their two wagons and four oxen loaded with all the Tabernacle’s coverings and curtains, joined the throng after Zebulun. They were followed by the Merarites with their four wagons and eight oxen loaded with all the boards, bars, pillars, sockets, and everything that was necessary for the setting up of the Tabernacle (Numbers 10:17). The Gershonites and Merarites were near the front of the line so, when they camped, they could set up the Tabernacle and have it ready when the Kohathites arrived with the furniture (Numbers 10:21). It was also necessary for the Tabernacle to be set up so the tribes could locate their camping positions.

The tribes which camped south of the Tabernacle, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, followed the wagons that transported the Tabernacle (Numbers 10: 18-20). They were

joined by the Kohathites bearing the holy furniture of the sanctuary and court, who traveled far enough behind the wagons so the Tabernacle and court would be ready when they arrived with the furniture (Numbers 10:21).

The tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, who camped west of the Tabernacle, fell in line after the Kohathites (Numbers 10:22-24). And, bringing up the rear, were the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, who camped on the north side of the Tabernacle.

Israel's first journey with the Tabernacle, lasted three days. They traveled from the wilderness of Sinai to the wilderness of Paran (Numbers 10:11, 12). We will not follow them further in our study of the Tabernacle, but for the next forty years God led them in the wilderness by the cloud and fire, under the command of Moses. After the death of Moses, God continued to lead them across the Jordan river into the Promised Land under the direction of Joshua.

I suppose many people might question where the people of Israel obtained the gold, silver, brass, and precious stones that went into building the Tabernacle, the garments for the priests, and the wagons and oxen that were used to convey these things on their journeys. The answer is simple. They brought them from Egypt.

After the death of the firstborn sons of the Egyptians, Pharaoh practically forced them to leave immediately and told them to take all their belongings, flocks and herds with them (Exodus 12:30-33). Moses told the people, probably by the word of the Lord, to ask the Egyptians for these things. They gladly gave them in order to have the Israelites leave immediately (Exodus 12:34-36).

And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians (Exodus 12:36).

They came out of Egypt with great substance (Genesis 15:14).

Chapter VIII

THE PRIESTHOOD MINISTRY

God ordained a ministry of priests before the foundation of the world. This was a part of His plan of redemption in Christ. We learn from the Bible that the people were familiar with the ministry of priests very early in the history of the human race. The earliest record of a priest was that of Melchizedec. He was the king of Salem and the priest of the Most High God. He met and blessed Abraham, who was returning from the slaughter of the kings and the rescue of Lot and the people of Sodom (Genesis 14:14-20).

The ministry of the priesthood is very important to the work of the Lord. In the time of the Patriarchs, the father (head) of each family or tribe became its priest. Melchizedec was such a priest.

The priests were God's mediators, used to teach and guide their off springs and those under their care in the way of the Lord. They believed in God and felt constrained to teach and train others in the faith of God and right living. When a priest died, his oldest son inherited, as his birthright, his father's position as priest of the family. This was the birthright which Jacob bought from Esau. Similarly, Job was a priest to his family. And God, who inspired such faith, honored him (Job 1:1-12).

Now that the descendants of Jacob had grown into this vast company of people, it was important that they should also have the guidance of a priesthood. For this purpose, God assigned to Moses the building of the Tabernacle for the people of Israel. The Lord also, at this time, told Moses to set his brother Aaron apart to be Israel's first high priest, and Aaron's sons to work with him in the priesthood (Exodus 28:1-3).

God later ordained of Levi, the tribe to which Moses and Aaron belonged, as the priestly tribe. God appointed the family of Aaron for the dynasty of the priests throughout the generations of the kingdom of Israel (Exodus 40:12-15). But He chose the other families of Levi to serve the priests in duties other than the ministry.

The Tabernacle, with its furniture and vessels, was built for the services of the priests. It could have served no purpose without these ceremonies. God put Aaron and his sons, under the leadership of Moses, in charge of the Tabernacle ministry. This ministry began with the sacrifices on the brazen altar in the court of the Tabernacle.

When the Tabernacle was set up and everything put in order for the priests to begin their services, God Himself dedicated the Tabernacle with a manifestation of His glory, and the priests could not enter. Later, however, Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons and dressed them in their holy garments, and they began their ministry (Leviticus 8:1-36; 9:1-24).

The ministry of the Aaronic priests was a daily affair. They offered sacrifices every morning for their own sins and those of all the people. They were responsible to keep the fire always burning on the brazen altar, the altar of burnt offerings. They were required to burn wood on it every morning and to never let the fire go out (Leviticus 6:8-13).

This seems to have been the fire that the Lord Himself started in the beginning of the priests' ministry in the Tabernacle (Leviticus 9:22-24). But two of Aaron's sons failed in this responsibility. They probably had let the fire go out on the brazen altar and attempted to burn incense in their censers with strange fire (fire of their own kindling). The Lord sent fire from heaven upon them, and Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord for their sin of disobedience (Leviticus 10:1-7). This left only Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons, to serve with him in the priesthood.

Each morning, after offering the daily sacrifices, the priests washed their hands and feet in the laver. Only then could they enter the Holy Place, the sanctuary, through the first veil which was hung over the doorway of the Tabernacle. It seems to have been Aaron's responsibility to burn sweet incense on the golden altar of incense each morning.

He then dressed the lamps by trimming their wicks and adding fresh oil to their bowls (Exodus 30:7, 8). Each Sabbath Day the priests put fresh bread on the table of shewbread and removed that which had been placed on it the Sabbath before.

The most important and responsible act of Aaron, as high priest, was the offering of the yearly atonement. He was required to make atonement first for himself and his family, and then again for all the congregation of Israel. He was required to go through the full ceremony each time.

First, he killed his sacrifice and sprinkled the blood on the altar and the horns of the altar seven times. He then washed in the laver and put on his holy garments: the linen breeches, the embroidered coat, the blue robe over the coat, the ephod with its curious girdle and the attached breastplate with the Urim and Thummim, and the mitre with the gold crown, on which was engraved "Holiness unto the Lord."

He next took a censer (a gold pan) with burning coals of fire from the brazen altar, with sweet incense in his hand and some of the blood of the sacrifice. He took these to the golden altar of incense in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, where he sprinkled blood on the altar of incense. He then burned the sweet incense on the censer, which formed a cloud over the mercy seat as he went within the veil into the presence of God where he sprinkled some of the blood on the mercy seat.

When he had performed the full ceremony exactly according to God's pattern, he

was accepted of the Lord as being holy. He then repeated the full ceremony for the whole house of Israel.

The sacrifice that Aaron offered for himself was somewhat different from that which he offered for all the people. He offered a young bullock for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt-offering for himself and his house. However, for the whole congregation of Israel, he took two kids for a sin-offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

He presented the goats before the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle, and cast lots on them, one lot for the Lord and one for the scapegoat (Leviticus 16:5, 7-10). The goat on which the Lord's lot fell was killed for the sacrifice, and the scapegoat was turned loose in the wilderness. Before the live goat was led out into the wilderness, Aaron laid both hands on its head and confessed all the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of all the people of Israel, to send them away with the goat (Leviticus 16:21). The goat that was sacrificed had made atonement for the scapegoat.

The high priest made the atonement each year on the tenth day of the seventh month (Leviticus 16:29-31). He went before the Lord in holy garments, bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his shoulders in the ephod, a type of strength, and the same names of twelve tribes on the breastplate over his heart, a type of loving concern for them. The gold plate on the front of his mitre, engraved with "Holiness unto the Lord," was also an important emblem, by which he was approved of God as being holy.

This ceremonial atonement, however, did not take away the people's sins (Hebrews 10:4). It only postponed God's judgment of their sins for another year, when the whole ceremony had to be repeated. Nevertheless, the faithful and obedient of Israel were accepted of God on the merits of their faith till Jesus Christ should come to atone for them (Hebrews 11:39, 40).

Chapter IX JESUS CHRIST, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

The priesthood of Jesus Christ is divine and eternal. Paul, speaking of Christ's great priesthood, said:

And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore (Hebrews 7:23-28).

This was the Son of Isaiah's prophecy, whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

The priesthood of Jesus Christ involved a new covenant. God confirmed the Abrahamic covenant to the children of Israel at Sinai (Exodus 24:2-8), but they continued to break His covenant throughout their generations. God, knowing that they could not keep His laws without a new birth, had foreordained a new covenant of life in Jesus Christ. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Hebrews 7:19).

About six hundred years before the coming of Christ, Jeremiah had prophesied of this new covenant. We read in Jeremiah 31:31-33:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The covenant of law could not make the people perfect, for it could not take sin out of the nature they had inherited from fallen Adam. But Paul said of the Lord Jesus, "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). He quoted Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant (Hebrews 8:7-12), and then added, "in that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13).

God's new covenant in Jesus Christ replaced the old Mosaic covenant (Hebrews 12:24). Paul, in closing his letter to the Hebrews, pronounced this benediction upon them:

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20-21).

JESUS CHRIST, OUR GREAT KING-PRIEST

The priesthood of Jesus Christ was after the order of Melchizedec (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:5, 6), but the pattern of His priestly service in His gospel was prefigured by the Aaronic priesthood. Being a priest after the order of Melchizedec simply meant that He did not need to belong to a certain tribe or family as did the Aaronic priests. Jesus' mother, Mary, and her husband, Joseph were of the tribe of Judah and the lineage of David, the dynasty of Israel's kings.

Unlike the temporal Aaronic priesthood, the priesthood of Jesus is eternal. God did not make Jesus to be like Melchizedec, but He made Melchizedec to prefigure the priesthood of Jesus. He purposely left the Old Testament record blank concerning the parents, the birth, and the death of Melchizedec (Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:1-3). Melchizedec's record could have had no effect on his priesthood. He was evidently a priest by the will of God, and also a king. His blank record reflected the eternal and everlasting priesthood of Jesus.

The Aaronic priests were separate from their kings. Israel's kings came from the tribe of Judah and the lineage of David, but their priests could come only from the tribe of Levi and the lineage of Aaron. When Aaron died, his son Eleazar was made high priest in his stead.

Jesus is our King-Priest, "Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (Hebrews 7:16). He fills the offices of King, Priest, and Prophet. David prayed to Him, "Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my

meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray" (Psalm 5:1, 2).

Zechariah prophesied of Him:

Thus, speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both (Zechariah 6:12, 13).

Jesus is the Branch (the Son) of David, the son of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1).

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedec (Hebrews 5:8-10).

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16).

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ offered one sacrifice, not of bulls and goats which could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:4), but of Himself on the cross of Calvary to atone for all the sins of all men of the whole world.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of the things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:23-26).

Paul, quoting from David's prophecy of Christ (Psalm 40:6-8), wrote of Jesus:

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering

thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Hebrews 10:5-10).

The ceremonial atonement of the Aaronic priests could not take the people's sins away, but it foreshadowed the coming of Christ, our great High Priest, who made an eternal atonement for all (Romans 6:1, 2; 11 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24, 25; 1 John 3:4-9). John the Baptist witnessed to the coming atonement of Christ: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me" (John 1:29-30).

The Aaronic high priest killed the sacrifice and offered it on the brazen altar. Jesus, however, offered Himself. In the Garden of Gethsemane, while the disciples slept, He won the battle alone when He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). When the multitudes came with swords and staves to take Him, He said to His disciples:

Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me" (Matthew 26:53-55).

His enemies could not lay a hand on Him till it was God's time. He then freely gave Himself into their hands, refusing to defend Himself before the Jews (Matthew 26:59-58), or before Pilate (Matthew 27:11-14; John 19:26-37). His death was not the result of His hanging on the cross for three hours, or of the soldier's piercing His side, but He Himself gave up His spirit unto the Lord (Luke 23:44-46; John 19:28-30).

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again, another scripture saith, they shall look on him whom they pierced (John 19:31-37).

Jesus' death alone, however, freely given, would not have been sufficient to save men. It was essential for Him to be buried and to come forth from the tomb on the third day. After forty days on earth, it was necessary for Him to ascend into heaven, into the same glory He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5). He was then ready to pour out His Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Chapter X

THAT GREATER AND MORE PERFECT TABERNACLE

It was the indwelling presence of God that made the wilderness Tabernacle so important to the children of Israel. God said to Moses, "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). However, the people were afraid of His presence. They wanted His protection and provision, but they did not want Him to speak directly to them. They recognized the manifestation of His presence in the cloud and pillar of fire above the Tabernacle, yet they could not enter it. And they could only receive God's commandments and instructions through Moses. Consequently, except certain prophets, priests, and kings, Israel, as a nation, had no personal contact with God.

This was the reason so many of them failed and why most of the older generation never entered the Promised Land. Israel could look upon the Tabernacle and see some of the priestly service, but they could not experience or see God's glory. They could only obey Moses' instructions, the trumpet signals, and follow the cloud and fire. Therefore, the people had little understanding or realization of a spiritual life. They thought only in terms of the needs, wants, and pleasures of their carnal life.

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building" (Hebrews 9:11). God pictured, in the types and shadows and priestly services of the Tabernacle, His spiritual kingdom. These typical pictures have been translated for us in the Messianic promises and prophecies of the Old Testament prophets and in the New Testament Scriptures, particularly in the book of Hebrews.

The Apostle Paul gave a brief sketch of the Tabernacle, its furniture and priestly services in Hebrews 9:1-17 and explained many of its types which Christ fulfilled in His redemptive ministry. **This greater and more perfect tabernacle** is the body of Christ, the church (Colossians 1:18), of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone (Ephesians 2:19-22).

The walls and the furniture of the wilderness Tabernacle were made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. This was a type of the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ. He had to be both God and man to save sinful men. Paul said of Him:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:1-3).

And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom (Hebrews 1:6-8).

We read in the Gospel of John:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men ... And the Word was made 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 (John 1:1-4, 14).

But our Savior also had to be man. All men have sinned, and the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). Their only hope was that someone would be willing to die for them, and only one who was sinless could do this. The Prophet Isaiah pictured the condition of fallen men and could find no man could help (Isaiah 59:1-14). But God had foreordained the salvation in Christ (Isaiah 59:16, 20). God became man to save humanity from sin and its penalty of death. Hebrews 2 states:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man ... Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (verses 9, 14-17).

Jesus paid the only price that could release men from the penalty of death. He was buried in Joseph's new tomb (John 19:38-42), which was significant of His going into the lower part of the earth (hell) where He preached to spirits in prison (Ephesians 4:9, 10; I Peter 3:18-22), and came forth on the third day with the keys to death and hell (Revelation 1: 18). Death is the penalty for sin (Romans 6:23; Genesis 2:15-17). When Adam and Eve were driven from the garden and died spiritually, their sin and its penalty was visited on the whole human race. Only Jesus could die for the sins of mankind because He alone was sinless.

Jesus died to atone for the sins of all men, but not all men will be saved. To appropriate His sacrifice, one must believe in His deity (Matthew 16:13-17; John 3:16) and must obey His gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ is His death, burial, and resurrection. Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Peter preached the first gospel message on the Day of Pentecost, just after the first one hundred and twenty disciples, including himself, had received the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:12-15; 2:1-41). Many of the Jews were convicted of their sins and asked what they should do. Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

To obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, one must thoroughly repent from his heart, which means to completely turn away from, give up, the old life of sin (Romans 10:8-10; II Corinthians 7:10, 11; Matthew 21:28, 29; Revelation 2:4, 5). As Jesus died to His mortal life, a repentant sinner dies to his old life of sin. He must then be buried with Christ by water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ that he may receive the Holy Ghost. This is the new birth by which one is born into the body of Christ, the church (Colossians 1:18, 24).

Repentance and water baptism were typified by the Aaronic priest as the priest offered the sacrifice on the brazen altar and then washed in the laver that he might go through the doorway into the Holy Place to serve the Lord. Jesus is the door (John 10:7). When we receive the Holy Ghost, we are born into that holy place of the church. Paul further explained this in Romans 6:3, 4:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

This is in obedience to Acts 2:38. By the new birth, God's people are made new creatures in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17) and are made partakers of His divine nature (II Peter 1:4).

The high priest of Israel bore the names of the twelve tribes in the breastplate over his heart as a symbol of the compassion he should have for the people (Hebrews 5:1-

15). However, symbolism did not give him that compassion. It was only a type. Paul wrote of the compassionate love of Jesus:

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (Romans 5:8-11).

The atonement of Christ means not only a life of joy and victory in this world, but eternal life in heaven at the end of this mortal life.

The high priest also bore the names of the twelve tribes on the shoulder pieces of his ephod. Yet, this type could not give the people the spiritual strength needed to renounce sin and to obey the commandments of the Lord Jehovah. All men have inherited their carnal nature from Adam, and none is capable of measuring up to God's standard of true holiness. But Jesus has provided a new birth for every repentant sinner. All who have received the new birth into Christ receive strength from Him daily to obey His word and to accomplish His work on earth. Jesus said:

Abide in me, and I in you, As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing (John 15:4, 5).

Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). We cannot live a Christian life without Christ or accomplish His work in this world. But He gives power and grace, through the Holy Ghost, to meet all His requirements (Acts 1:8; 11 Corinthians 9:8; I Corinthians 1:26-31; Ephesians 3:20, 21).

Jesus does not need the Urim and Thummim (lights and perfections) to guide His people in the way of the Lord. He is the light and perfection. He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). He leads His people by His Spirit (Romans 8:14). He reveals His word, His truths, and His will unto them (I Corinthians 2:9-16). Paul stated:

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:2, 3).

Jesus' first appearance after His resurrection was to Mary Magdalene, just outside the tomb from which He had recently arisen (John 20:1-16). He said to her, "Touch me

not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). Perhaps on that day, sometime between His appearance to Mary Magdalene and His appearance in the evening to His disciples (John 20:18-20), He ascended to the Father for acceptance of the atonement He had made. This fulfilled the type of the Aaronic high priest's going into the presence of God for approval of the atonement He had made.

Jesus appeared to His disciples a number of times during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension into heaven (I Corinthians 15:5-8). During this time, He was preparing the disciples to take over the work He had begun on the earth. On His first appearance, He said to them:

Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained (John 20:21-23).

The disciples did not receive the Holy Ghost at that time. His breathing on them indicated that He would, at the proper time, breath His life (Spirit) into them to give them authority and power to do the work He had just called them to do. The Holy Ghost was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified with the glory He had with the Father before the world was (John 7:37-39; 17:5).

Forty days from the time of His resurrection, Jesus assembled with His disciples in preparation for His ascension into His eternal glory.

And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence (Acts 1:4, 5).

The disciples did not yet understand the meaning of God's spiritual kingdom under the new covenant. They asked Jesus if this was the time He would restore the kingdom to Israel. They knew Old Testament prophecy had promised this, but Jesus told them it was not for them to know the time of that event. He then told them:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight (Acts 1:8, 9).

As Jesus disappeared into the glory cloud, two angels stood by and told the

disciples that He would in like manner come again as they had seen Him go into heaven (Acts 1:10, 11).

The disciples then joyfully returned to Jerusalem to wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost, which would usher them into the kingdom of God. Jesus had said that the new kingdom does not come with observation but is within each Christian (Luke 17:20, 21). Paul later wrote, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17).

The Holy Ghost, by which God writes His law in the hearts and minds of His people, is the new covenant (Hebrews 8:7-13). One hundred and twenty followers, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, the other women, and those whom Jesus had chosen for His apostles, were the first to receive the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-18). The Holy Ghost manifested Himself by speaking through all the disciples in many different languages.

The outpouring of the Holy Ghost was the beginning of the kingdom of God, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the body of Christ. This was the Comforter which Jesus had promised His disciples they should receive after He had ascended to heaven. He told them:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you (John 14:16-20).

Although the wilderness Tabernacle with its priestly services typified the way into heaven, it could not open heaven up to men.

The sacrifice of Jesus was the only acceptable sacrifice for the redemption of men. The high priest alone was permitted to go into the Most Holy Place, which typified heaven, and he could only do so once each year (Hebrews 9:6, 7). Paul said, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing" (Hebrews 9:8).

The Lord Jesus Christ, by His acceptable sacrifice and resurrection, not only pointed the way to heaven, but He opened it up (Hebrews 9:11-15). "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14). Jesus is the ladder which Jacob saw in his dream (Genesis 28:12-16), by which He has bridged the way for men from earth to heaven.

After Nathaniel acknowledged Jesus as the promised Son of God:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man (John 1:50, 51).

The opening up of the way into heaven was signified by the rending of the veil in the Temple at the time Jesus died on the cross (Matthew 27:50, 51; Luke 23:45, 46). The Temple was built on the same plan as the Tabernacle, with a veil which shut everyone out of the Most Holy Place except the high priest on the Day of Atonement.

This greater and more perfect tabernacle is the Lord Jesus dwelling in His redeemed and born-again saints.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (I Corinthians 3:16).

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

As the Lord dwells in His people and rules their lives (Romans 8:14), they become partakers of His divine nature (1 Peter 1:4).

But although the way into heaven was not opened up by the services of the Aaronic priests, the faithful Old Testament saints received a good report by their obedience and their faith in God's promises of the Messiah, who would make the only acceptable sacrifice for their sins. They were accepted by God on the basis of their faith and their efforts to obey His word as much as they could without the strength of the new covenant (Romans 4:3). As the writer of Hebrews penned:

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect (Hebrews 11:39, 40).

The death of Jesus on the cross atoned for all men of obedient faith from the time of Adam till the Second Coming of Jesus Christ for His saints. Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David are outstanding examples of the faithfulness of the Old Testament saints. They did not have the experience of the Holy Ghost as we do today. But because they believed and trusted in God, He brought them through to victory. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews witnesses to their accomplishments of faith (Hebrews 11:4-39). Nevertheless, the old covenant, under which they served, was only God's schoolmaster, leading to the coming of Christ with His new covenant in the Holy Ghost (Galatians 3:24).

Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises (Hebrews 8:6), which has brought us into a far better hope (Hebrews 7:19). Israel was God's natural kingdom, governed by natural laws. Their promises of reward were mostly of natural prosperity (Deuteronomy 8:1-11). But the Lord's promises to all His people under the new covenant are not only for this life, but for all eternity (I Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 9:15; 11:8-10; II Peter 1:4). Paul admonished the Hebrews:

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that ye may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me (Hebrews 13:5, 6).

The Lord has given us many promises for this life. He has promised to heal when we are sick (James 5:14-16) and to provide all our needs (Matthew 6:30-33). At times He goes beyond our needs and often provides many of the luxuries of life. However, He admonishes:

Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man hath given unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed (John 6:27).

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (II Corinthians 9:8).

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having a high priest over the house of God; 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. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) (Hebrews 10:19-23).

Chapter XI GOD'S KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

God called to Moses out of Mount Sinai and gave him this very special message to give to the people of Israel:

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation... (Exodus 19:4-6).

Moses called the elders of the people together and gave them all the words that the Lord had commanded. And they answered in unison that they would do all that the Lord had spoken. Moses then returned their answer to the Lord (Exodus 19:7, 8).

The Israelites believed they could obey the words of the Lord, and they intended to do so. However, they did not realize their own weakness and instability. On the third day after their commitment, God spoke from the top of Sinai, out of the fire, smoke, thunder, and lightning, the Ten Commandments in their hearing. He then called Moses into the mount for forty days and nights (Exodus 24:17, 18).

When Moses had not come down from the mountain after many days, the people said to Aaron, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him" (Exodus 32:1).

Aaron told Israel to bring all their gold earrings of their wives, sons, and daughters, and he made a golden calf, a god of the Egyptians.

God sent Moses down the mount and he found the children of Israel dancing like heathens around the golden calf (Exodus 32:7-35). They were judged and forgiven, and they built the Tabernacle, but they were never able to keep the required laws and covenant of God. Their whole history was one of failures, and they never became a kingdom of priests as God had intended. The priesthood was limited to the house of Aaron.

Because God knew the frailty of Israel, He had foreordained before the foundation of the world His heavenly High Priest, through whom He would bring into reality a true kingdom of priests. Peter remembered the history of Israel's failures and recognized the position of the New Testament church. He said of it, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"

(I Peter 2:9).

The people of Israel could not attain to this high calling by the works of the law.

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God (Hebrews 7:19).

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect (Hebrews 10:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has made His New Testament saints a kingdom of priests by the new birth of His Spirit (Revelation 5:10). Paul said, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Corinthians 3:6). Paul also said that if there had been a law that could have given life, righteousness should have come by the law (Galatians 3:21). The fault was not with God's law for it was holy, just, good, and spiritual (Romans 7:12, 14). The fault was in the carnal nature of the people (Romans 7:14-24; Hebrews 8:7-10). The bondage of sin in the nature of all men is indeed a wretched condition, but God's answer is in Jesus Christ (Romans 7:24, 25). Consider:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8:1-4).

God's priests must put on their holy garments to enter into His church to do His service:

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Galatians 3:27).

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof (Romans 13:14).

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24).

By the Holy Ghost God's priests enter into the holy place of His church to do His

service. In this place His priests are to keep the sweet incense of praises and worship going up to God continually, and their prayers will be answered as they ascend in worship and thanksgiving (Revelation 8:3-5). God's priests must continue to partake of Him, the Bread of Life, that they may represent Him to the world. And they must keep the light of life burning brightly within them that they may light the way of sinners to the altar of grace (Matthew 5:14-16).

The Lord's priests must offer sacrifices. The first and most important sacrifice is that of themselves. Paul wrote to the Romans:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1, 2).

A very large part of the priestly services in the New Testament church is its worship and praises to God. Paul listed this as one of the sacrifice offerings of the saints. He said, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15). We find many very wonderful examples of praise in the Psalms of David:

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee (Psalm 63:1-3).

Another very important part of the priestly services of God's saints is their tithes and offerings for the support of God's work, and to help those in need. Again, Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16). We can only give to God a little of what He has given to us. David prayed to God:

Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee (I Chronicles 29:13, 14).

God, in rejecting the insincere sacrifices of the people of Israel, said to them:

I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goat out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof

(Psalm 50:9-12).

God has graciously given us the privilege of contributing to His work that we might receive the reward, even as He gave the widow of Zarephath the privilege of sharing her cake with Elijah that she and her son might be provided for during the drought (I Kings 17:8-16). However, we must not do these things for reward, but out of a heart of love and thanksgiving for what He has done for us. When we communicate, share what we have with others, we manifest the compassionate Spirit of Christ.

The Lord Jesus made it clear that He would continue His work on earth by breathing His Spirit of life and power into His people through whom He would work. Every Spirit-filled saint of God is a priest (Revelation 5:10). They are not all called to preach or teach, but they are all called to represent Jesus to this wicked world (II Corinthians 5:19, 20).

Jesus said to His disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). Jesus was distinguishing between His humanity and His deity when He spoke of going to His Father. When He went to the Father after His death and resurrection, He ascended into heaven to be glorified together with God, with the same glory He had with Him before the world was (John 1:1-4; 17:5).

The Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of the church of Jesus Christ, which is His kingdom of priests. Joel prophesied:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit (Joel 2:28, 29).

Jeremiah prophesied of the new covenant in which God would write His laws in the people's hearts and minds (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The Lord spoke through Ezekiel:

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Isaiah said:

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear (Isaiah 28:11, 12).

God spoke through all the disciples who were filled with the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost and all those of the early church. And He still speaks through all who are filled with His Spirit, in languages other than their own (Acts 2:1-4, 7-18; 10:44-48; 19:1-7; John 15:26, 27). The Holy Ghost experience in Jesus Christ is the rest of which Isaiah prophesied (Matthew 11:28-30). Paul also referred to Isaiah's prophecy when teaching of the ministry of the church concerning speaking in other tongues (I Corinthians 14:18-22).

The Holy Place of the Tabernacle was a type of the spiritual place which is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its three pieces of furniture, the golden altar of incense, the golden table of shewbread, and the golden candlestick, were involved in the services of the Aaronic priests. They typified the services of God's Spirit-filled saints, which are His New Testament priests.

The altar of incense prefigured their service of worship and prayer, which is a very important part of our service to God. Paul exhorted Timothy that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, should be made for all men (I Timothy 2:1). Such service can only be performed in the Spirit.

Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26, 27).

Such intercession is the Lord performing His work in His people. We can only worship God in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23, 24).

The table of shewbread typified Christ, the Bread of Life (John 6:48-59). It was the duty of the Aaronic priests to keep the bread always on the table. The bread was replaced each Sabbath Day and the priests were allowed to eat that which had been removed. The New Testament priests must continually partake of Christ. Jesus said, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56).

Jesus promised His disciples another Comforter after He ascended back to heaven. He made it plain, however, that the Comforter would not be another person, but He Himself returning to them in Spirit. He said:

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you (John 14:18-20).

When we have His Spirit, the Holy Ghost, within us, He is also all around us, so that we are in Him. We are nourished in our minds and in our spirit daily by His Spirit which is in us. But we must walk in His Spirit daily to have the nourishment we need from Him (Romans 8:1-6). The most important part of our ministry is to keep filled with His Spirit, that we may manifest to the world, the loving merciful nature of Christ, as well as His miraculous works (I Timothy 4:12; John 15:3-5; James 3:13).

The priests were required to keep oil in the bowls of the candlestick so that its seven lamps would continue to give light. God's New Testament priests are the light of the world by reason of the light of life they have received in the Holy Ghost (Matthew 5:14-16; John 1:4; II Corinthians 4:6).

Jesus Christ is no longer in the world in visible form, but He is here in His people. The church of Jesus Christ is the only source of spiritual light in the world today. This world would indeed be a dark place without the light of spiritual life and truth in the Spirit-filled people of the Lord. But thank God, His light is still shining in His saints throughout the world.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (II Corinthians 4:6, 7).

The Lord's Spirit-filled saints, as His priests, are performing His service by letting their light shine, by witnessing to the blessings of salvation, by praying, by preaching His gospel, and by supporting every phase of His work on earth by their tithes and offerings. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:9, 10).

John, on the Isle of Patmos, had a vision of the glorified Christ. He saw Him in the midst of the seven candlesticks, having seven stars in His right hand, with a sharp two-edged sword held in His mouth (Revelation 1:12-16). In the midst of the glory and power of the presence of the Lord, John fell at His feet as one dead.

The Lord then gave him the interpretation of the vision. He said, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (Revelation 1:20).

In the marginal reading, the word angels is translated "messengers." The seven stars evidently represented the messengers, or ministers, of the seven churches in Asia Minor to whom was addressed the seven messages in the second and third chapters of

Revelation. These seven churches, being seven in number, represent the whole church of God. And the seven stars which the Lord held in His right hand represented all of His ministers, who are called to minister His Word. They are ordained to preach His Word under the anointing and inspiration of His Spirit.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen (I Peter 4:10, 11).

This tells us plainly that all God's ministers should be led, inspired, and empowered by His Spirit. The Lord anoints the minds of His true ministers that they may speak His words as He would have them declared to the world (II Corinthians 4:1-7). Such are truly New Testament prophets (II Corinthians 14:3).

Chapter XII

THE NEW JERUSALEM

The ten-cubit cubicle room at the west end of the Tabernacle, which was called the Most Holy Place and in which was placed the ark of the covenant, was where God chose to manifest His presence as dwelling among His people. It was called the Most Holy Place because the people recognized it as God's dwelling place. From that time the people of Israel looked upon the ark of the covenant as the emblem of God's presence. The ark contained the tables of stone on which God had written the Ten Commandments, which were called the tables of the covenant or the testimony. It also contained a golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded and bore fruit after it had been cut off from the tree.

This room where God manifested His glory as a cloud over the mercy seat between the cherubims was a type of heaven (Hebrews 9:24). This was the reason no one was permitted to enter this room except the high priest, a type of Jesus Christ, and he could only enter once a year to make the annual atonement.

Aaron's rod that budded and bore fruit was a type of the divine life of Jesus Christ:

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:26, 27).

The pot of manna was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ as the bread of life (John 6:32, 33, 58). The ark, by its contents, signified the presence of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh (John 1:1, 14).

Jesus, near the end of His ministry on earth, comforted His disciples with these words:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:1-6).

Jesus not only gave the disciples instructions concerning how to get to heaven, but He sent the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost to give them grace and power to obey His instructions. By the Holy Ghost, He anointed the apostles to write the New

Testament Scriptures, in which we have His true gospel message, and a very plain map which shows just how we must walk and live in this life, so that we may someday arrive in that beautiful city.

Through Jesus Christ God has prepared that most holy and eternal realm where all who will believe and obey His gospel, receive His Spirit, and live faithfully for Him through this life may enter. While on the Isle of Patmos, John had a vision of that most glorious place. We read his description of its beauty and glory in Revelation 21. He said:

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful (Revelation 21:2-5).

John described the city of his vision as having great high walls and twelve gates, three gates on each of its four sides. There was an angel at each gate, and the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel were written on the twelve gates, one name on each gate (Revelation 21:12, 13).

As we remember the pattern of the camp of Israel around the Tabernacle in the wilderness, we see the twelve tribes encamped around the court of the Tabernacle, three tribes on each of its four sides. These gates of John's vision represented God's Old Testament saints who, by their faith and faithfulness, were redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. Their history and examples, under God's law given by Moses, were God's schoolmaster, leading to the coming of Christ (Galatians 3:24).

John then described the wall of the city as having twelve foundations, with the names of the twelve apostles written on the twelve foundations, one name on each foundation (Revelation 21:14). Paul said:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

God ordained the twelve apostles to lay the foundation of His New Testament

church by giving them the revelation of His gospel; they did through the New Testament Scriptures (Ephesians 3:1-6; Romans 16:25, 26). Peter used the keys to God's kingdom in his first gospel message on the Day of Pentecost (Matthew 16:16-19). Paul, who was chosen of God to take the place of Judas Iscariot as the twelfth apostle (Galatians 1:11-17), wrote to the Corinthians:

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon, But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:10, 11).

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16, 17). Every book of the New Testament was written by an apostle or under apostolic influence. Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, was not an apostle but was evidently influenced by Paul. Likewise, Mark, the writer of the second gospel, was not an apostle but probably wrote under Peter's sway (Acts 12:12).

John, in his vision of the New Jerusalem, measured the city (Revelation 21:16, 17), and, in symbolic numbers, pictured it as being foursquare, as prefigured in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. I see John's measurement as symbolic and not the actual measure of God's heaven. Eternity is without beginning or end. God is omnipotent (having all power), omniscient (knowing all things of time and eternity), and omnipresent (everywhere present at all times), and I can't imagine His universe or His heaven having a boundary. The scientists have never found the edge of the universe. The New Jerusalem's being foursquare signifies God's perfect and all-inclusive spiritual kingdom in heaven in eternity.

John next attempted to describe the beauty of the New Jerusalem, but he had only human language by which to express it. Heavenly and spiritual things have been expressed to us in human language because that is all we can understand with our finite minds. However, God reveals spiritual matters to His people by the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 2:9-16). In this mortal life we know only in part and see through a glass darkly (I Corinthians 13:9-12), but we have had a taste of heaven in the Holy Ghost, which is the earnest of our eternal inheritance (Ephesians 2:13, 14). The fruit of the Spirit, the love of God in our hearts (Romans 5:5), that delivers us from hate, selfishness, envy, and all that once made us unhappy and miserable; the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory (I Peter 1:8); the peace of God that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7); and the anointing of the Holy Ghost in our prayer life, are some of the things which give us a taste of heaven. These blessings should help us to understand, in some measure, the spiritual elegance of the New Jerusalem.

The Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle, a type of the New Jerusalem, was a beautiful room with its walls of gold, its ceiling and veil of fine linen, richly

embroidered with cherubims in blue, purple, and scarlet, and its golden ark, covered with the solid gold mercy seat, on which were golden cherubims. But its natural beauty could not be compared with the heavenly splendor of the New Jerusalem. Its magnificence, as described by John (Revelation 21:18-27), is beyond our imagination, and its eternal reality is beyond description in human terms. It is of the majesty of the greatness, the righteousness, and holiness of God (Exodus 34:5-7).

The Lord is getting His people ready for that eternal home. God's people, by the power of the Holy Ghost, become partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10). By the new birth of His Spirit they are recreated in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24). "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22).

Now that we can worship God in Spirit and in truth in the Holy Ghost, we are learning what it means to worship Him in the beauty of holiness (Psalm 29:2; 96:9). The Lord, who takes pleasure in His people, is beautifying the meek with salvation (Psalm 149:4). We all should pray, as did David, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

John said of the New Jerusalem:

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:22-27).

One of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues of God's wrath to be visited on a wicked world and said to John, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:9-10). The New Jerusalem will be more than a city composed of beautiful buildings, mansions, and streets of gold; it will be the redeemed people of God, the bride of Christ, who have become His dwelling place.

Jesus indicated to His disciples that He is preparing a place for us: "In my Father's house are many mansions ... I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). At the same time, the Scriptures state that we, individually and collectively, are the temple or dwelling place for God: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit

of God dwelleth in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16).

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

It is the bride of Christ, arrayed in the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints, who will be caught up into the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). Afterward the raptured church will return with the Lord when He comes to fight the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-16) and set up His Millennial kingdom on earth. The bride of Christ, the church, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (Revelation 19:7-9), is the same as the armies, clothed in fine linen, clean and white (Revelation 19:14).

Paul, remembering the Old Testament account of Israel at Sinai (Exodus 19:9-25; 20:1-20), said to the New Testament saints:

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto the blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was com- manded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moss said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet, once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet, once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace,

whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:18-29).

I have quoted this full passage of Scripture because it so clearly expresses the power of the Word of God, and the assurance of its fulfillment. In it is glorious hope and promise to the saints of God, but serious warning to any who might fail in the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15).

God's people cannot afford to permit the deceivable things of this world to shake their faith in God. We are admonished to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith (11 Corinthians 13:5), and to stand fast in the faith (I Corinthians 16:13). Paul warned the Hebrews to cast not away their confidence which had great recompense of reward (Hebrews 10:31-37).

Isaiah prophesied of that time when the Lord arises to shake terribly the earth (Isaiah 2:19-21). But we can thank God for faith that cannot be shaken.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35-39).

After Joshua led the children of Israel into the Promised Land, they set up the Tabernacle at Shiloh (Joshua 18:1), where it remained until the time of Samuel. It was there that Hannah prayed for a son, and Samuel was born in answer to her prayer (I Samuel 1:1-28).

The wicked sons of Eli, the high priest, did much to bring God's disfavor upon the people of Israel. Their armies were badly smitten by the Philistines. The elders of the people asked to take the ark out before their army, thinking God would surely protect it and them.

But again, the Philistines defeated Israel and captured the ark. God permitted Israel to be defeated because they had sinned, but when the Philistines carried the ark into their own land, He protected it, as the emblem of His presence, until the Philistines were glad to send it back to Israel (I Samuel, chapters 4 through 7). However, it was never returned to the Tabernacle in Shiloh.

When David became king of Israel, he made Jerusalem the capital of Israel, and finally brought the ark into Jerusalem, where he had set up a temporary tabernacle for

it (II Samuel 6:12-17). And the services of the priests continued as they had from the time of Aaron, their first high priest.

David wanted to build a permanent Temple to house the ark of the covenant. He was not permitted of the Lord to do this, but he provided and prepared for a beautiful Temple which his son Solomon built. When it was ready for dedication, Solomon assembled all the elders and heads of the tribes, and they brought in the ark with great ceremony to Jerusalem where they had a great dedication (I Kings 8:1-66). When the ark was brought into the Temple, the glory of the Lord filled the Temple, as He had done at the dedication of the Tabernacle at Sinai (I Kings 8:10, 11). Solomon's Temple was built by the same plan as the Tabernacle which it replaced. The Tabernacle was probably worn out long before this. The Temple became, to Israel, the dwelling place of the ark, the emblem of God's presence.

The ark remained in the Temple in Jerusalem until the Babylonian captivity, when everything of value was carried to Babylon, and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed. There was no further mention made of the ark after the Babylonian captivity of Israel.

But the people of Israel repented in the land of captivity, and after seventy years they were permitted to return and rebuild Jerusalem. Zerubbabel, as governor, finally rebuilt the Temple. Before the coming of Christ, wicked Herod the Great had enlarged and beautified the Temple of Zerubbabel, trying to please the Jews. The disciples of Jesus, with a feeling of pride, showed Him all the buildings of the Temple, but He answered them, "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matthew 24:2).

Jesus cleansed the Temple twice of those who sold sacrifices and turned over the tables of the money changers (John 2:13-16; Matthew 21:12, 13). When the Pharisees accused Jesus of profaning the Sabbath, he said to them, "Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple" (Matthew 12:5, 6). Jesus had come to build His spiritual and eternal temple. And we, His Spirit-filled people, have the great privilege of being a part of that temple.

God revealed to John on the Isle of Patmos things which should be hereafter and told him to write them (Revelation 1:19). John wrote, among many other things:

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and was, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which

destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail (Revelation 11:16-19).

And again, John wrote of things hereafter, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (Revelation 7:15).