

LESSON 12: EXODUS 25-31
NOVEMBER 16, 2011

OVERVIEW

- . The Ark of the Covenant – Exodus 25:1-22
- . The Table, the Lampstand and the Altar of Incense – Exodus 25:23-40, 27:20-21, 30:1-10
- . The Tabernacle – Exodus 26, 27:9-19
- . The Altar for Burnt Offerings and the Basin for Washing – Exodus 27:1-8, 30:17-21
- . The Priestly Garments – Exodus 28
- . The Consecration of the Priests – Exodus 29:1-43
- . The Sabbath – Exodus 31:12-18

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT – EXODUS 25:1-22

- . The Ark: A description
 - . Made of acacia wood, a hard dense wood made to stand up against the rigors of the wilderness
 - . A box, 2.5 cubits long by 1.5 cubits wide by 1.5 cubits high
 - . Ancient cubits varied from 17-20 inches
 - . By our measurements, 45” long by 27” wide and 27” high
 - . Covered with pure, precious gold
 - . Lid made of pure beaten gold
 - . On each end of the lid was a figure of a cherub, a type of angel
 - . The two cherubim were made to face each other, looking inward towards the cover
 - . Their wings stretched backward and upward so as to nearly meet at top
 - . The ark was fitted with four rings through which poles were inserted for Transporting
 - . The ark contained the stone tablets of the law that God gave Moses
 - . Later it also became the repository of a gold jar of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded (Hebrews 9:4)
 - . Other names for the ark; the ark of the Testimony, the ark of God
- . The Ark: It’s function
 - . To better understand the ark’s function, two important things must be known
 - . First, God was understood to dwell symbolically between the wings of the cherubim, above the covering of the ark
 - . The Israelites knew that God was everywhere and not confined to a single space

- . However, when the glory cloud of God filled the Tabernacle, this was the Most Holy of spaces where the essence of God was centered – Exodus 40:34-38
- . Second, the covering of the ark was called the “atonement cover”
 - . Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest brought blood of the sacrificed animal into the Most Holy of places and sprinkled it on the atonement cover
 - . This showed God that atonement for their sins had been made and they were now calling on God for His mercy
- . This was powerful symbolism
 - . When God looked down from between the wings of the cherubim His gaze settled upon His law that had been broken
 - . But the blood of the sacrifice that spread across the cover was there for God to see, as a reminder of the Israelites acknowledged brokenness and willingness to try again
- . The Ark of the Covenant was the only object in the Most Holy of Places, which was the inner most room in the heart of the Tabernacle

THE TABLE, THE LAMPSTAND AND THE ALTAR OF INCENSE **EXODUS 25:23-40, 27:20-21, 30:1-10**

- . Adjacent to the Most Holy of Places, was another room, called the Holy Place
 - . In this room were three objects; the Table, the Lampstand and Altar of Incense
- . The Table of Showbread – Exodus 25:23-30
 - . Slightly smaller than the ark, 36” long by 18” wide by 27” high
 - . Made of acacia wood, covered with gold, with gold rings and acacia poles to Transport
 - . Surrounded by gold molding to keep objects from falling off when transporting
 - . Table had twelve loaves of bread on twelve plates, to represent the twelve tribes
 - . The loaves were thank offerings for God’s faithful provisions for the people
 - . The communion bread we use today in remembrance of Christ compares in a striking way to the showbread
- . The Golden Lampstand – Exodus 25:31-40, 27:20-21
 - . A seven branched lampstand that we refer to today as a menorah
 - . Made of pure gold and placed at the south side of the Holy Place, across from the table
 - . Seven lamps supplied with olive oil, trimmed by the priest every morning and evening never to be extinguished
 - . Purpose of the lampstand
 - . To provide physical light for priests working in this dark space
 - . Symbolically, the light represented the light of God and eventually pointed to Christ and the light of the world – John 8:12

- . Much later, the apostle John, received a vision of the lampstand in Revelation that represented the seven churches – Revelation 1:12, 20
- . The Altar of Incense – Exodus 30:1-10
 - . The Altar of Incense was placed on the west side of the Holy Place just before the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place
 - . The altar was 18" long by 18" wide by 36" high
 - . Made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold
 - . Incense symbolizes the prayers of the saints – Revelation 5:8

THE TABERNACLE – EXODUS 26, 27:9-19

- . The Courtyard
 - . Exodus 26 and part of 27 describe the details for construction of the Tabernacle
 - . The outer dimensions of the Tabernacle, that defined the courtyard, were 150' long by 75' wide (about 25% of a football field)
 - . Curtains of finely twisted linen were made to create the outer walls
 - . Posts 7.5' high were cut to support the curtains
 - . There was one entrance on the west side
- . The two rooms
 - . Inside the courtyard was a curtain that further divided off two rooms
 - . The larger room was the Holy Place, measuring 30' by 15'
 - . In this room were the Table, Lampstand and Altar of Incense
 - . The smaller room was the Most Holy Place, measuring 15' by 15'
 - . A large curtain separated the Holy Place from Most Holy Place
 - . The only object in this room was the Ark of the Covenant
 - . Only the High Priest was allowed in this room and only one day of the year, the Day of Atonement
- . The Curtain
 - . Made of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen with figure of cherubim
 - . The curtain symbolically separated the people from the Most Holy Place
 - . Further, the curtain showed that God could not be approached by sinful people – there had to be this separation between God and sin
 - . When Christ died on the cross, the temple curtain was torn in two forever, indicating that by his death, Christ had opened the way into God's presence forever, for those who surrender themselves to Christ
 - . During this period of disposition (the law), the way to God was barred, symbolically by this curtain

THE ALTAR FOR BURNT OFFERINGS AND THE BASIN FOR WASHING **EXODUS 27:1-8, 30:17-21**

- . The most important object in the courtyard was the “altar”
 - . The altar was large, 7.5’ long by 7.5’ wide by 4.5’ high
 - . Made of acacia wood, covered with bronze
 - . Stood immediately inside the entrance to the outer court
 - . The location symbolized that every approach to God requires a blood Atonement
 - . Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness – Hebrews 9:22
- . The Basin for Washing – Exodus 30:17-21
 - . The basin was placed between the Altar of Burnt Offerings and the door to the Tabernacle
 - . This symbolized the need for the priests to cleanse themselves every time they entered the Holy Place
 - . The guilt of the sins has already been dealt with by the burnt offering
 - . The basin symbolizes the need for the people to cleanse themselves of the sin once they had atoned for their sins

THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS – EXODUS 28

- . The Ephod of the High Priest – Exodus 28:6-14
 - . Two piece outer vest joined over the shoulders by gold clasps
 - . Set on the clasps were two onyx stones with the names of the twelve tribes
 - . Stones signified that the High Priest ministered before God as a representative of all the people
- . Breast piece – Exodus 28:15-29
 - . Folded pouch attached to Ephod
 - . On it were twelve stones engraved with the twelve tribes
 - . Twelve stones were worn over the heart
 - . Symbolism here is that the High Priest carried the people on his shoulders (onyx stones on Ephod) and in his heart
- . The Urim and Thummin – Exodus 28:30
 - . These were part of the breastpiece, however no one knows for sure what they were or how they were used
 - . Their use seemed to have declined early and never used again
- . The robe – Exodus 28:31-35
 - . The robe of the Ephod had bells attached to the hem

- . The turban and the gold plate – Exodus 28:36-38
 - . The headpiece (turban) had a gold plate on which was inscribed “Holy to the Lord”
 - . This inscription described the essence of God’s ceremonial law
 - . God is Holy and those who approach Him must be Holy also
 - . “Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? He who has clean hands and a pure heart” – Psalm 24:3-4

THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS – EXODUS 29:1-43

- . Chapter 29 describes in detail how Aaron and the other priests were to be consecrated and installed in office
 - . The ceremony lasted seven days, involved ritual washing, anointing with oil, several sacrifices and eating a sacrificial meal
 - . The symbolism here was complete external cleansing to make them perfect before the Lord
 - . What the Aaromic priesthood could not accomplish was the complete internal cleansing – this ultimately pointed the way to Christ

THE SABBATH – EXODUS 31:12-18

- . The final subject here is God’s instructions to Moses to observe the Sabbath
- . The Sabbath celebration was to be a lasting one for generations to come
- . God reaffirms that every seventh day will be a day of rest

NEXT LESSON IS WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2011: EXODUS 32:1-33:6