

# TLCBiblical.com Video Lessons

## 220 - The Tabernacle

### 1. Introduction

At the heart of the Hebrew camp was a structure that represented their spiritual leadership, was a central point around which the tribes were organized and that later struck fear in their hearts. Made to be mobile, it was a work of art and engineering whose details came from God himself. In this lesson we'll discuss **The Tabernacle** and its significance physically and figuratively.

### 2. The Tabernacle

The Tabernacle was the heart of the Hebrew camp and for centuries, until Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, was the center of worship. Today the influence of the Tabernacle can be seen in the idea of the sanctuary, the place of worship as holy ground and the place where God's spirit is strongest. The term Tabernacle itself is used by many groups to refer to their representation of the presence and work of God. As we examine the Tabernacle we'll see that this majestic structure not only housed contemporary worship for the Hebrews, but was also structured in a way that foreshadowed things to come. The Tabernacle was a complex structure that was meant to be durable and mobile. In this lesson we'll take a look at...

- a. The design and construction of the Tabernacle
- b. Moving the Tabernacle
- c. Placement of the Tabernacle in the Hebrew camp
- b. Placement of items in and around the Tabernacle
- d. Figures and foreshadows in the Tabernacle

Let's take a look at each of these.

### 3. Design and construction of the Tabernacle

Instructions for building the Tabernacle are complex and perhaps more detailed than what we find with other objects created for worship. The idea that the Tabernacle was a simple tent-like structure doesn't come close to the reality of what it was. Like other objects that God commanded the Hebrews to make, the Tabernacle consisted of the finest materials and the workmanship was done by those who were highly skilled and inspired by God to complete the work. When finished, the Tabernacle was a work of art of such proportion that it was completely foreign to the desert environment of the wilderness wandering. Although David and later Solomon wanted to build a Temple to honor God, and the Lord allowed Solomon to perform that task, the Tabernacle remains an enigmatic symbol of God's presence, leadership and preservation.

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Materials for the Tabernacle were identified including acacia wood, fine twined linen, gold, silver and brass, or bronze. These elements were supplied by the freewill offering of the children of Israel (**Ex 25.1-7**). As time goes on the offerings of the people are so great that they are told to stop giving as the materials for the work are enough (**Ex 36.1-7**). The work was then performed by “*Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded.*” (**Ex 36.1**). The Tabernacle consisted of the primary structure but there was a court that was created as well. The court effectively created a space around the Tabernacle where some tasks such as the sacrifices were offered while other acts of worship took place inside the Tabernacle itself. As we talk about the Tabernacle we’ll examine the court as part of its overall design and structure.

I mentioned that instructions for building the Tabernacle were complex and perhaps more detailed than most of the other objects Moses was told to create. Based on the descriptions in the book of Exodus and Leviticus as well as some notes from Numbers, we can summarize the overall design of the Tabernacle by looking at its components. The first part is the Tabernacle itself. The first details are from **Exodus 26.15-25**.

There are two long sides of the Tabernacle that faced North and South. The shorter sides faced- East and West. The door of the Tabernacle faced East. Descriptions and items for the longer sides are:

- a. Boards made of shittim or acacia wood
- b. There were 20 of these for the North and South
- c. Each board was to be 10 cubits long and 1 ½ cubits wide
- d. Two tenons were set in each board facing the next board
- e. Sockets were created to lock onto the tenons on the opposing side
- f. Each of the sockets were made of silver
- g. The boards were to be overlaid with pure gold
- h. Gold rings were set in the boards
- I. Bars were made to lock the boards together
- j. From the description these appear to have been setup vertically

Based on this description, using eighteen inches as an estimate for a cubit, the boards would have been approximately 180 inches, or roughly fifteen feet long. Their width would have been about twenty-seven inches or roughly a little over two feet. On the sides there were tenons. Woodworkers are familiar with these which are projections that lock into a what we recognize as a mortise, or socket as described in the text. The tenons were to be seated into sockets made of silver that appear to have been at the top and bottom of the boards. Tenons were placed on the side directly facing a companion board locking into a set of sockets and the opposite side would lock into the next board. Each of the boards were then covered with plates of gold. A rough

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estimate here would be a structure with walls on the long sides that were fifteen feet high and approximately forty-five feet long.

\*chart - conversion of cubits to inches / feet

On the outer side of the boards were gold rings through which bars of acacia wood also covered in gold would slide to lock them together. There were five bars used for each of the long sides with one bar running the full length of the side to strengthen the wall that was created (**Ex 26.26-30**).

Details for the West side of the Tabernacle are somewhat confusing but breaking them down we can try to get an idea of the size. Six boards, using the same size as those for the North and South, were used for the central portion. The instructions specify that two boards were to be used for each corner bringing the total number for the West side to eight. The corners were to be joined at the bottom and the “*head*”. Five bars were to be used on the West side as well with a central bar running end to end. The tenons and sockets were identical to those on the North and South sides with a total of sixteen tenons silver sockets. The corner boards appear to have been joined differently which would supply strength as they formed a square with the sides. Given the dimensions of the boards the West side would have been fifteen high and approximately eighteen feet wide.

The description so far has detailed the North, South and West sides of the Tabernacle. We have a structure that is fifteen feet high, eighteen feet wide and forty-five feet long, consisting of a superstructure of gold plated boards fortified with gold bars set in gold rings. The last side is that of the East where the entrance to the Tabernacle is located. Exodus chapter twenty-six provides detail for the “*door of the tent*”.

The narrative states, “*And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.*” (**Ex 26.36-37**). The door is referred to as the “*hanging*” for the entrance and no dimensions are given. The only detail in the description from chapter twenty-six is that there were five pillars made of acacia wood overlaid with gold with gold hooks and sockets of brass. As we’ll see with the court in a moment, the door of the Tabernacle appears to have been a single wide curtain hung on five pillars spaced at intervals to support the weight and function of the hanging.

The Tabernacle itself was to be made from a series of curtains as we see in **Exodus 26.1-6**. A total of ten curtains were to be made which would be connected in two groups of five. The curtains were twenty-eight cubits in length, which was approximately forty-two feet using the estimate of eighteen inches per cubit. The width of the curtains was to be four cubits or

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approximately six feet. On the edges of the curtains were gold clasps and loops of blue that would connect them to each other. The fabric of the curtains is fine twined linen and was blue, purple and scarlet with embroidered cherubim. There's no precise detail as to how these were setup or how they complemented the boards. The end result however is that the curtains were linen, not a heavy canvas that tents are made of that we're familiar with. The length of the curtains was sufficient to run the length of the long sides and joined together the width would cover from the floor to the tops of the posts or pillars that formed the walls.

The boards and curtains define the overall structure and shape of the Tabernacle but we haven't discussed the roof or overall covering. **Exodus 26.7-14** provides this detail. The covering for the Tabernacle consisted of three layers. The first layer was made of eleven curtains made of goats hair. Their length was thirty cubits, or approximately forty-five feet long. Their width was four cubits or approximately six feet wide. On each of the curtains were fifty loops in which fifty brass clasps were placed to connect the curtains. The curtains were connected in two groups of six and five. The sixth curtain was placed toward the front of the Tabernacle and appears to have been doubled over perhaps as protection for the entrance. One of the curtains, that facing the West side, was to overhang the Tabernacle by as much as half its length. The description at this point lacks detail so its hard to place these exactly. On the long sides of the Tabernacle, facing North and South, the curtains were to hang over the side by one cubit, approximately eighteen inches using the measurement employed so far.

The first covering would have formed the ceiling of the Tabernacle and as we saw with coverings for the Ark of the Covenant, additional curtains provided protection. The second layer on the roof of the Tabernacle was made of rams skins and this was to be dyed red. No dimensions are given for the second layer but it would be reasonable to conclude that these were identical to the first layer.

Finally a third layer was added to the top. The King James Version states that this was to be made of badger skins. The American Standard Version renders this as sealskins. The English Standard Version renders these as goatskins and the New International Version renders this as " ***durable leather.***" Everett Fox, in *The Five Books Of Moses*, renders this as tanned-leather skins. These layers were made of durable materials that could withstand the elements and protect the interior of the Tabernacle.

Now we have the Tabernacle itself but we have to include another element that is inseparable and fully defines the space occupied by the Tabernacle; the court or courtyard. **Exodus 27.9-18** and **38.9-20** provides detail for this area. The description in the King James Version can be difficult and I've found that the New International version provides a better description. Another note is that while the King James Version refers to brass in the construction of some items, a more correct rendering would be bronze.

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The North and South sides of the Court were made of curtains spanning one hundred cubits. It's not clear if this was a continuous curtain but from the description that seems more likely. The material for the curtains was fine twined linen. In the description in Exodus there isn't a color designated for these sides. The curtain was to be held in place by twenty pillars that fit into twenty bases all made of brass, or bronze. Hooks and what's referred to as a "*fillet*" is to be placed on each of the pillars. The NIV refers to the "*fillets*" as bands which would fit the description of the means to attach the curtain to the pillars.

The West side of the court is described as being made of "*hangings*" measuring fifty cubits, or approximately seventy-five feet. Ten pillars and bases were made to support the curtains.

The East side of the Court was to be fifty cubits wide as well but was divided into three sections. Each side consisted of fifteen cubits, approximately twenty-two and a half feet. The hangings on each side were supported by three pillars and bases. A gate was to be made consisting of a single hanging, or curtain, measuring twenty cubits in length making it approximately thirty feet wide. It was to be made of blue, purple and scarlet fine twined linen and was to be embroidered with needlework that isn't specified. The gate was to be supported by four pillars of bronze with a matching base and silver hooks and bands or fillets. All of the posts used in the court were capped with silver as well.

As the description of the court of the Tabernacle comes to an end we're given a summary of its dimensions. "***The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass.***" (Ex 27.18). The height of the court with its curtains was 5 cubits or roughly eight feet high. This helps us visualize what it might have looked like to some degree. The court would have been one hundred fifty feet long, seventy-five feet wide and seven and one half to eight feet high. The gate would span thirty feet and matched the curtains that formed the Tabernacle.

#### 4. Moving the Tabernacle

When the time came to move the Tabernacle, tasks were assigned to specific individuals. The descendants of the three sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath and Merari shared these.

The descendants of Gershon were put in charge of "***the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it for all the service thereof.***" (Num 3.25-26). The sons of Kohath were in charge of the hangings, or curtains, that formed the "*sanctuary*" referring to the Holy Place and most Holy Place (Num 3.31). They also cared for the Ark of the Covenant and the items inside the Holy Place. The sons of Merari were put in charge of "*the*

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*boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto, And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords.” (Num 3.36-37).* So as a summary, the sons of Gershon took care of the exterior of the Tabernacle including the coverings for it as well as the hangings or curtains of the court. The sons of Kohath were responsible for all of the objects inside the Tabernacle as well as the curtains on the interior of the structure. Finally, the sons of Merari were in charge of the hardware including all of the structural elements; the boards, posts and sockets that connected them.

\* chart for sons of Levi and the Tabernacle

The details for the Tabernacle are intricate and complex. The size of the Tabernacle and the materials from which it was made set it apart from a common tent. It was made to be taken down, moved and setup quickly but at the same time had an elegance and beauty that set it apart from anything else in the Hebrew camp. To complete the picture we have to see where the Tabernacle was in relation to the tribes who camped around it, and the significance of their placement.

#### 5. Placement of the Tabernacle in the Hebrew camp

Viewing the Tabernacle from above we can see that the entrance would be on the East facing the sunrise surrounded by a court of linen attached to posts. The North and South sides were a continuous curtain one hundred cubits long and five cubits high. The West side was fifty cubits wide. The entrance to the court was also on the East side made of a single curtain twenty cubits wide hanging on four posts. From the description of the Tabernacle it was at the heart of the camp of the Hebrews. One of the most interesting things that I've noted about the Tabernacle is the placement of the tribes around it. To understand why this is interesting we have to start with a review of the sons of Jacob, their birth order and their mothers.

First let's identify the women that Jacob was married to. Rachel was the love of his life for whom he worked seven years. Laban tricked Jacob on his wedding day, giving Leah to him instead of Rachel. Jacob was obviously upset over this and took the matter up with Laban who explained that Leah was the oldest and it was their custom that the older daughter had to marry first. Jacob was able to marry Rachel a week later (**Gen 29.28**) but had to work another seven years for her. The result of this is that two things happened. One was that Leah realized Jacob didn't love her. Because of that God blessed her with children while Rachel was unable to conceive. Finally in desperation there emerged a competition as to who could give Jacob more children. The story in Genesis twenty-nine and thirty is worth reading as its quite a tale.

Rachel became envious of her sister and finally, after telling Jacob “**Give me children, or else I die**” (**Gen 30.1**) was reminded by her husband that he wasn't God who had prevented her

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from getting pregnant. Rachel then came up with a solution that reminds us of what Sarah did - she told Jacob to take her handmaid, Bilhah, and have children by her in her place. Leah also gave her handmaid, Zilpah so that she would bear children for Jacob in her place (**Gen 30.9-13**).

The reason this story is important and has a connection to the Tabernacle has to do with the relationship that must have existed between some of the brothers and their later descendants. Another thing that I've noticed over the years is that if we identify a patriarch and their personality traits, we can then read about their descendants and find that the same character attributes and conflicts are present. This is easily seen in an exploration of Jacob, Esau and the nations of Israel and Edom that descended from them. So let's take a look at the tribes and their placement around the Tabernacle.

God assigned the camps for the children of Israel in his instructions to Moses. In order of birth the sons of Jacob are:

1. Reuben
2. Simeon
3. Levi
4. Judah
5. Dan
6. Naphatali
7. Gad
8. Asher
9. Issachar
10. Zebulun
11. Joseph
12. Benjamin

Now let's identify their mothers.

1. Reuben - Leah
2. Simeon - Leah
3. Levi - Leah
4. Judah - Leah
5. Dan - Bilhah
6. Naphatali - Bilhah
7. Gad - Zilpah
8. Asher - Zilpah
9. Issachar - Leah
10. Zebulun - Leah
11. Joseph - Rachel

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12. Benjamin - Rachel

Now that we've identified the twelve sons of Jacob and their mothers we have to make a modification. We're going to remove Joseph from the list and include his two sons as the result of the double blessing he received. Our list now looks like this:

1. Reuben - Leah
2. Simeon - Leah
3. Levi - Leah
4. Judah - Leah
5. Dan - Bilhah
6. Naphatali - Bilhah
7. Gad - Zilpah
8. Asher - Zilpah
9. Issachar - Leah
10. Zebulun - Leah
11. Ephraim - Asenath
12. Manasseh - Asenath
13. Benjamin - Rachel

Our list may look a bit confusing right now since we know that there are twelve tribes of Israel and we now have thirteen in our list. The tribe of Levi had an encampment at the Tabernacle but they didn't receive a physical blessing of land in Canaan. Their inheritance was God and they were taken as servants of the Lord in place of the firstborn of the children of Israel. Because of that we'll remove Levi from the tribal list which now looks like this:

1. Reuben - Leah
2. Simeon - Leah
3. Judah - Leah
4. Dan - Bilhah
5. Naphatali - Bilhah
6. Gad - Zilpah
7. Asher - Zilpah
8. Issachar - Leah
9. Zebulun - Leah
10. Ephraim - Asenath
11. Manasseh - Asenath
12. Benjamin - Rachel

We'll come back to the Levites when we examine their placement around the Tabernacle. I'll also note that Asenath was the daughter of Potiphera the priest of On who was given to



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Joseph as a wife while in Egypt. This was a great honor since it was the priest of On who sanctioned and proclaimed the Pharaoh as ruler and god in Egypt. Now let's take a look at the tribes around the Tabernacle.

Instructions from God for the placement of the tribes can be found in **Numbers 2.1-33**. I'll summarize them here.

The camp of the Levites surrounded the Tabernacle creating a buffer zone if you will between it and the rest of the tribes. The Levites were sanctified and dedicated to service to God so this makes sense. The Levites were holy in their dedication as the Tabernacle was holy so they were able to minister to Moses and Aaron in daily service. The other tribes were arranged around the Tabernacle as follows.

#### **The North side:**

- a. Dan - Bilhah
- b. Asher - Zilpah
- c. Naphatali - Bilhah

#### **The South side:**

- a. Reuben - Leah
- b. Simeon - Leah
- c. Gad - Zilpah

#### **The West side:**

- a. Ephraim - Asenath, grandson of Rachel
- b. Manasseh - Asenath, grandson of Rachel
- c. Benjamin - Rachel

#### **The East side:**

- a. Judah - Leah
- b. Issachar - Leah
- c. Zebulun - Leah

An interesting observation I've made over the years is that the children of Leah and Rachel aren't placed on the same side of the Tabernacle. We don't have a reason stated for that but there may have been friction between the two sisters that took the form of resentments or conflict between their offspring. Although children of Bilhah and Zilpah are placed on the North Side of the Tabernacle, there isn't a direct connection with the children of Rachel and Leah. This doesn't appear to have any symbolic significance that I can see but its interesting that God did this. Later we'll see that there are figurative elements involved in the placement of some of the

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tribes. Now that we have an idea of the structure of the Tabernacle and the environment around it, let's take a look at the placement of the various objects used in worship to God.

#### 6. Placement of items in and around the Tabernacle

If we start at the entrance on the East side of the court of the Tabernacle we can draw a line that leads us into the Tabernacle, through the Holy Place and into the Most Holy Place. Exodus provides information concerning the placement of objects inside the Tabernacle and outside it in the court.

- a. The Tabernacle's structure was to be setup first (**Ex 40.2**)
- b. The Ark of the Covenant was to be placed in the Most Holy Place (**Ex 40.3**)
- c. The vail was to be hung concealing the Most Holy Place and Ark of the Covenant (**Ex 40.3**)
- d. The Table of Shewbread was to be placed on the North side in front of the Vail (**Ex 40.4, 22**)
- e. The Lampstand was to be placed on the South side and the lamps were to be lit (**Ex 40.4, 24**)
- f. The Altar of Incense was to be placed in line with the entrance between the door and the vail (**Ex 40.5**).
- f. The door of the Tabernacle was to be hung (**Ex 40.5**)
- g. The altar of Burnt Offering was to be placed "*before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation*" (**Ex 40.6**). The actual position appears to be in line with the door of the Tabernacle and the entrance of the court perhaps midway between the two.
- h. The Laver was to be placed "*between the tent of the congregation and the altar*" and filled with water (**Ex 40.7**).

The assembly of the Tabernacle on the day it was setup follows an inside out sequence. The Tabernacle itself was set up. Then the Ark was placed inside, the priest would uncover it and see that the vail was hung. The Table of Shewbread and Lampstand were next since they sat on either side of the entrance to the Most Holy Place. The last item placed inside the Tabernacle was the altar of incense that appears to have been in line with the Ark in the Most Holy Place. Finally the door of the Tabernacle was to be hung on the pillars prepared for it.

Exodus forty specifies that the Altar of Burnt Offering was setup next at a point between the entrance of the court in line with the entrance to the Tabernacle itself. Finally the Laver was placed between the Altar of Burnt Offering and the door of the Tabernacle. Once done the court was to be set up placing the posts at the required intervals and hanging the linen curtains as well as the embroidered entrance to the courtyard.

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Now that we understand the construction, arrangement of the tribes, placement of the objects inside, arrangement of the altar of burnt offering, the Laver and the court we can examine some figurative connections with the Tabernacle.

#### 7. Figures and foreshadows in the Tabernacle

Figurative connections in the Tabernacle are more subtle than with some of the objects used in worship. The Tabernacle represented the presence of God with the Hebrews. As God gave instructions to Moses he states, ***“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”*** (Ex 25.8). On the day the Tabernacle was setup God manifested his presence in the sight of the children of Israel. When Moses finished erecting the Tabernacle we read, ***“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.”*** (Ex 40.34-35). This was visual proof to the children of Israel that the Lord was with them. The relationship between God and the people was close and the structure is referred to as the Tabernacle of the congregation. This implied that not only were the people in the presence of God, but God was also with them. The glory of God manifested in the Tabernacle on the day it was setup so that no one could enter it. The cloud that had been guiding the Hebrews remained over the Tabernacle becoming a pillar of fire by night. The cloud was used by God to signal when the people were to move their camp and was a reminder that God’s presence and power were with them.

The Tabernacle was as mysterious to the children of Israel as the Ark of the Covenant was. Their perception of the Tabernacle can be seen in their reaction following the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. The people were angry because of the destruction of the rebels and complained against Moses and Aaron. God then demonstrated the delegation of his authority through Moses and Aaron by causing Aaron’s rod to blossom, bloom and bear almonds. The people’s reaction to this reveals their thought process and lack of spiritual vision. ***“And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?”*** (Ex 17.12). It is clear that the people misunderstood the physical Tabernacle, failing to accurately perceive the spiritual presence of God and were fearful of an inanimate structure.

As I’ve stated before there was no power in the Tabernacle, nor was it the place where God lived. The Tabernacle was the single place where offerings for sin were made and the blood of atonement offered to God at the appropriate time in the year. Reading through the book of Leviticus we see that the Tabernacle was a place of judgment, worship and communion with God. The high priest, a type of Christ who would come in the future, was the only person authorized to approach God in the Most Holy Place and offer the blood of atonement for the sins of the people. In the same manner, Christ was the only one who could offer himself as the final

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sacrifice for sin before God. The Tabernacle was a place of prayer and it was also the point at which God provided direction for them physically and spiritually.

The purpose and plan of God to redeem mankind was hidden in prophecy. The Tabernacle represented the concealment of the Lord's plan to bring this about. The concealment that was shadowed in the Tabernacle is something that is best described by the writer of Hebrews who compares the Law of Moses with the Gospel, showing that the law of Christ is superior and the Law of Moses was a figure of what would come later. The temporary nature of the Tabernacle and what it prefigured is seen in the discussion of Christ. ***“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”*** (Heb 8.1-2). The earthly Tabernacle, or sanctuary, mirrored the future plan of God to reconcile man to him. The writer goes on to describe this in a statement about the service conducted in the Tabernacle.

Speaking of the Levitical priests the writer states, ***“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. 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.”*** (Heb 8.5-6). The temporary nature of the Tabernacle and the worship of God is also described clearly.

***“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 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: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.”*** (Heb 9.1-10).

From this we can learn that:

- a. The Tabernacle was a shadow of heavenly things.
- b. It foreshadowed the way to redemption which was concealed behind the veil

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- c. The Tabernacle was the single point at which sacrifices were made to atone for the sins of the people
- d. The ordinances and procedures for all acts of worship were for that time and would last until the “*time of reformation*” when the Messiah would make the final sacrifice for sin.
- e. The Tabernacle represented the presence of God with the people but only the priests could approach the place where God could be communed with. Christ has made it possible for all to access God through him and his sacrifice as all Christians are priests in the sight of God (**1 Pet 2.5**)
- f. Construction of the Tabernacle, like the other objects, demonstrates the need to follow God’s directions without deviation in order to be pleasing to him.
- g. The Tabernacle mirrors God’s desire to be close to, bless and guide his people which is a foreshadow not only of man’s reconciliation with God but also the eternal home prepared for those who love the Lord.
- h. Once it was setup everything inside the Tabernacle was to be anointed with the holy anointing oil. Following that the Altar of Burnt Offering and laver were anointed as well. This procedure used oil specified by God to be used in the process of sanctifying something to make it holy. The name Christ means the anointed one and in this figure we see a shadow of the coming Messiah, a new law and how everything was contained in the sacrifice of Christ.

An added note about the placement of the tribes around the Tabernacle. Moses and Aaron were both to place their tents on the East side of the Tabernacle before the entrance (**Num 3.38**). Moses was the lawgiver chosen and sanctified by God just as Christ was the lawgiver of the new testament as Moses prophesied (**Deut 18.18-19**). Christ was of the tribe of Judah whose camp was on the East side of the Tabernacle. Balaam prophesied that a star would come out of Jacob (**Num 24.15-17**) and Jacob stated that the scepter wouldn’t depart from Judah until Shiloh came (**Gen 49.10**). Christ’s birth was signaled by a star in the East (**Matt 2.1-9**). We might think that these things are coincidental but we have to remember that God was directing things to prepare the way for Christ as can be seen in figures and shadows in the Tabernacle and sacred objects created for worship. These points will be further clarified as we discuss the remaining objects used in worship, their figurative connections with God’s final revelation to mankind and the coming of the Messiah.

#### 8. Next

The Ark of the Covenant was concealed from everyone’s sight except for the high priest who offered the blood of atonement in the Most Holy Place once a year. The barrier between the Holy Place and Most Holy Place was an elaborate curtain that doubled as the first cover for the Ark when the Tabernacle needed to be moved. Join me in the next lesson for a discussion of **The Vail**.