

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

by

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CHAPTER ONE

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS

FRIENDS, AS WE BEGIN THIS SOUL SATISFYING, HEART thrilling study of "*The Tabernacle in the Wilderness*," may the Psalmist's prayer constantly be ours, "**Lord, open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.**" I trust that when we have finished this series you will have fallen in love, as I did many years ago, with this rich teaching - which, in the Old Testament foreshadows the CHRIST of the New Testament, and shows the way by which a sinful man may approach and have fellowship with a holy GOD.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

This study of the Book of Exodus, and particularly the Tabernacle, is a spiritual "eye opener" and I can testify, after years of meditating on this portion of GOD's Word, that the one who lets the HOLY SPIRIT enlighten him, understanding this teaching in its fullness, will never be led astray into false cults, but will be sure that no man cometh unto the Father except through CHRIST. [15]

The Bible tells us that all have sinned; the natural man is dead in trespasses and sins.

The supreme question of all ages, far above any political question, national or international, is this: how can a sinful man, by nature fallen - how can such a one approach a holy GOD?

Man needs GOD.

- How can he find Him?
- How can he be acceptable before Him?
- How can he know forgiveness of sin, be at peace with GOD, and have fellowship with Him?

The teaching of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness shows us the answer.

For, if a soul now laden with sin, in whose heart there is no peace, will approach GOD in His way, in the way as shown in the Tabernacle, he will be forgiven, reconciled, and will become a new creature fitted to fellowship with the Holy GOD. The Tabernacle shows forth in types the glorious Gospel of CHRIST which is the power of GOD unto salvation to everyone who believeth.

Any who will diligently study this marvelous pre-picture of our Lord JESUS CHRIST will have the eyes of his understanding opened to spiritual truths, and his hunger and thirst after righteousness will be satisfied. As he studies he will grow in knowledge of our Lord, becoming steadfast in his faith, unmovable amidst the storms, stress, and turmoil of life. [16]

He will find increasingly sweet fellowship with GOD, and though his paths be rough, he will be sustained, kept steady, and at peace on the wilderness journey in this world and to Heaven itself.

CHRIST IS THE KEY TO THE BIBLE

First of all, let us consider some basic truths relative to the Word of GOD.

The main subject in the Bible from the beginning of Genesis through Revelation is none other than the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

The eternal GOD exhausts the resources of human language to tell forth the wonders, the grace, the mercy, and compassionate love GOD has for all men everywhere. He uses as illustrations the material things round about us, things with which we are familiar, to better enable us to understand that His Son is the Mediator, the One and Only Way that sinful man can approach a sinless GOD.

The furnishings of the Tabernacle which we shall study in detail later are used to show us GOD's way of approach to Himself.

- JESUS is the Brazen Altar,
- JESUS is the Laver,
- JESUS is the Shewbread,
- JESUS is the Light of the World,
- JESUS is the Altar of Incense.
- JESUS is the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holiness.

No man cometh, I say again, No man cometh unto the Father but by JESUS CHRIST!

Now notice Exodus 25:8. The children of Israel had been in bondage and slavery in Egypt. GOD called Moses to lead His people out of captivity to the Promised Land. [17]

The first twelve chapters of Exodus record the terrible sufferings of that bondage and GOD's deliverance.

We are told of the beginning of that long journey, when GOD led His people, some one million five-hundred-thousand of them, with their cattle and personal goods, out of Egypt by the way of

the Red Sea, by the waters of Marah, by the wells of Elim.

GOD led the Israelites, His children, across the desert waste to a camping place at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Then, according to the 25th chapter, verse 8, when Moses was upon the mountain, GOD spoke to him and said, ". . . **let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.**"

Then GOD gave Moses detailed instructions concerning the construction of that sanctuary which was called the Tabernacle in the Wilderness.

When that Tabernacle was finished - parts of it made of wood overlaid with gold - GOD came down and dwelt there in the midst of His people. Wood speaks forth the Lord's humanity, and gold speaks of His Deity.

Centuries later, long after dwelling in their midst during the Wilderness journey, the Lord GOD came down from the Glory above to be born of a virgin. He came down and dwelt among men in a body of flesh and bones; He was GOD manifest in the flesh. We turn to John 1:14 and we read ". . . **the Word [that is CHRIST] was made flesh, and dwelt [i.e., tabernacled] among us.**" [18]

"We (i.e., those that have been enlightened as to His glory) beheld His glory as the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth."

He tabernacled or dwelt among His people in the days of long ago during the Wilderness journey. He is here now in the person of the HOLY SPIRIT to tabernacle among us today, and our bodies are now the temples of the HOLY SPIRIT!

A DESCRIPTION OF THE TABERNACLE

As we study, I ask you to refer frequently to a picture of the Tabernacle in the front of this book, for this will help greatly in your understanding of the teaching.

The Tabernacle was some forty-five feet in length, and about fifteen feet in width; the rear end and two sides were made of boards, each board about fifteen feet in height by two inches in thickness. The Tabernacle stood in a courtyard surrounded by curtains of fine, white, pure linen, some eight and one-half feet high, enclosing an area of 175 feet in length and eighty-seven and one-half feet in width.

The entrance, which was on the east side of this courtyard, was closed by a curtain of fine-twined linen in blue, purple and scarlet.

Let us pause a moment to consider how purple is made. Blue and red are mixed to make purple. Blue, the blue of Heaven, speaks of CHRIST's deity. [19]

The scarlet speaks of earth, and the two together picture for us the deity and humanity of CHRIST our Mediator.

Note the order and arrangement of the articles of furniture in the courtyard and in the Tabernacle itself.

- First, at the one entrance was the Brazen Altar upon which the sacrifice of a spotless lamb was burning continually.
- Next was the Laver at which the priest washed his hands and feet; then, entering into the Holy Place at the right was
- the Table of Shewbread, and on the left was
- the Golden Candlestick.
- Just before the entrance to the Holy of Holies was the Altar of Incense.
- In the Holy of Holies stood the Ark of the Covenant,
- the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat and
- the Overshadowing Cherubim.

Now note, the articles of furniture are placed in the shape of a cross - the main shaft was made by the Brazen Altar, the Laver, the Altar of Incense, and the Ark of the Covenant; the Table of Shewbread and the Candlestick made the two arms.

Thus, in the beginning we see the Cross, and we are taught that the basis of all our hope for time and eternity is the Cross of Calvary! No wonder Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said, "**I am determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.**" No wonder we sing "*In the Cross of CHRIST I Glory*" - "*We Must Need Go Home by the Way of the Cross*" - "*Near the Cross*" and "*The Old Rugged Cross*." [20]

NEW TESTAMENT COUNTERPARTS

Now, let us leave the Old Testament briefly, and with your Bibles open let us look into the Gospel of John.

Perhaps it never occurred to you that the order of approach to GOD on the part of sinful man, as outlined in the Tabernacle, is beautifully shown in the Gospel of John.

Will you note in chapter one, verse twenty-nine that John the Baptist said one-day " . . . **Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**"

This most certainly points back to the sacrifice on the Brazen Altar.

And let me say this to you (and remember it if you never hear my voice again) that you will never become cleansed of sin and have fellowship with a Holy GOD unless you have come to the Cross, the Brazen Altar where the Lamb was slain! There and there only is the sin question settled!

I know that there are thousands of people in the various cults today who are trying to have fellowship with GOD - trying to find Him.

Listen! They never can come to GOD and have forgiveness, peace and fellowship, until they

have come to the Cross - repenting, and confessing their need of a Saviour!

Get it, please, and remember that John 1:29 points back to the Brazen Altar in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. Mark that verse in your Bible, and write beside it "The Brazen Altar." [21]

Then, as to the Laver for washing.

There are three references to it in the first five chapters of John.

First to the waterpots at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. In chapter 4:14, "**but whosoever drinketh the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**" In chapter five we have the scene at the pool of Bethesda. All these references speak of various aspects of the washing or cleansing - with water and hark back to the Laver which was beyond the Brazen Altar.

Then in John 6 we come to the feeding of the five-thousand which is the great discourse on the Bread of Life.

In John 8:12 JESUS said, ". . . **I am the light of the world** . . ." which speaks of the Golden Candlestick.

Then in the 17th chapter of John we have our Great High Priest's prayer, JESUS at the Altar of Incense, and, brother, listen to me, your prayers cannot be heard and be acceptable unto GOD until you pass the Brazen Altar - the Lamb slain - until you are cleansed through His Word, and until you have fed upon the Bread of Life and walked in the light of His Word. After this your prayers will be answered!

But remember, GOD says that if we regard iniquity in our hearts, He will not hear us.

He also says, "**Who shall ascend up to the Holy Mount? Those who have clean hands and a pure heart.**" He has provided for us His method of cleansing. We must come in His way. [22]

Now notice, in the Book of Romans.

Oh, I want you to fall in love with the teaching of the Tabernacle in both the Old and the New Testaments. It is so rich!

Paul writing in Romans, chapters 1 to 3:20, tells of three types of sinners.

1. There is the scarlet, deeply-ingrained sinner, the evil man.
2. Then Paul speaks of the man who feels that because he is a moral man his own works of righteousness will make him acceptable before GOD.
3. Paul speaks last of the religious man, the one who is faithful to his duties to the church, but who never has experienced the new birth.

He sums it up by saying, ". . . **all have sinned and come short** . . . !"

Then in Romans 3:21-25, Paul shows there is a way for sinful man to come to GOD by the grace which is ours in CHRIST JESUS; that CHRIST paid the penalty for our sins, that He was the burnt offering sacrifice which provides man's approach to a Holy GOD.

Read this portion of Scripture over and over again and rejoice, friend of mine, that CHRIST paid our debt for sin - yours and mine, and through Him we can come boldly to GOD as our Father.

Then in Romans, chapters 6, 7 and 8, we are told we must wash at the Laver in order to enter the Holy Place, and feed upon the Bread, and walk in the Light. Yes, indeed, Paul is pointing back to the Tabernacle.

Then, in chapters 12-16 he shows us that as a result of this cleansing we bring forth the fruit of righteousness. [23]

THE ONE WAY OF APPROACH

NOW, friends, here is an interesting point.

When GOD gave the instructions to Moses for building the Tabernacle, he first spoke of the Ark of the Covenant where GOD dwelt, and then of the Brazen Altar, which depicts GOD coming to man. But when man comes to GOD he comes by the one gate of entrance, then on to the Brazen Altar and then finally into the Holy of Holies!

Yes, GOD so loved the world that He provided this way of approach to Himself through the one door, CHRIST JESUS.

Have you come by the Table of Shewbread which depicts CHRIST the Bread of Life, and by the Candlestick which shows CHRIST interceding for us in prayer? This path leads to the Holy of Holies, to the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat where a sinner, cleansed, can meet GOD in fellowship.

How clear! How blessed! Do you see it, friend of mine?

Oh, may the HOLY SPIRIT, the Great Teacher, open your eyes to behold the wonders of the Book.

May you not be indifferent!

May you study and become grounded in the Word, not tossed to and fro like children - listening and following any attractive voice.

Remember, "**There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof is the way of death.**" Come by His way!

Yes, if you come by faith, GOD will accept you.

He will cast your sins behind His back, never to remember them against you, forever. [24]

Take GOD at His word. That sin question must be settled, either the sinner must die for his sin or an innocent substitute die in his place. JESUS came and died for you, He gave His Life a ransom for you (John 1:12).

Oh! friends of the radio audience, which is scattered across the nations of earth, how many today will kneel wherever you are, and look up into the Father's face and say, "Oh, GOD save me, I believe."

GOD will hear you.

As we bring this blessed hour to a close, how many here in this visible audience will raise their hands and say, "Brother Fuller, I need CHRIST as Saviour. I want to be remembered in prayer. I want to receive Him and make Him Lord of my life."

Will you raise your hand thus indicating your need of GOD?

Yes, I see hands going up all over. GOD bless you -Yes, I see you, service man, another service man - anywhere - up in the balcony. I can't acknowledge all of them. Putting your hand up you say, "Brother Fuller, pray for me, I need CHRIST."

We must close in a few seconds, and we shall be praying for you as we have our altar service here. Please continue in prayer as we leave the air. This is Charles E. Fuller saying, "Goodbye, and GOD's richest blessing upon you." [25]

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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