

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness

GOD's Marvelous Revelations Concerning Sin and Death
and
The Divinely Provided Way of Salvation

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CHAPTER NINE -

THE HOLY OF HOLIES AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

(Exodus 26:31-37, Exodus 25:10-22, 26:33-34)

As already indicated, between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, was a magnificently beautiful curtain or veil. Like the gate into the court of the Tabernacle, which was the first door, and the second door which hung at the entrance into the Holy Place, the third door, or the veil into Holy of Holies was beautifully woven with purple, scarlet and blue upon pure white, fine twined linen. We have already stated that these four colors symbolized the four characters of CHRIST, as prophesied in the Old Testament, and as presented in the four Gospels of the New Testament.

- Purple for the King and His Kingdom, as represented in Matthew.
- Scarlet for the Suffering Servant and Redeemer, obedient unto death, as seen in Mark.
- Pure White for the Perfect Man, so beautifully portrayed in Luke's Gospel, and
- Sky-Blue for Him who came down from Heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him, the Only Begotten Son of GOD, as John's Gospel presents Him.

Within the Holy of Holies upon curtains hung around the walls and overhead, were represented angelic figures woven in gold, symbolizing the heavenly hosts before and around the throne of GOD, and also that vast company of the redeemed of whom Paul speaks so reverently, that great cloud of witnesses, so deeply interested in everything pertaining to the welfare and victory of the children of GOD.

WONDERFUL SYMBOLISM

It is important to notice that the hanging, at the outer door of the Tabernacle, was supported by five pillars of acacia-wood overlaid with gold. ***A fifth pillar was added to the four which supported the gate of the court; since the revelations of spiritual realities in the Holy Place go far beyond the truth revealed in the Gospels, which deal with those things which JESUS began to do and teach; to present His resurrection from the grave, His ascension into Heaven,***

to sit down on the right hand of GOD, and His sending forth the HOLY SPIRIT on the Day of Pentecost, His power in Heaven and on earth, and His coming again in power and great glory. The fifth pillar supporting the curtain or door into the Tabernacle therefore symbolizes the Book of Acts. These five pillars, covered with gold, were set in sockets of brass; but the brass was over-towered by gold, and significantly enough, brass is never again mentioned. **"There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"** (Romans 8:1).

Those who rightfully step through the door into the Holy Place are in fellowship with Him who is the Light of the world. They feed upon Him who is the Bread of Life. They have been redeemed and freed from sin, and so from condemnation and judgment for sin. If any sin, they have an Advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST, the Righteous. All of these ministries of CHRIST are represented and symbolized in the Holy Place. How could brass, the symbol of judgment, continue in evidence? How wonderfully exact these representations are!

The inner veil hung upon golden hooks from four pillars of acacia wood covered with gold. They were set in sockets of silver. There were 96 other silver sockets supporting the boards which formed the walls of the Tabernacle. These will be described in detail in PART II. All of this speaks of the redemptive ministry of our Saviour, thus there were an even 100 silver sockets underlying the sides and supports of the Tabernacle proper. All of this demonstrates that the complete purpose and process of salvation rests upon the price of our redemption, paid by our Savior on Calvary. Not for one minute, in our life and worship, will GOD look with mercy or favor upon us, who approach Him, if we forget, or even neglect, Him by whom blood-atonement was made for our sins.

THE COURTS OF HEAVEN

Those who have followed the revelations of truth, symbolizing GOD's plan of salvation, foreshadowed in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, are correct in concluding that the Holy of Holies represents the courts of Heaven and the ministry of CHRIST in the immediate presence of GOD, the Father. The Holy of Holies could be entered only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, by the High Priest, and by him alone. The thick, heavy veil symbolized the barrier between earth and Heaven, impassable except in the way prescribed by Divine revelation and commandment, which is the way of redemption, the way of the Cross.

The ministry of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement symbolized the ministry of CHRIST. After the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies were filled with the sweet odors arising from the burning incense from the golden altar, the High Priest parted the curtains and entered into the Holy of Holies. He bore in his hands a basin filled with the blood of the spotless, paschal lamb. Only as he came bearing the blood of the lamb, could he enter the presence of GOD, manifested by the effulgence of glory above the mercy seat. **"Without shedding of blood is no remission (of sins)... and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."** Therefore, without bearing the blood of the appointed sacrifice, neither the high priest nor any man, may approach GOD.

ONCE FOR ALL

That the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies only once a year, fore-shadowed the fact that CHRIST, having made one complete and sufficient sacrifice for sins, entered once and forever into the presence of GOD in Heaven, there to represent us, as our great HIGH PRIEST, making intercession for us before the throne of GOD.

Nothing more solemn and sublime characterized the Divinely appointed worship of Israel, than this element in the ministry of Israel's High Priest. To enter the Holy of Holies without the blood of the lamb, merited and received the instant judgment of death. The people gathered before the gate of the outer court had no way of knowing whether their petitions for mercy and forgiveness would meet with pardon and absolution, manifesting the Divine favor, until the return of the High Priest from the presence of GOD, with his message of peace and protection to the people of Israel.

Within the Holy of Holies rested its only piece of furniture. This was the Ark of the Covenant, or the Ark of the Testimony. It was constructed of acacia wood and was like an oblong chest, covered with gold within and without. It was two and one-half cubits long, one and one-half cubits wide, and one and one-half cubits high (or 44x27x27 inches). Round the four sides, at the top, was a moulding, which projected outward to form a secure rest, within, for the mercy seat. As in the case of the Altar of Sacrifice, and the Table of Shewbread, at the four corners were rings of gold, through which were thrust poles of acacia wood covered with gold, which, doubtless, were located close to the base of the ark as by direct command they were never to be removed from the ark.

THE ANGELIC BEINGS

The cover of the Ark of the Covenant was a wonderful piece of workmanship wrought from a single, solid block of gold. It was smooth and flat on the under side of its base. Above, at either end, the Mercy Seat was fashioned into the form of angelic beings usually called the "Cherubim." Doubtless, the reader has seen different representations of these angelic figures. Some are represented as standing, others are kneeling, and still others in varied postures. Perhaps, the representation of these Cherubim, herein presented, may appear to be strange and startling.

AN ANCIENT TRADITION

The ancient tradition, which is religiously held to in Ethiopia, states that when the son of the Queen of Sheba, by King Solomon, who remained behind to be educated at Solomon's court in Jerusalem, was about to return to his mother's palace, to assume his princely duties, in Abyssinia, King Solomon invited him to ask one supreme favor as a token of his affection. The prince asked that he be given the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple in Jerusalem. Of course, this was refused. Then the prince asked if it would be possible for a replica of the Ark to be made, and that he be permitted to take it with him to Abyssinia. This request was granted. But, according to the legend, or tradition, still believed in Ethiopia, when the replica was finished, the son of the Queen of Sheba caused it to be substituted for the sacred original in the Temple. It is impossible to prove the truth, nor, for that matter, the falsity of this ancient tradition.

We do wish to state very emphatically that the Cherubim, as represented on this purported replica of the Ark of the Covenant, is in perfect harmony with the posture of Orientals engaged in worship, wherever we saw them in Asia. They bow upon their knees, with their foreheads resting upon their hands, which in turn, rest on the ground before them. Read of the prostrate posture of Daniel, of St. Paul and of John, the Revelator, in the presence of the Glory of CHRIST, and it is not at all difficult to accept the posture of the Cherubim, as presented in our illustration, as likely to be correct.

WITHIN THE ARK

Within the Ark of the Covenant reposed a golden pot of manna, the tables of the Law, and Aaron's rod that budded. These symbolize CHRIST, the Bread of Life, of which, if a man eat by faith, he shall live forever; CHRIST who kept GOD's Law perfectly in His heart; and CHRIST, our hope of immortality, of everlasting LIFE.

Thus we have discovered how everything in and pertaining to the Tabernacle in the Wilderness symbolized and foreshadowed the coming and ministry of our Blessed Savior and Lord. Were these various elements presented in or about the Tabernacle, to be represented on a blackboard, one by one, we might have rubbed them out, since, one by one, we have seen how CHRIST Himself fulfilled them, and filled them with amazing Divine meaning. Thus, as types and symbols, they become object-lessons, showing forth the steps in the way of Divine Redemption and Salvation, wrought for us by our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and thus point the way from sin and death, step by step, into the presence of the Glory of GOD in the heavenlies.

When the high priest had entered into the Holy of Holies, symbolizing CHRIST's ascension into Heaven, once for all, there was no way the congregation of Israel, waiting without the gate of the court, could know that he remained alive, or had received favor with GOD, except by the tinkling of little bells fastened to the hem of his garments. They listened intently for the sound of these bells, until the high priest returned to view, and proclaimed to them the pronouncements which had been communicated to him from above the Mercy Seat.

THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When CHRIST was about to go to the Cross, on that last night in the Upper Room, He told His disciples that when He had ascended to His Father in Heaven, He would ask the Father to send another Comforter, the Divine Paracletos, who would become their assurance that GOD, the Father, had accepted the sacrifice which He had offered on Calvary. By the coming of the HOLY SPIRIT into their hearts and lives they would know that HE LIVES. That the redemption of sinful, but believing men is complete, and that now, before the throne of GOD, He ever liveth to make intercession for the saints, until He shall come again to receive them unto Himself, even as He promised. (John 14:1-3, Acts 1:10-11)

The coming of the HOLY SPIRIT into their hearts and ours is the earnest, or guarantee, that the blood shed by the Lamb of GOD on the cross is efficacious for the cleansing away of OUR sins, and that We, indeed, have passed out from death into ETERNAL LIFE.

GOD BE PRAISED

Thank GOD, for He has so simply and beautifully revealed these things to us. Have we grasped them? We never can do so with our minds alone. They can be fully known and, experienced, only as we come to know JESUS CHRIST and through Him come to know GOD our Father. (John 17:3) Every sincere seeker of GOD and of personal salvation may take these steps and know these experiences, freely and fully, if he, or she, will take the place of the sinner in ancient Israel, and walk in the way of the HOLY SPIRIT which, in our behalf, and for us, are here set forth for our humble belief and acceptance: for this is the Divinely revealed way to GOD, through JESUS CHRIST, who alone is "**THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.**"

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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