

9/29/24 Christ Fellowship

## Jesus the Tabernacle – Exodus 25

Did you know that if you want to visit the White House in Washington, D.C. that you have to send in a written request at least twenty-one days in advance? And while they give guided tours almost every day, there is basically one way in and one way out for the general public. The whole property is fenced with motion-sensing fencing. The grounds are motion sensing. The air above it is a no-fly zone for anything including drones. And you can only visit certain, select portions of the building.

But it hasn't always been that way. When Abraham Lincoln was president, early on he had what he called an open-door policy. And he meant it literally. If you wanted to meet with the president of the United States, you could actually just walk in the door and ask for him and he would come meet you. Usually there was a long line of people who wanted jobs in the government or help from the government in some way. It got to be so time-consuming that he had to make some changes but it was that way for quite a while.

Can you imagine being able to just bebop into the office of the most important man in the country and be able to ask him something or complain about something or get his help in some way? That would be pretty cool, wouldn't it? But you can understand why that wouldn't work for very long. And do you know what would be even cooler? Bebopping into the throne room of the Creator of the universe. That would be pretty cool.

Can you imagine being able to just waltz in anytime, day or night and being able to ask the Great I AM, the Redeemer and Sustainer, the Author and Perfector of life a question or even a favor? And to know that He welcomes you and wants you to come in and has provided a way for you to do it. Yes, there is a way. There is a door. There is one way and only one way and if you don't go through that door then you can't meet with God. And who is that door? Jesus!

We are continuing our look at finding Jesus in the Old Testament and in the past few weeks we have seen Him show up bodily and we have seen foreshadows of Him and today we see a symbol of Him some 1500 years before He came to earth bodily. And He is symbolized here...as a tent. Seriously. Let's turn to the **book of Exodus** to see this. And what was happening in the book of Exodus? The Hebrew people were exiting Egypt and making their way to the Promised Land of Israel.

But there was a problem. Okay, there were thousands of problems but the problem we see addressed here is the ability for the people to worship God in a real way. Yes, God had

been with them every step of the way and he had shown up in some amazing circumstances. He parted the Red Sea. Kind of a big deal, that one. He provided a cloud by day and fire by night to guide them. He provided food and water for them in the desert. He made their clothes not wear out. He protected and provided in so many ways but God Himself wanted more.

He instructed Moses on how to build a portable temple. They were on the move so they couldn't build a real temple in which to worship God and God wanted them to be able to come to Him so God gave them instructions on how to construct a tent like He wanted. They lived in tents and God would too. And God said He would dwell there and they could meet Him there – if they did it right. If you have ever been to Ikea and bought some furniture that you had to assemble at home and felt overwhelmed, this would have been too much for you. God gave very specific instructions on what He wanted down to the color of the fabric and exactly how long and how wide and every other detail. Let's look at it in **Exodus 25**.

Now, if you have ever read **Exodus 25**, I'm pretty sure even the godliest of you thought at some point, *"Well...this is boring."* And it would be boring if it wasn't symbolic of Jesus. It's the reason I always recommend to people that have never read the Bible to start in the New Testament. The New Testament allows you to see Jesus plainly. But the whole Bible is about Jesus, all of it, even this passage. And when you see how Jesus comes alive on these ancient pages, it starts to get exciting and motivating.

Now, in this passage, we see God telling Moses that since there's not an Ikea around, he needs to gather up all the materials to build this tent from scratch. Let's read the first part of Exodus 25 and we will read some more in a minute. **Exodus 25:1-9** says, *"The Lord said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>'Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. <sup>3</sup>These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; <sup>4</sup>blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; <sup>5</sup>ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; <sup>6</sup>olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; <sup>7</sup>and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast piece. <sup>8</sup>'Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. <sup>9</sup>Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you."*

Can you imagine hearing from God and this is His wish list? I can just imagine Moses writing this down on his Big Chief notebook. *"Gold, silver, bronze, ok, I think we have some of that lying around...blue, purple and scarlet yarn? Now wait a minute. That has to come*

*from a certain type of crustacean found only in certain parts of the ocean and then prepared in just such a way. That's a lot of work. Goat hair? Yea we have that. That's doable. But the other stuff is going to be hard to find. God, are you sure about this or is this just some kind of test?"*

There was a pattern that God had in heaven, and He told Moses what that pattern was and mandated that Moses do it exactly as God had said. So, Moses made everything just exactly and meticulously according to what God had said not knowing the symbolism involved at all. And he never would in his lifetime understand the symbolism because Jesus wouldn't show up bodily for another 1500 years or so.

But because we have the New Testament, we can recognize Jesus in all the symbols represented by the tabernacle and what was in it. Now, some people can find symbolism in every square inch of every thread sewn together here but I want to just hit the highlights as we continue to read **Exodus 25**.

In **verse 10**, God describes to Moses what He wants to go in the tabernacle, starting with the Ark of the Covenant. Some versions say the Ark of Testimony and we will see why in a second. God tells Moses the exact dimensions and what it is to be made of and what is to go in the Ark. And the main thing that is to go in the Ark right now is the 10 Commandments. It also had Aaron's rod that budded, and a jar of manna. But these two tablets that have God's rules on them for the people are to be placed in this gold-covered box and it served to symbolize God's covenant or promise to Moses that the Hebrew people would always be special to God.

But the symbolism on top of that symbolism that we can see now is that with the coming of Jesus, we can all be special to God, not just the Jews. We can all go to Heaven by faith in Jesus. Yes, the Jews are still a special people to God but no longer is the Gospel just for them. **Hebrews 8** says, *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt."* So, we can see that Jesus is the new covenant that includes us Gentiles as well.

**Exodus 25:23-30**, it describes the table, what Jews called the Table of Showbread. It was designed by God just to hold bread and something to drink. Huh. How could that possibly symbolize Jesus? Well, Jesus said in **John 6:35**, *"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."*

The next thing is the lampstand in **verses 31-40**. Jews now call this a *minora* and it is usually depicted as a candle holder. But candles had yet to be invented so the original one held cups of oil with a wick that burned and it was the only light in the tent itself. Gee. How could light be a symbol of Jesus? What do you think? Yes! Jesus said in **John 8:12**, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”*

In the next chapter of Exodus, it continues with the exact measurements and exact colors and types of fabric that God wants the tent itself to be and in **verse 31** it says to make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and to hang it on golden hooks on golden stands with silver bases. And that curtain was to separate the Holy of Holies from the rest of the tabernacle. And once a year, the High Priest could go in there and make offerings. Not just anybody could waltz in there.

But you remember on the day of the crucifixion of Jesus. After they had beaten Him and cursed Him and abused Him and then nailed His innocent body to the cross. After they had given Him some nasty wine vinegar to drink, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, *“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”* And then Jesus took His last breath. And when He did, that old veil, that curtain that separated the Holy of Holies was torn in two from top to bottom and, once again, Jesus was the symbol. His body was torn and the veil was torn showing that Jesus was now the way to have a relationship with God.

He is the only way. He is the only truth and He is the only life and His is the only name whereby we can be saved. **Hebrews 10:19-20** explains, *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body.”* Thank you, Lord!

Every aspect of the Tabernacle’s intricate design and everything done inside it were not merely religious formalities but profound spiritual symbols pointing to the ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Each element of the Tabernacle—the bronze altar, the laver, the lampstand, the table of showbread, the altar of incense, the Ark of the Covenant, the veil, the high priest, and the coverings—finds its ultimate meaning and fulfillment in Jesus. That’s one of the reasons we always say that the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments is about Jesus or points to Jesus or leads people to Jesus. Jesus is the only way to Heaven.

But what happens when you ask somebody outside these walls how to get to Heaven? What do they always say? *“Well, you have to be good enough.”* Right? Because that just makes sense to us. That’s how we would do it if we were God. Heaven is for good people.

I remember years ago working with a lady that I was pretty sure was not a believer and one day I had the opportunity to present the Gospel to her. And I explained everything the best I could. I told her what God had done for me through His Son Jesus and how we are saved by grace and through faith, the whole bit. But at the end she said, *“Well, I’m glad you have that. I’m glad for you to have that truth. But my truth is different. **See, I’m going to get to Heaven my own way.**”*

Do you know what that is? That is saying to God that *“God, I know you have prepared a way for me from millennia past. I know that you designed a very specific, very detailed plan like only the Creator of the universe can. I know that in your unfathomable wisdom and undeserved love for me that you made a way for me to accept your gracious gift of eternity in Heaven by the substituting sacrifice of your own Son...but you know what? I got this. I’ll do it my own way.”*

**Proverbs 14:12** says, *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”*

The high priest’s role in the Tabernacle, particularly on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), is profoundly symbolic of Jesus’ earthly priestly ministry. The high priest would enter the Most Holy Place once a year to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people. This act of atonement involved the sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat to cover the sins of Israel. But if that same high priest were to go in on any other day or neglect any other aspect that was commanded to him, if he tried to go in that Holy of Holies any other way, do you know what would happen to him? He’d be DRT – dead right there.

It’s the same for us today. If we try to get in by our good deeds, we end up in Hell for eternity. If we try religion, we end up in Hell for eternity. See, the high priest might make the right sacrifice, wash himself at the laver just right and send up just the right combination of incense but if he had unconfessed sin in his life, he would die as he walked into the Most Holy Place. He had to make a sacrifice of an animal for his sin and for the sin of the people and it’s the same today. **Hebrews 9** says, *“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”*

But Jesus made that sacrifice so we don’t have to kill animals like that anymore nor do we have to be that sacrifice. All we have to do is believe in the one who made the sacrifice for us. And when we believe, we give our whole lives to Him. True belief is literally life changing. True belief in Jesus is agreeing with God that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life and no man comes to the Father except through Him. (John 14:6) And when you believe you will become a servant of God. If God tells you something, whether in scripture

or through prayer or any other way, then you do it and do it completely and immediately. Anything less is sin and sin will pain you if you are really a believer.

Have you made that decision yet? It's a one-time decision and it is for life. It's not to be taken lightly. It will require sacrifice just like it always has but for us today the sacrifice is of time, pride, money, fame, and any part of us that we can brag about. But the benefits are peace and joy in this life even while the storms of life hit and then life in Heaven for eternity. It is so worth it! Make that choice today while the music plays.