



KNOW:TRUTH

The Gospel of John

A New Covenant Study

WEEK ONE | DAY FOUR

BEHOLD JESUS IN THE TABERNACLE

John was written around AD 90. There is some debate from scholars as to the actual date, but for the most part, that date seems to be where most land. It is interesting to note that the Tabernacle was completely destroyed twenty years before that, in AD 70. (Jesus prophesied it would happen in Matthew 24:1-2 when he told his disciples that not one stone would be left unturned. Most law-abiding Jews died during that terrible time, but almost all Christian- Jews heeded the warning and fled to the mountains and hills and survived.)

As I was preparing for this study, I read many commentaries and listened to many sermons seeking direction from the Lord as to how to approach the structure keeping a New Covenant perspective. One day, I ran across a sermon by Joseph Prince highlighting this gospel as an aerial view of the Tabernacle. Although I could not find a commentary that supported this view, as most break John up into three sections, or “books” (Prologue, Book of Signs, Book of Glory; or Light, Life, Love), this “Temple” perspective intrigued me considering that this book was written with a completely different purpose than the other gospels. This book feels to me like a love letter to the church and an earnest plea to the Jews that they no longer need to grieve the loss of their traditions, for Jesus IS the very One who they worshiped through those traditions; all of their traditions were just a shadow of the Real. A Tabernacle perspective makes perfect sense, and so that is how this study will be structured.

John, many scholars agree (with just a few suggestions that another John authored it - John the Elder), wrote this shortly before he died at about 100 years old. John also authored I, II, III John, and Revelation.

Let's Begin.

In the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life was placed in the center of the garden. Adam and Eve were told they could freely eat of it and live eternally, but they did not. The Tree of Life was Jesus. God wants His children to live eternally. To live eternally is to know God. “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God.” John 17:3

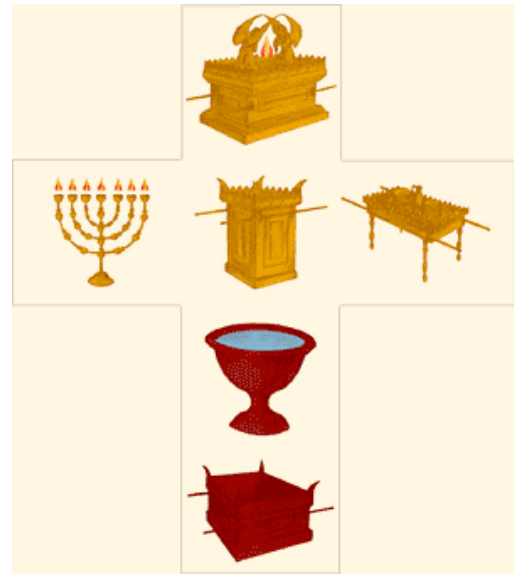
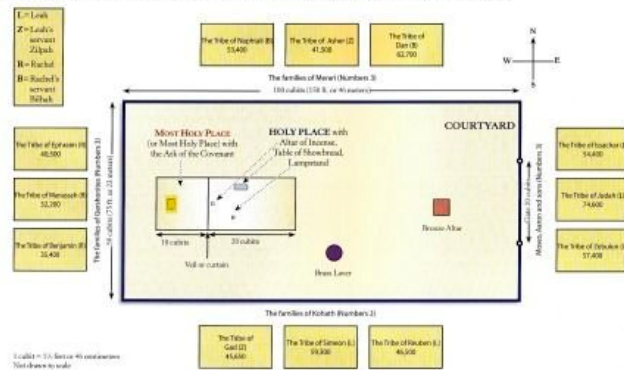
Everything in scripture is peripheral to Jesus. The instructions God gave to Moses when constructing the Tabernacle comprised of details when constructed spoke of Jesus and His sacrifice.

As shown in the illustration below, each tribe was divided into four groups and instructed by God as to how they should be positioned around the tent; they were arranged, with the Tabernacle in the midst, to form the shape of the cross.

Furthermore, the positioning of the furniture also forms a cross within the Tabernacle, and each item, in its detailed construction, speaks of Christ, from the wood and metals used to the colors and types of fabric.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE CAMP

The Israelite camp in the wilderness was not a regular nomadic camp. The book of Numbers describes the organization of a military camp. Israel became God's army, and God, Israel's king, went along with them in the military march. The organization of the tribes depended on military strength: Judah had the most warriors of all the tribes, so they guarded the east side of the Tabernacle. The east in the ancient world was an important, symbolic point of reference. The Tabernacle, like the Temple in Jerusalem, always faced east.



The amazing thing about the book of John is, that it silently speaks of the Tabernacle! As Jesus came out from the bosom of the Father, He came out of the Holy of Holies, past the veil and the furniture within the Holy Place to gather his people like a shepherd and bring them back through the items, back into the bosom of the Father.

Look at the correlation in this outline:

From Chapters 1-12, Jesus came out from the bosom of the Father to gather His lost sheep.

- The Holy of Holies- (Ch 1:1-13-) He is in the beginning.
- The Veil - (Ch 1:14-17)- He is the Word became flesh.
- The Altar of Incense- (Ch 1:18)- Jesus came out of the bosom of the Father.
- The Shewbread- (Ch 6) - I am bread of life.
- The Candlestick- (Ch 8)- I am the light of the world.
- The Laver- (Ch 9)- Jesus heals blind man who bathes in pool of Siloam.
- The Brazen Altar- (Ch 12) If I be lifted up, I will draw all (men) unto me. (signifies His death)

From Chapters 13-21, Jesus takes His gathered sheep back to the Father.

- The Laver- (Ch 13:10) - Jesus washes disciples feet.
- The Shewbread (Ch 13:18)-Lord's Supper/ Disciple leans on the bosom of Jesus.
- The Candlestick (Ch 14)-Holy Spirit (represents the candlestick- Isaiah 11).
- The Altar of Incense- (Ch 17)- High priestly prayer.

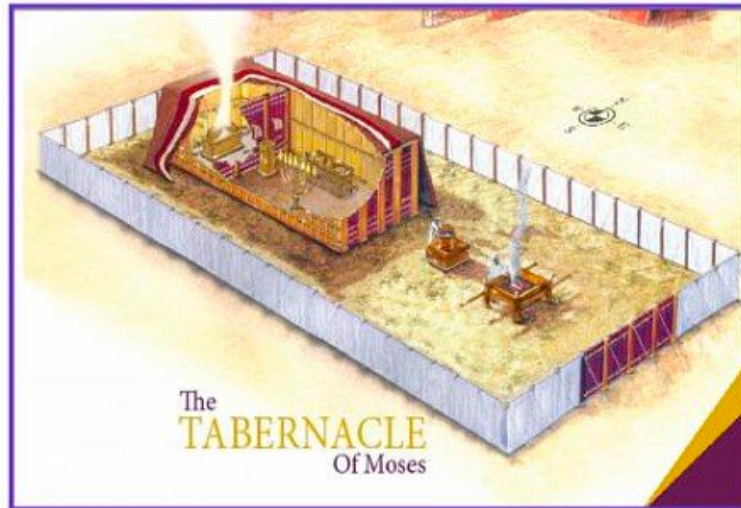
- The Veil- (Ch 19)- His flesh is torn.
- The Holy of Holies -(Ch 20)- He is the Risen Lord, now we have security and confidence to come boldly to the throne room of Grace.

God always wanted to dwell with His people. Through Jesus, He placed His Tabernacle with those hidden in Christ.

Let's take a look at each article from the inside out; this is in direct contradiction to how a Priest would have entered. Nobody could enter the Tabernacle except through the door in the east leading in toward the veil. Rituals of purification must be met as the priests performed their duties in relation to each article. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year to sprinkle the blood of the "blood sacrifice" over the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant to atone for the sin of the people. The priest must be without sin and have performed his duties perfectly, or he would die, for sinful man can only enter God's presence sinless and with the help of an advocate, The High Priest.

Jesus performed perfectly to give us access to the Father because of His sacrifice on our behalf. He is our High Priest, and we are hidden in Him.

We will begin where Jesus began.



The Holy of Holies

The Holy of Holies was the most unique place in the Tabernacle. Where the Outer Court experienced the natural light of day, and the Holy Place was lighted by seven lamps, the Holy of Holies (or The Most Holy Place) was lighted by the Shekinah Glory of God. The very Presence of God rested on the Mercy Seat of the Ark like a cloud. No man could come near the Presence

and live except for the High Priest, once a year, to make atonement for the people's sin and who offered incense which represents prayers given as a sweet-smelling fragrance to God.

The Ark

The Ark of the Covenant was placed within the Holy of Holies. Within the Ark were three items: The Tablets of the Law, which represents Father-God, the Lawgiver; the Golden Pot of Manna, which represents Jesus- the Bread of Life; and Aaron's Rod that Budded, which represents fruitfulness and life- the Holy Spirit.

The Ark symbolized the Godhead, with Jesus peripheral even in its design. Made with shittim wood and covered with pure gold, its design speaks of Christ, "God made manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim 3:15-16, for wood, represents humanity, and gold represents divinity.

There were two cherubim on the two ends of the Ark with wings spread over the blood-stained Mercy Seat, faces looking at one another. The Cherubim represented the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the triune God. Covered with one piece of gold (representing One God), one Cherub represented the Father, the other, The Holy Spirit, and the Mercy Seat in the midst, representing the Son.

The very history of the Ark speaks of Christ- it is His Story; the journey speaks of His birth, anointing, life, ministry, death, resurrection, glorification, and second coming.

The Veil

Separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place was The Veil, which contained four colors: blue, which represents Heaven; red, which represents Adam; purple, which represents royalty; and white, which represents righteousness. The Veil represents Jesus, whose flesh was torn to give us access to the Father.

The Holy Place

Within the Holy Place were three pieces of furniture that speak of Christ.

The Golden Altar of Incense

"He ever lives to make intercession for us." Hebrews 7:25

The Alter was for the burning of Incense unto the Lord. Incense speaks of prayer and intercession, a "sweet smelling fragrance unto the Lord." (Revelation 5:6-12). Jesus is our Great High Priest, interceding for us, pleading our case against the accusations of the Accuser, Satan. His blood speaks a better Word, and that Word is what keeps us, sustains us, and gives us victory.

God considers our prayers a fragrant aroma because it is how intimacy with Him is sustained. Our very life is a prayer because Christ dwells in us. Partnering with God through prayer is faith at work in order for the promises of God to be made manifest.

The Table of Shewbread

“You prepare a table before me.” Psalm 23:5

Made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold, just like the Ark, it represents Christ in design and function. When God gave the instructions for constructing it, the word “Table” was first mentioned in the Bible (Ex 25:23). “Table” speaks of grace in redeeming fallen man back into an intimate relationship with God. Shewbread means “to declare.” So Jesus declared He was the “Bread of Life” and gave the church the authority to declare His life, death, resurrection, and coming again in the Table of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The Golden Candlestick

“I AM the light of the world.” John 8:12

Positioned opposite the Table of Shewbread, it was lit by seven lighted lamps with a continual supply of oil poured into them. Made of one solid piece of gold, it speaks of the deity of Christ and the church because Christ's Divine nature would be revealed through them. “You are the light of the world.” (Matthew 5:15-16)

The Greek Word for “oil” is “charisma,” translated as “anointing.” Christ is the Anointed One, and the believers of Christ are “anointed ones,” continually burning with the Spirit and God’s anointing. Without the light from the Candlestick, The Holy Place would remain in shadow, but the light produced highlighted the Table and the Alter of Incense. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is the Oil that continually burns with a believer highlighting Christ in a dark world.

The Outer Court

“For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.” Psalms 84:10

The Brazen Laver

“and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7

“that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.” Ephesians 5:26

The Brazen Altar was inlaid with the looking- glasses of the women and filled with water to wash the hands of the priests. The purpose of the Laver was twofold: to reflect the image of the priests as they washed their hands, leading to self-condemnation, and to cleanse the stain of the sacrifice from their hands.

Now, Jesus is our reflection. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,” Romans 8:1. The only reflection we should see when we look at ourselves is of Christ because He is our Laver. The water in the Laver of Christ is the Word. We are cleansed by His Word. Jesus is the Word. When we see Jesus, we see our reflection because “as He is, so are we in this world.” 1 John 4:17.

The Brazen Altar

“For both, He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Hebrews 2:11

The word “altar” means “lifted up,” “high,” and “ascending.” The Brazen Altar was for the burning of the sacrifice. The priests would lay the sacrifice upon the altar in exchange for the people's sin. Jesus was lifted up on the Cross- His altar. Since then, He has ascended up and is high above all. (Acts 2:30-36). In Greek, altar means “slaughter place.” Calvary was a slaughter place. Christ was led as a Lamb to the slaughter to become sin in our place. He traded places with us to give us His righteousness. He became our one and final sacrifice.

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

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