

NEW HOPE CHURCH OF GOD

ALTAR WORKERS TRAINING

LESSON 1 Part B: The Tabernacle

A summarized presentation

This **brief** presentation is not to be regarded as straying from the course of study but as an incentive. **The objective here is to see (at least get a glimpse) of the emphasis that God has placed on reaching out to His people.** This will not be a detailed presentation due to time factor but you are encouraged to do some homework in this area and get help if you have any questions.

You are encouraged to observe the details God placed on the preparation stage, the materials, the contents, **the priesthood**, the people, their worship, etc. You have heard of symbols and types, things in the Old Testament that definitely point to Jesus Christ. Well, here is one example that in so many ways point to Christ and His redemptive work. **God remains the same (Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8) and while methods have changed His message in essence remains the same! (Matt. 24:35; 1 Peter 1:25). God has always had a standard, be it applicable to the seeker, the saints or His servants of higher calling; much can be learnt even in this most outstanding symbol of the greater things that even we are experiencing today . . . THE STUDY OF THE TABERNACLE IS OF TREMENDOUS SPIRITUAL BENEFITS!!**

We are what we are by the grace of God; all believers are ministering servants, yet some have been called to higher service. Undoubtedly, we are *“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that our lives may glorify Him who has called us out of darkness into the marvelous light”* (1 Peter 2:9)

The Aaronic priesthood may not be in-force for us because of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ but the need to be light in this world of darkness is still imperative. In the Tabernacle the Golden Candle Stick was the only light available as the Priests ministered. Jesus Christ is the **ONLY** source of light and life that leads to everlasting life in the presence of God (John 1:4, 9; 5:26; etc.).

A. THE TABERNACLE LITERALLY AND TYPICALLY

1. The Tabernacle was the dwelling place of the God of Israel. It stood in the center of the twelve tribes, facing the east.
2. God was the one who gave the blue print to Moses, who was instructed to follow the details given not only in the construction of the Tabernacle but in worship (for example see Ex. 25 through 31).

3. The Tabernacle was God's first dwelling place on earth.
 - (a) He walked in the company of Adam in Eden.
 - (b) He visited Abraham at Mamre, but had no dwelling-place there.
 - (c) In the Tabernacle, He comes down to dwell with His redeemed, and from then till now, He had a dwelling place on earth.
 - (d) Jesus Christ brought a major difference; in Christ, God was manifest in the flesh. "*... the Word became flesh and tabernacle among us*" (John 1:14).
 - (e) Next came the Church—a spiritual temple, built of living stones.
 - (1) This is the present place of God on earth.
 - (2) Some references: 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16.
 - (3) Therefore, where two or three are gathered in His Name He is in their midst (Matt. 18:20).
 - (f) As you study in more details you will see the beauty of the various ways that the Temple was a type of better things to come!! God be praised, Jesus Christ brought the fulfilment to reality (Col. 1:21-29, NB Vv. 26-27; etc.) and we are chosen to help others experience the fullness of the Only True God!!

B. FREE WILL OFFERINGS

1. All of the materials of which the Tabernacle was built were "***free-will offerings of the people of God.***"
2. The sense of God's goodness was present to His people's hearts; redemption and its results they had tasted the sweetness of it. They were in the dew of their youth, and **they gave their very best to God!!**
3. Morning after morning (Ex. 36:3), the gifts of willing hearts poured in, in such abundance, so the Moses had to request of the people to stop taking in gifts for the Tabernacle (Ex. 36:5)

C. THE WORKMEN

1. See Exodus 31:1-11; 35:30-36; etc.).
2. Bezaleel and Aholiab were called and fitted for the work, the former (Bezaleel) from the tribe of Judah (Ex. 31:1-2)—also known as the "*royal tribe*" (Heb. 7:14); the tribe that was the first on the march (Num. 10:11-14). Aholiab was from the tribe of Dan (Ex. 38:23); the wisdom of Bezaleel and Aholiab is skill in supervising and teaching others how to do things, as well as being able to do intricate, artistic things themselves.
 - (a) Thus does the Lord show that He can find "chosen vessels" anywhere He desires.
 - (b) He called one apostle from the feet of Gamaliel and another from his fishing boat on Galilee's Lake, and linked them together as Apostles of the circumcision and of the Gentiles (Gal. 2:8).
3. **Those whom He calls, He fits for His service.**
 - (a) This is more than man can do: "*Every one whose heart stirred him up, came to work to do it.*" (Ex. 36:2)

(b) Jesus has guaranteed that if we follow Him, He “*will make us fishers of men*” (Matt. 4:19).

(c) **Willing hearts cause willing hands to work for God!**

- (1) A willing heart—a mind to work—is the crying need if this present hour.
- (2) Clod-hearted saints will always find some excuses for idleness, hearts a-glow with the love of Jesus will find work to do for Him.
- (3) God is building His heavenly tent. Now is the opportunity for His saints to show their love.
- (4) Nothing really given to God or done for Him with single eye, will ever be forgotten on a coming day.

D. THE GATE

In front of the Tabernacle, in the center of the court, facing the east was the gate.

1. The east in Scriptures is connected with the rising light.
2. The camp of Judah was commanded to pitch on the east, “*toward the rising of the sun*” (Num. 2:3).
3. The beams of the rising sun would fall upon the gate, revealing its colors, and showing the way to approach to God.
4. There was no back or side entrances: he who entered must do so in the light.
5. The sinner must be exposed (made fully conscious of his state) before he can be saved: he must enter God’s appointed gate in the full consciousness that he is a sinner; there must be no shirking of the light, no covering or hiding of his state.
6. The gate was the only access to God.
7. The gate was for all; the prince and the beggar alike; so it was with Jesus, He came that all will be able to come to God.
8. The gate was the only way in; one moment a transgressor outside the gate. The next moment he was inside. The gate today is still ajar for the whosoever will ... Oh, that men would enter in and taste and see that God is good! (Psa. 34:8).
9. Jesus is the door upon entering, in salvation which salvation is experienced (John 10:1-18). Irrespective of what is being taught today, Jesus still remains the only way to God!! (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

E. THE TABERNACLE—CONTENTS SIGNIFICANCE (*Briefly Presented*)

1. Altars preceded sanctuaries in Israel (Gen. 12:7, 8). Monotheism (*doctrine that there is only one deity*) underlay the Tabernacle, and the later temples were modeled after it.
2. **The Outer Court**: continued the Altar of Burnt Offering and the Laver. **The Tabernacle structure consisted of two divisions: The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place.**
 - (a) **The Holy Place had three items**: Table of Shew Bread, The Golden Candle Stick, and The Altar of Incense.

- (b) The Holies of Holies (*separated from the Holy Place by the veil*) contained: The Ark of the Covenant, in which were The Two Tables of Law, The Pot of Manna, and The Rod of Aaron that Budded.
3. **The Altar of Burnt Offering** (Ex. 27:1-8 and 38:1-7)
- (a) Also called the “Altar of Bronze” from its appearance and the “Altar of Burnt Offering from its use (Ex. 27:1-8; 30:28).
- (b) The fire on the altar was never to go out (Lev. 6:13).
- (c) This was the most important of the contents of the outer court.
4. **The Laver**
- (a) The laver is described in Exodus 30:17-21 and 38:8.
- (b) It was for the exclusive use of the priests as they ministered in the ritual of the Tabernacle. They neglected this provision at the peril of their lives (punishable by death . . . Ex. 30:20-21).
- (c) The Laver was made of bronze, had a base, evidently for the washing of the hands and feet of the priests.
- (d) Actually there were two washings of the priests.
- (1) At the entrance before they entered the Tabernacle. This was a complete washing done by Moses (Ex. 29:4; Lev. 8:6).
- This was their first act of consecration.
 - **No holy garment, no anointing oil was put upon them until they were washed . . . neither could they enter the Holy Place.**
- (2) The second washing was before they entered the Holy Place.
- After the sacrifices and moving around the sand . . . it was imperative for them to wash their hands and feet at the Laver.
 - **No unclean priest was allowed to minister to the LORD on penalty of death— “Holiness adorns Your house, O LORD, forever.”** (Psa. 93:5b NKJV).
 - This was their cleansing and when their consecration was completed, they might enter the Holy Place!
5. **The Golden Candlestick** (Exodus 25:31-40)
- (a) The Golden seven branch lamp stand.
- (b) It was the most ornate of all the furniture.
- (c) It was made of pure gold, consisting of a shaft, an upright center branch, and six other branches proceeding out of the shaft, three on either side.
- (d) On the end of each of the seven branches was a lamp containing pure olive oil, and these kept continually burning to give light within the Holy Place.
- (e) **It was the only source of light there, and in that light the priesthood served and worshiped God!**
- (f) Jesus Christ is and ever was “the Life” and “The Light.” He and He ONLY is the giver of life and light, and He communicated both unto His saints. They are in possession of His life, and are “*Children of the light*” and it is through them that He manifest and displays himself. The candlestick seems to point to that deep,

mysterious oneness that exists between the Head and the members of **“one new man,”** expressly called **“the Christ”** (1 Cor. 12:12).

6. **The Table of Showbread** (Ex. 25:23-30)
 - (a) Made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold, with a golden crown around the top.
 - (b) Twelve loaves made of fine flour and overlaid with frankincense lay upon the table within the inner crown in two rows.
 - (c) At the close of every week they were removed by the priest and replaced with fresh loaves, the priesthood receiving the former as their food.
 - (d) Only the priests were allowed to eat these loaves.
 - (e) Time is not available for details but the table is symbolic of Jesus Christ in whom the priesthood finds their food.
7. **The Altar of Incense** (Ex. 30:1-10; 34-38)
 - (a) This is not the Altar of Burnt Offering.
 - (1) The Altar of Burnt Offering was made of shittim wood and cooper: the altar within the Holy Place was made of shittim wood and gold.
 - (2) **The cooper altar was the place of sacrifice; the golden altar was the place of Incense.**
 - (3) There was continual bloodshed at the one altar and perpetual incense at the other.
 - (b) Perpetual sweet smelling incense was offered on it, night and morning, and on the Day of Atonement expiation (**“expiation”**: *pay the penalty for; atone for, etc.*).
 - (c) The incense was a holy perfume, composed of four spices, perfumed according to the command of God. None was to be made like unto it, upon penalty of being cut off from the people of God (Ex. 30:37-38).

Obviously, there is yet so much more in regards to the Tabernacle that we have not discussed above. There is significance in regards to the materials used in the making of the Tabernacle. There is also significance in the colors, used, etc. (for example see Ex. 25:1-9).

We have not discussed the **Holy of Holies** which is the smallest of all the parts of the sanctuary, yet it was the most significant because of the ritual that was carried out there on the Day of Atonement, and because of the reiterated declaration that God Himself dwelt in the holiest of all (**The Holy of Holies or The Most Holy Place**); it was a dwelling represented by the Shekinah cloud over the innermost sanctuary. The only furniture in the Holy of Holies was the Ark (Heb.9:3-4), it contained the Ten Commandments (1 Kings 8:9), the pot of manna (Ex. 16:33, and Aarons rod that budded (Num. 17:10).

The **Veil** was also of great significance basically means **“to bar”** or **“shut off;”** in some cases it is also translated: **“shrine in a temple”** as well as **“to spread over, to cover.”** It is also defined as **“curtain”**. The inner curtain was that which divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies and it is distinguished from any other curtain used in the entire Tabernacle. It was a symbol of God’s

unapproachability. There are other significant features of the veil, for example, the colors, etc., however at this point we have to close off due to time.

1. Keep in mind that the veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Only the high priest was permitted to enter behind the veil, and that only one day each year—the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:2; Heb. 9:7).
2. During the crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23:45), or at the moment of His death (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38) and at the time the priests were busy with the evening sacrifice, the veil of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, exposing the Holy of Holies (The Most Holy Place), symbolizing that Jesus, as the High Priest who could enter the Most Holy Place (Heb. 6:19, 20; 9:11, 12), had opened the way for all believers to enter into the presence of God through His flesh, symbolized by the veil (Heb. 10:19, 20).

The altar is definitely a place of sacrifice and a place where we meet God. Priests are needed to minister to the needs of so many; while we are dependent on the Aaronic priesthood nor have an altar that is limited as to its location, sacrifices are still made and God's presence to be experienced. Thanks be to God because of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ wherever we are God's presence is and the sacrifices can be made (see John 4:1-26, NB Vv. 21-24). As we compare the significance of the Tabernacle even in other areas not discussed in the above, may we through these facts be challenged by the righteousness of our holy God and be determined that by His grace and our total submission to His perfect will we will be holy, always yielding to His perfect will.

Romans 12:1-2 Amplified Bible

"I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of You in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. Do not conform to this world (this age), [fashioning after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and new attitudes] so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you]."

Eph. 6:7 NKJV

" . . . with goodwill doing service as to the Lord, and not to men, . . . "

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