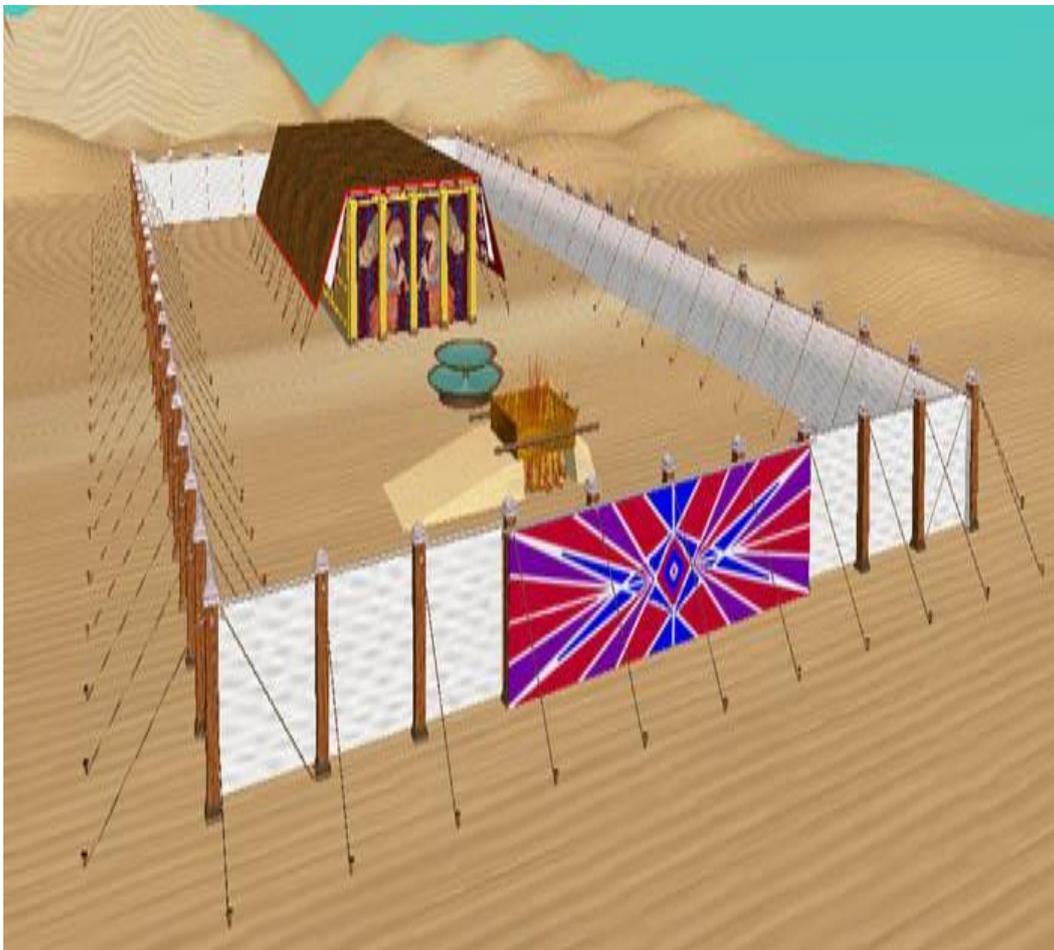
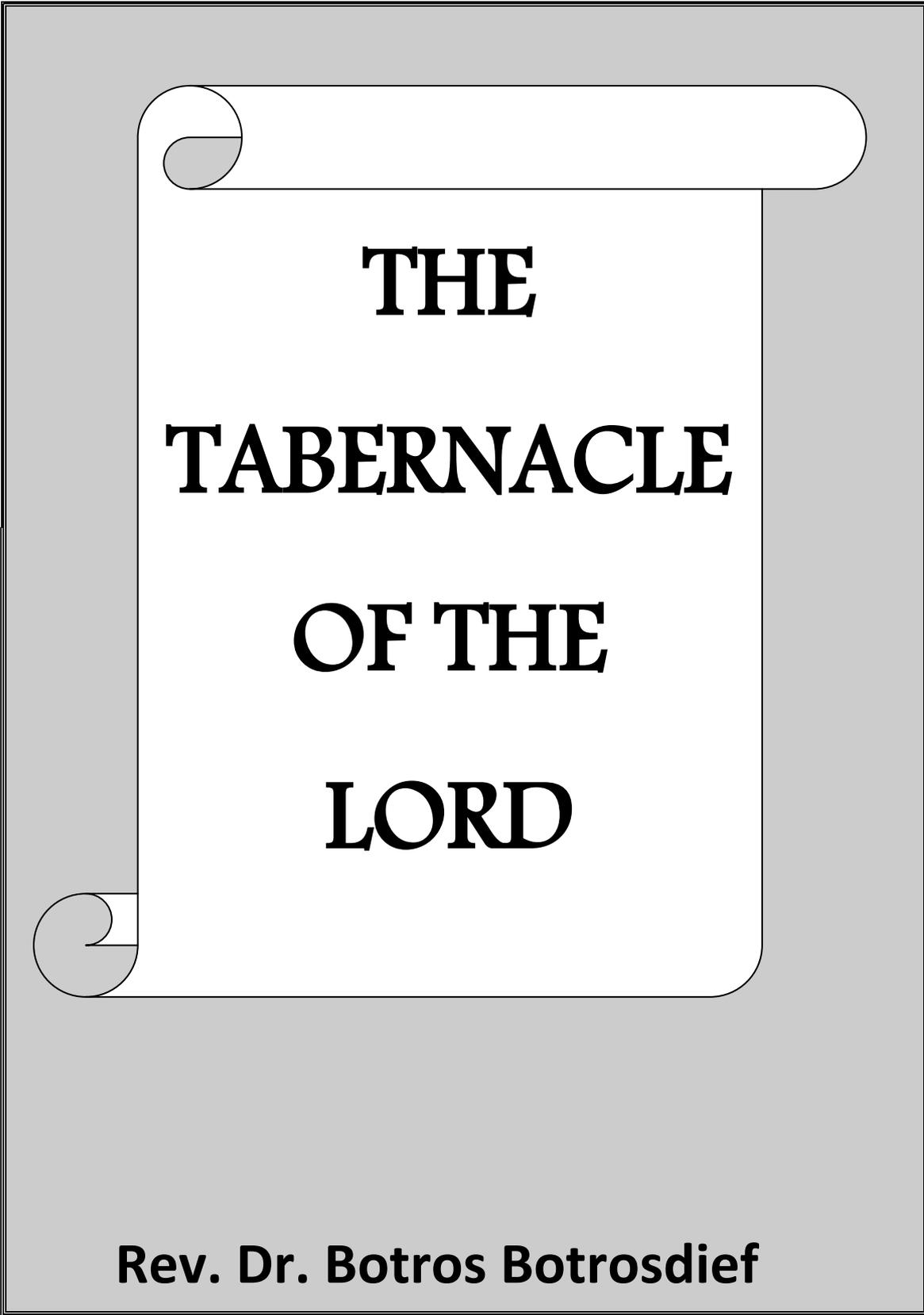


The Tabernacle of the Lord



Rev Dr Botros Botrosdief



**THE
TABERNACLE
OF THE
LORD**

Rev. Dr. Botros Botrosdief

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Soli Deo Gloria- To God Be the Glory

Btoros Botrosdief

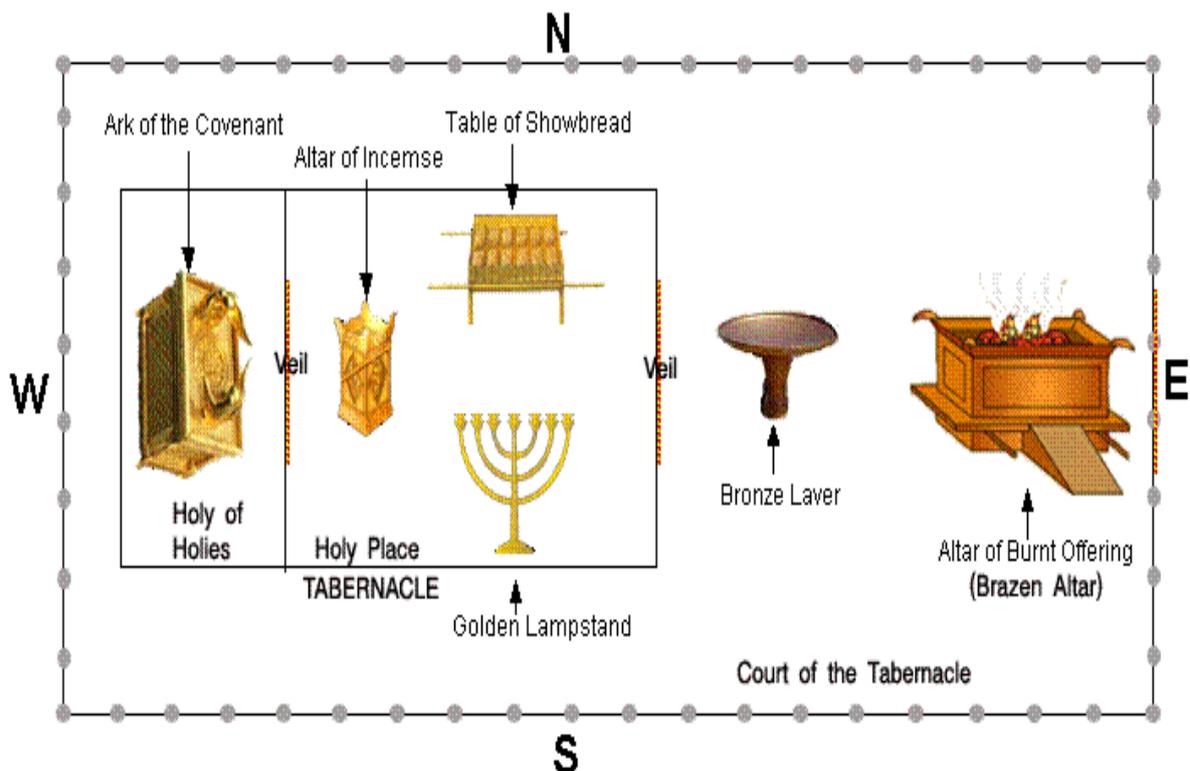
Christmas 2022

Introduction to the Tabernacle

Q: What is the Tabernacle?

The word “Tabernacle” in Hebrew “מִשְׁכָּן”, means “dwelling”. It was a portable tent used only as a place of worship for the Israelites during the period of wandering that preceded their arrival in the Promised Land and worshiped the Lord in the temple of Jerusalem (1 Kings 6). It was called also by other names such as, “tabernacle of the congregation”, “wilderness tabernacle”, “tent of witness” and “Tabernacle of the Lord”.

THE TABERNACLE



God instructed His people whom He delivered from Egypt to build that tabernacle so that He could meet with them, and they could worship Him, and cast their burdens before Him. The tabernacle had three distinct sections: The Holy of Holies, the holy place, and the outer court. In the Holy of Holies, there was the Ark of God. In the Holy Place there were an altar of incense, a lampstand, and table of showbread. And in the Outer Court were the Bronze altar and the bronze laver. From the east, the gate to the courtyard, we see the bronze altar, where the priests offered the sacrifices, and the bronze laver, where they would wash their hands.

The Tabernacle with its 6 pieces of furniture, as we see in the diagram, were object lessons, that teach God's people of the Old Testament through pictures, the way to approach God and enjoy His presence and His blessings. All these elements were a type and point to Lord Jesus the Promised Saviour.

Q: How God spoke to Moses from the Tabernacle?

God showed Moses just a glimpse of His glory above the ark, and from there God said to Moses, *"I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel"* (Exodus 25:22).

Q: What Was the Purpose of the Tabernacle?

In Exodus 25:8, God told Moses *“Make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst”*. And in verse 22, God said, *“There I will meet with you... and I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel”*. In the Tabernacle and later the Temple, the Israelites were allowed to come closer to God, to meet with Him and worship Him, to cast their sins and their cares upon the Lord and be guided by His Word.

Sadly to say, the Israelites turned the Place of meeting with God into den of robbers and later to a market place. And God said to them through His prophet Jeremiah, *“Will you steal and murder... burn incense to Baal and worship idols, and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, “We are safe”—safe to do all these detestable things? Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? ... While you were doing all these things, declares the Lord, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer”* (Jeremiah 7:9-13).

When the Lord Jesus came to earth and He entered the temple courts, He drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves and said to the Jews, *“It is*

written, My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it 'a den of robbers... Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate" (Matt 21:12-13; Luke 13:34-35).

But God's purpose to dwell with mankind will never fail, at His first coming, Christ our Lord came and dwelled with us, for the purpose of our salvation and by His cross. He obtained for us eternal redemption. The Word of God tells us that in Jesus, we have a greater tabernacle, one made without human hands, in which the fullness of God dwells bodily- Col 2:9). John 1: 1 & 14 says, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.*"

But, Christ our Lord will come again, in a more permanent fashion to dwell with us forever in the new heaven and in the new earth, and bring us to the eternal rest as He promised.

Q: What was the Spiritual Significance of the Tabernacle for Israel? And why does this matter for us as Christians today?

Through the sacrificial system held at the Tabernacle, daily offerings and the Day of Atonement, the Israelites learned the gravity of their sinfulness and how much they needed God to

save them according to His mercy and grace. But only those who approached God by faith learn to look at God as their Saviour and relied only on His promises to forgive their sins and save them from its guilt and condemnation. Here are some examples from the Old Testament;

David in **Psalm 51** said to God, *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions... Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity... Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise”* In **Psalm 32**, he said, *“Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit... I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the guilt of my sin”*

God promised in **Isaiah 43:25; 44:22**, *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins... I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you”*. **Micah 7:18-19**, says, *“Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? ...You delight to show*

mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea”.

God said in **Jeremiah 31:31-34**, *“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel... For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more”.* That new covenant has been fulfilled in Christ in whom all the sacrificial system held at the Tabernacle were pointed to Him as the prophet Isaiah said, *“He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”* (Isaiah 53:5-6)

John the Baptist said about Jesus, *“Behold the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world”* John 1:9. So, When God said to Moses in Exodus 25:8, *“Make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst”*, that reflected His loving desire to dwell with us forever. In this regard, the tabernacle is an incredible source of encouragement to us to study. It tells us first, that God climbed down the ladder to get to us, because we cannot get up to him. And through the Tabernacle, the Israelites were allowed to draw closer to God. In the light of the New Testament, and in the present time, we can appreciate that God tabernacles- dwells- in our hearts by His

Spirit and not in a temporary earthly dwelling space. We no longer have to offer up sacrifice for our sins, as the Israelites did, because Jesus was the final and perfect sacrifice once and for all

We no longer have to have one representative once a year to approach God; we can approach God every hour of every day, and pray boldly as the Bible says; *“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need”* (Hebrews 4:14-16).

But what do we do when we sin? What does the Bible say?

1 John 1:8-9; 2:1-2; 4:9-10 say, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness... My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world... This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that*

we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins”.

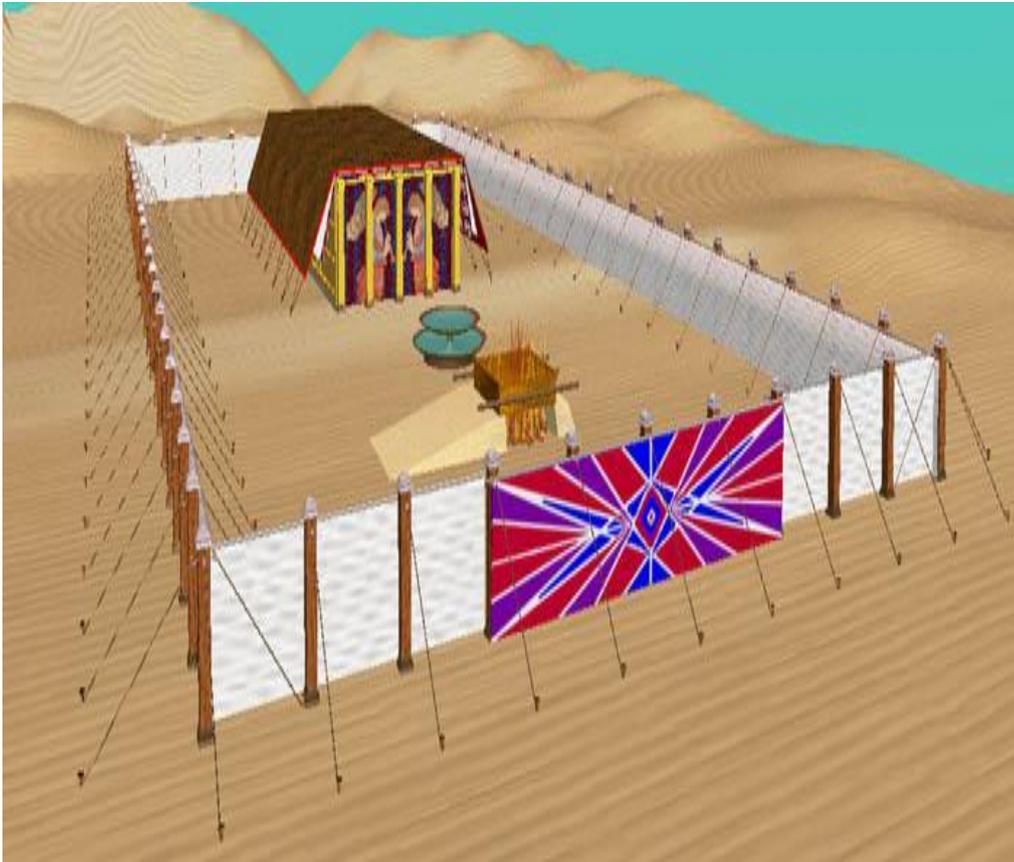
So in the light of Christ of the New Covenant, the Tabernacle teaches us these important lessons;

1. God climbed down the ladder to get to us, because we cannot get up to him.
2. Through Christ alone, who Tabernacles among us and presented Himself as the Perfect sacrifice for our sins once and for all, we have confidence to come before the throne of God any hour and at all times.
3. God tabernacles now- dwells- in our hearts by His Spirit, who guide us to His Word and comfort us in our troubles.
4. When we fall into sin, we look to Jesus, our great High Priest, and confess our sins, and he intercedes for us and frees us from any guilt. *If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future,*

nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:31-39).

Now we are waiting the coming of Jesus our Lord to tabernacle with us forever in the New Heaven and in the New earth. The Bible says in Revelation 21:1-4 & 22-23, *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them... I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp”.* And that was a general view of tabernacle.

The Tabernacle Gate Jesus is the only Way to God



The Tabernacle gate was the only entrance, No other Gate. It was located at the east. Its curtain was colorful, too bright for anyone to miss. And God said to Moses; *"For the entrance to the courtyard, provide a curtain twenty cubits long, of blue, purple and scarlet (red) and white- finely twisted linen—made by a weaver, with four posts and four bases."* (Exodus 27:16). Everyone from the high priest to the common worshiper entered and left through this only Gate, No other way.

Like the other elements of the tabernacle, the gate of the tabernacle to the court of worship was rich with meaning. The

gate was on the east end, opening to the west. Going west to enter the Tabernacle symbolizes moving toward God. Going east away from Tabernacle symbolizes going away from God. The gate on the Garden of Eden was on the east side (Genesis 3:24). **Cain** went away from God to the land of Nod, east of Eden (Genesis 4:16). Lot split from Abraham, went east and landed in the evil cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 13:11). So the first lesson of the Gate of the Tabernacle is this: Come nearer to God and do not go away from His presence.

When Asaph was away from God's presence, troubles afflicted him but joy and peace filled his heart when he came back to God. And here what he said, *"My feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply, till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered, I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you. Yet, you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever... Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to*

you. But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds”.

The gate was a hanging of fine twined linen of **four colors**; Blue, Purple, Red and White, and that symbolized the life of Christ as presented in the four gospels. Blue stood for the deity of Christ. And of Christ who came from heaven, the Bible says that in Christ, God was manifest in the flesh. Purple, stood for royalty. Jesus was crucified, because of his claim to be King of the Jews. In Rev 19:16 He is "King of Kings". And in Philippians 2:9-11, "All will bow to Jesus as Lord and King". White, symbolized purity. In Heb 4:15 Jesus was the sinless one. And in Luke 23:4, 14 Pilate said of Jesus "I find no fault in this Man". Red symbolized blood, the color of sacrifice. It refers to Jesus and His sacrificial suffering for our sins. Mark 10:45, says that Jesus give His life a ransom for many. In Col 1:14, "Redemption is through His blood".

The gate of the Tabernacle was the only way in, just as Christ is the only way to God. One gate, one way into salvation. The Lord Jesus said of himself: *"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved"* (John 10:9). God has always had just one way to Himself. Faith in the Promised Saviour He would send. It was Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God and the seed of the woman. The one and only gate is a representation of Christ as the only way through which one could fellowship with God and worship Him. To do this, one

had to enter in through the gate to the place where God dwelt. Jesus said in his famous “I AM” statements: *“I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14:6) Our Lord also said in Matthew 7:13-14, *“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”*

The act of entering the gate to the tabernacle was significant to the Israelites. The first thing that one saw upon coming through the gate was the brazen altar, which served as a reminder of man’s sinfulness and his need for a Saviour, a substitute to redeem him and be forgiven. John 10:7-9, says that Jesus is the door. We have to go through Jesus to be part of the flock (for salvation) and to be part of His Church (pasture where sheep are fed). This is “Only Way” that man must enter and be saved.

The tabernacle gate was open always to any repentant Israelite who wanted to enter and seek life and forgiveness for sin. The Bible describes our Lord Jesus, as the life that gives light to men, *“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men”* (John 1:4). Our Blessed Lord Jesus described himself, John 8:12 *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”* (John 8:12) But, in our shrinking, pluralistic world, the belief that

Jesus is the only way of salvation is increasingly called arrogant and even hateful.

In the face of this criticism, we need to be filled with the Spirit of God and say with boldness like Peter who stood against the false religious leaders, “There is No other way except Jesus”. The Bible says in Acts 4:5-12, *“The rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas... and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem... they had set Peter and John in the midst, and asked them, “By what power or by what name have you done this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* Through the loving proclamation of the **Good News** of God’s love, the voice of Christ is still calling all people, *“Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, I will give you rest... I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (Matt 28:11; John 14:6).

The four pillars of the gate were made of wood that was set in brass socket foundations with silver caps and hooks. Brass stands for judgment. And Christ our blessed Lord had carried the wrath of judgment we deserve upon Himself on the cross as the Bible said in Isaiah 53:4-6, *“Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”*. And that was fulfilled in Christ our Lord for the Bible says, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”* (John 3:16-19).

Those who think that there are other ways to God or heaven other than Jesus and reject the Gospel call, they will be sadly mistaken at Judgment Day, and will be condemned

to the eternal wrath. The Day will come, it may be soon in our life time, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11). Our Prayers today should be as our Blessed Lord Jesus prayed, “Father, glorify Your Son, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent *Surely*” (John 17:1-3).

Our Lord also taught us to pray, “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven...For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”. Let us also brethren proclaim the Gospel of Christ, as the Lord said to His apostle Paul in Acts 26:17-18, “*I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me*”.

The Bronze Altar

The Altar of Cross of Christ and the Bronze Altar



The Bronze Altar was the largest piece in the tabernacle, and it was the first thing that people would see when they entered through the only gate to the Tabernacle of the Lord. Let us make a mental picture of the altar. The Altar was made of acacia wood overlaid with brass or copper, and all its tools—shovels, fire pans, and flesh hooks were all made of brass, that is why it was called the “Bronze Altar”. At the top of the four corners of the altar, was a horn, so the animal would have been tied to the horns before being sacrificed. There were many sacrifices offered on the altar, all pointing to Jesus

as the perfect sacrifice and what He accomplished on the cross for us.

Q: What is the significant of the Altar to God's people of both Old and New Testament?

The Altar served first as a reminder to Israel that God is Holy and man is sinful and in need of a sacrifice to atone for his sin. God said to Israel in Leviticus 17:11, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life"*. And in Hebrews 9:22, we read that *"Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness"*. So the bronze Altar served as a reminder of man's sinfulness and his need for a Saviour, a substitute to redeem him. The purpose of the altar has been fulfilled in Christ who was the Lamb of God who took away our sins. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and said, *"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29). And the apostle John heard the host of heaven saying in Revelation 5:12, *"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain for us, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"*

Secondly, the Altar served as a reminder to Israel that God is Just and Merciful and He in his grace provided the way for us to be forgiven and to be in His presence and enjoy His

blessings. God instructed His people to approach Him through sacrifices of burnt offering, meal or peace offering, sin offering and the trespass or guilt offering. All were pointing to Jesus and His perfect redemption upon the Altar of the cross. The Bible says in Hebrews 10:10-11, “And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But Christ, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. And we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*”. And in Ephesians 1:7, the apostle Paul says, “*In Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins through His blood*”.

Thirdly, all animals would have been tied to the horns before being sacrificed as the Bible says; “*Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar*” (Psalm 118:27). Christ our Saviour was tied into the Cross, and of Him the Bible says, “*My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet*” Psalm 22:16 In His love for us, He went to the Cross and joyfully died for us, as He said, “*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (Mark 10:45).

Upon the Four horns of Altar, the blood of the sacrifice would atone for the sins of God’s people. Upon the Altar of the Cross of Jesus, God, the Just, in His mercy and love met

our need as sinful men and applied the blood of Jesus and covered us with His blood.

The guilty person would go and hold the horn of the Altar seeking mercy and forgiveness (1 Kings 1:50). The guilty thief who said to Jesus, “*Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom*”, and the Lord promised Him with the eternal life. So we too look by faith to Jesus seek His forgiveness, and enjoy all the blessing that He accomplished for us upon the Altar of the Cross.

Q: What Christ accomplished for us on the Altar of the Cross?

Our Lord Jesus accomplished four great things for us: Atonement, Redemption, Reconciliation and Victory. In each of these four acts, man stands in a different relationship before God!

Atonement is a sacrifice that removes God’s wrath, and turns it into favour. Man stands before God as a guilty person under God’s wrath. But because God loved us fully, Christ took our place on the cross as our substitute and died for our sins. The Bible says, “*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins*” (1 John 4:10) “*For He made Him who knew no sin to*

be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:21).

Redemption means “*to release a slave or prisoner of the payment of a ransom*”. Man stands before God as a slave and a prisoner and needs to be free from sin, death and Satan. Christ’s death accomplished our redemption, and freed us from sin, death, and Satan. The Bible says of Christ our redeemer, “*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*” (Colossian 1:12-14).

Reconciliation refers to the removal of our *alienation* from God. Man stands before God as an enemy, and because of our sinful nature, man is at war with God, separated from Him. By shedding of His blood and dying in our place, Christ *reconciled* us to God giving us a new nature that delights in the fellowship with God. The Bible says in Colossian 1:20, “*By making peace through his blood*”. “*For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son*” (Romans 5:10).

And on the Cross, Christ won **the ultimate victory** over Satan when He proclaimed “*It is Finished*”. Man stands before God as a defeated, captive to Satan, and under the fear of death, but Christ disarmed the devil and broke the

bonds of our captivity and freed us from his dominion. In Christ, we are no longer under the fear of death. The Bible says in Col 3:15, "*Christ disarmed the devil and his evil forces and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in the Cross*". And in Hebrews 2:14, the Bible says, "*Christ by his death, He broke the power of the devil and freed us from the fear of death*". That is why the apostle Paul rejoiced and said, "*Giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*" (Col 1:12-14).

The Crucified and the Risen Lord, our Saviour, gives us reason to sing and march in victory as we walk always in the shadow of the Altar of the Cross, our Altar as the Bible says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever... We have an altar (to eat from it), but those (do not believe in Him) who minister at the (old) tabernacle have no right to eat... But we through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that openly profess his name" (Hebrews 13:8-15). Let us then "*Fix our eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*" and rejoice as the apostle Paul says, "*Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*"(1 Cor 15:57).

The Bronze Laver



Q: What is the Bronze Laver and what its significant to God's people?

Like the other elements of the tabernacle, the Bronze laver was rich with meaning. It was to stand midway between the Altar and the holy place. It was an object lesson that teaches God's people the way to approach God and enjoy His presence and His blessings. No priest was allowed to enter the holy place or to offer sacrifices on the Altar with unclean feet or hands. Throughout the Bible, water represented cleansing. And God wanted His people to be holy and pure to serve Him. He said in Leviticus 11:44, *"I am the LORD your God. You shall consecrate yourselves, and be holy; for I am*

holy". And in Isaiah 52:11, God said, "*Be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord*".

Q: What is the Meaning of the Bronze Laver in the Light of the New Testament?

We have seen that our Lord Jesus was represented by the only Gate to God's presence, as the Only Way to God. And the Bronze Altar speaks of God's forgiveness through the Cross of Jesus that is our justification through His blood. Now, the Laver speaks of our cleansing, our sanctification.

Q: How our sanctification can be achieved in light of the New Testament?

There are two kinds of cleansing in the New Testament: first, the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, which is applied on us by the death of Jesus on the Altar of the Cross. The second cleansing stands for God's Word which is applied to us by our confession of sins and holding on to God's promises.

When Christ died, all believers in Him were cleansed once for all by His blood shed on the Altar of the cross. We no longer need a ritualistic washing with water to come before God, because the Bible says, "*Christ has provided purification for sins*" (Hebrews 1:3). And the apostle Paul says "*When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us,*

not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

Now we can “*approach the throne of grace with confidence*” (Hebrews 4:16), being sure that we are acceptable to Him because we are spiritually clean. The Lord said to Peter in John 13:10, “*He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean*”.

Our Father, not only forgives us, but He also cleanses us through His Word as the Bible says, “*Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word*” (Ephesians 5:25). This washing is applied to us by our confession of sin. “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9). So our loving Father not only promises forgiveness and salvation at the Bronze Altar of the Cross, but also provides cleansing at the Bronze laver of His Word. The Bible says in 1 John 1:7, “*If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin*”.

Without confessing our sins, we lose the joy of salvation and we are not able to have fellowship with our Father. Our loving Father, expects us to have clean hands and clean feet.

He encourages us to wash them at once when we sin. Do not wait so long like David! The night would be dark and cold in your spirit; and the day would be dry scorching your spirit. Let us look at David's experience! In his Psalm 51:1-12, He cried to God and says, *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me...Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me”*.

And in His Psalm 32: 1-7 he said, *“Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.” And you forgave the guilt of my sin. Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance”*.

Praise God, Yahweh, God of salvation who has given us these two great fountains: one for forgiveness, and the other for cleansing. Water and Blood in the Word of God are closely joined together. Of our blessed Lord Jesus, the apostle John said, *“One of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water”* (John 19:34). And in 1 John 5:6, *“This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth”*

Cleansing is a gift as well as forgiveness as God promised. A gift must be given; a gift must be accepted; a gift must be used by faith, because God means what He says. God promised His people, *“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees”* (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Our life in Christ is a walk of faith as the Bible says in Colossians 12:6, *“As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him”*. By faith we accepted Christ our Lord as our Saviour, who bore the punishment of our sins on the Altar of the Cross; and by faith we accept Him as our cleanser through the water of His Word.

The Laver is the only vessel of the Tabernacle of which no dimensions are given. That signifies that there is no limit to the cleansing and keeping power of the Lord Jesus, “*the author and the finisher of our faith*” (Hebrews 12:2). That is why we are blessed with this benediction, “*To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy, to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore!*” (Jude 24-25).

The Golden Lampstand



The Golden Lampstand was one of three items inside the Holy Place with the Table of the showbread and the Altar of Incense. The Lampstand was made of pure gold. It had a center stem with three branches going out of each side. The center stem and each branch had a lamp of flower-shaped cups held a measure of olive oil and a cloth wick. The wick became soaked with oil, was lit, and gave off a light to shine in the Holy Place. The priests, were to keep the lamps burning continually.

Q: What is the Meaning of the Golden Lampstand?

The function of the lampstand was to shed light in the holy place. It also stood as a permanent reminder that God is the giver of light that brings guidance to eternal life.

The lampstand was a foreshadowing of our Lord Jesus, the Promised Saviour who said in John 8:12, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"* (John 8:12). In this declaration, our Lord was implying that He was not just a good teacher, or a prophet but the light of God - the same light that led Israel through the wilderness. He is the very presence of God. Our Lord Jesus compared his followers to light as well. He said in Matthew 5:14-16, *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"*.

Scripture is overflowing with references that compare and contrast light and darkness, believer and unbeliever, right up to the book of Revelation. In Revelation 1:20, Christ says the *"seven lampstands are the seven churches"* God's people are to walk in the light of God and spread the light of the gospel of Christ to the people who live in darkness. Praise the Lord, He has taken His children out of the darkness and into His marvelous light, as the Apostle Peter says, *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God;*

once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy” (1 Peter 2: 9-10).

When, our Lord Jesus appears to Paul on his way to arrest Christians in Damascus, a bright light surrounds Saul and he hears a voice saying, *“I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”* Saul loses his sight but gains it again through the laying on of hands by Ananias who then baptizes him. The Lord said to Paul, *“I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me”* (Acts 26:16-18).

As Christ the light of the world sent Paul, He calls us to then shine the light of His gospel in the dark world. He identifies us as the 7 lampstands. Let us continue to be his light until He comes. In the Last two Chapters of God’s Word, Jesus will be the Light of the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city that we look for. There is a ‘river of life’ and the city has no need for the sun or moon because the Glory of God is its light. The Lamb (Jesus) is its lamp *“The river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city... The*

city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp... There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 21:22-23; 22:1-4).

Let us then look forward to his return, and invite people to enjoy His light. The Bible closes with invitation of the Lord Jesus to all men, *“And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly” (Revelation 22:17; 20).* May our prayers always be Amen! Come Lord Jesus

The Table of Showbread



The Table of the showbread was one of three items in the Holy place with the Altar of Incense, and the Lampstand. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. On it, the priests placed of 12 loaves of bread made from fine flour, arranged in two piles of six, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. Each week on the Sabbath, the priests consumed the old bread and replaced it with fresh loaves. “Showbread” also was called “bread of the presence” because it was to be always in the Lord’s presence.

Q: What is the Meaning of the Table of the Showbread in the Light of the New Testament?

We have seen, the Gate of Tabernacle, points to Lord Jesus as the only way to God’s presence. The Bronze Altar speaks of our justification through His blood that was shed upon the Altar of the Cross. The Laver speaks of our

cleansing and sanctification by applying His Word and confessing our sins. Now the Showbread speaks of Jesus as our provision, the one who sustains us along the life's journey.

Each week on the Sabbath, the priests eat the Bread in the Holy Place, in presence of the Lord. This signified the Lord's desire to commune with his people, the 12 tribes of Israel, who were represented before Him in the symbol of 12 breads. In the same way, God desires to commune with His people of the New Covenant, who are called in 1 Peter 2:9-10, "kings and priests". *"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God"*. So how we get to this communion?

In the first century, God manifested Himself in the flesh, for the purpose of redeeming mankind. As the Apostle Paul says, *"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ, Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst"* (1 Timothy 1:15). And in 1 Timothy 3:16, he says, *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, Received up in glory."*

And before He sent His apostles to preach the good news of salvation to all nations, Lord Jesus for three years called the Jews to believe in Him and identified Himself in words and deeds that He is Yahweh the God of Israel. He said to the Jews, *“Before Abraham was, I AM”* (John 8:58). And in seven great statements, Lord Jesus declared Himself that He is the spring of life, and told them what He is going to do and give them and to the world, if they believe in Him. One of these seven "I AM", Jesus said in John 6:35,

“I am the bread of life”. As “the Bread of Life”, our Lord Jesus said of Himself, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day... I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world... Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day” (John 6:35-54).

In this declaration, there are three things: first is the promise of satisfaction in life and the eternal life in the next even if we die. Second, the Lord explained that eating his flesh and drinking his blood is not physically but in spiritual sense, which mean to believe in Him. Third, the Lord make it clear that by His sacrificial death for us, we can enjoy the

forgiveness of sins and the gift of the eternal life. His declaration of *"I am the living bread... This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"* (John 6:51), is repeated again in the upper room, before His crucifixion, and the Lord said to His disciples that His body is the bread that is about to be broken on the cross for us. In Matthew 26:26, the Bible says, *"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.'"*

Today, we as Christians observe Communion of the Lord's Supper, partaking of consecrated bread to remember the death of our Lord for our sins on the Cross and renew our fellowship with God. Believing in the Lord Jesus, and in His broken body on the cross is our only access to have fellowship with God and be saved and this is clear in 3 of His Seven declarations of "I AM". *"I Am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved"* (John10:7). And in John 10:11, the Lord said, *"I Am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep"*. And in John 14: 6, He declares, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"*.

We must always remember whenever we celebrate the Lord's Supper, that we are sustained and have fellowship with the Father only on account of the gracious work of the Son on the Cross to meet every one of our needs. This is our position

now, as believers under the new and better covenant. Our sins are forgiven and paid for by the Lord Jesus. There is no longer a need to offer sacrifices. Our daily provision is now the living Word of God that points to Jesus the Living Bread for the eternal life. Hebrews 8:6 says, *"But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises."*

Yes, God desires our fellowship, and that is why He came to earth from heaven as "bread of life" and gave himself up for us in order to give us eternal life and live with Him forever. Today, our loving God still desires to have fellowship with those who, like the church of Laodicea, lost their first love for Him and love the world more than the love of God. They follow *"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"* (1 John 2:15-17). He is saying, *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me"* (Rev. 3:20)

Our Lord's calling to the church of Laodicea reminds us that there is something more important than money, and cares only for living. This was the problem of the Jews of the first century who did not believe that Jesus was the bread who came from heaven to give them the eternal life. They focused only on ordinary bread and missed the point when He

spoke of Himself as bread of life. They were just like us. The material things of life were more pressing and attractive than spiritual things. What they wanted was an unending supply of bread that could make their daily life easier. We are so easily tempted and count our blessings in material terms, but let us always remember that the Lord said, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4)

Our Lord Jesus in His love for the people of Israel, said to them *“to seek first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added into them”* (Matt 6:33). So does what the Lord said to Israel regarding what man should seek first apply to us today? Yes absolutely. That is why He came to earth to redeem us and prepare us to live with Him forever in the New Heaven and in the New earth. Let us see first what He said to Israel, the people of the Old Covenant, and compare it with what He said to the people of the New Covenant which is represented by the Church that consist of all believers in Him from all nations.

The Lord said to Israel, *“Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that perishes but for food that endures for eternal life... For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world...I am the bread of life. He who*

comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:26, 33, 35). To the Church of Laodicea, He said in Revelation 3: 17-20, “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke... So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me”.

As bread sustains physical life, so Christ offers Himself to all people as spiritual bread of life that lasts forever. Our relationship with the Lord gives us life in all its fullness. This is what we need most, the bread for the eternal life that Jesus our Redeemer alone can give. Let us remember what the Lord said, *“Do not work (only) for the food that perishes, but for food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of man will give you”* (John 6:26). Only this can sustain us along life’s journey and prepare us for the life to come. Let us then dear brethren cultivate an attitude of thankfulness to God and seek always to commune with Him and encourage others to do the same. Amen

The Altar of Incense



The Altar of Incense was the third item in the Holy Place with the Table of the showbread and the golden Lampstand. It was small in size, made of acacia wood, overlaid with pure gold. On each corner was a horn, which the high priest would dab with blood once a year on the annual Day of Atonement. Morning and evening, the priest would put incense on it, so a sweet-smelling smoke issued from it day and night. The fire used to burn the incense was always taken from the Bronze Altar that stood in the courtyard, and the priests carried it in censers.

Q: What is the significant and the meaning of the Altar of Incense?

In the Scripture, burning incense is often associated with prayer. In Psalm 141:2, David prayed, “*May my prayer be set before you like incense*”. And in Luke 1:10, as Zechariah the priest was offering incense in the temple in Luke 1:10, “*all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.*” And in clear indication that burning incense means prayer, the apostle John saw that the elders around the throne “... *held golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God’s people*” (Rev 5:8 & 8:3).

The Altar of Incense reminded the Israelites that prayer must play a central role in their life as God's people. The smell of the incense fills the Tabernacle and goes outside into the court, and the people who offer sacrifices can see and smell it. When the people smell the sweet smell, they believe that their prayers were being carried to God. But at some point, God said to Israel, “*Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is disgusting*” (Isaiah 1:13). And our Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “*these people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught...They worship Me in vain*” (Isaiah 29:13 & Mark 7:6-7). God wants our hearts and lives to be right, so how can we offer right prayer before Him that ascends to Him as a sweet-smelling smoke.

Our prayers must always be in the name of the Lord Jesus, our great high priest, and be based on His intercessory work for us. All the priests of the Old Testament could serve only until they died. But Jesus, our great High Priest lives forever to make intercession for us.

The intercessory prayer was a part of Christ's earthly ministry. In John 17:15-19, says Jesus prayed for his disciples and said to the Father, "*I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth*". In John 17:20-23, Our Lord Jesus as our great High priest prayed for us too, "*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me*".

And the Scriptures reveal to us that our Lord Jesus now intercedes for us from the throne of heaven in his exalted life

above. The Bible says in Romans 8:32, *“Christ Jesus who died, more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”* And Hebrews 7:25 says, *“He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them”*. The intercessory work of Christ is invaluable to every Christian, for it makes clear that our ongoing acceptance before God is finally grounded in His perfect sacrifice and its sufficiency on the cross. Our prayers must always be in the name of Jesus, and based on His Intercessory work for us. But what would happen in our minds as children of God when we do sin?

Satan uses this opportunity, fills our mind with guilt, and inserts in our mind distorted thought about God that affects our fellowship with our Father God. Satan inserts lies in our minds, and make us think that God is mad with us and saying to us, *“why did you do such thing? How many times must I forgive you? You disappointed me? I cannot forgive what you have done”*. The Bible says in Hebrews 2:16-18, *“For surely it is not angels Jesus helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted”*. The Bible tells us that Jesus, as our great

High Priest is always sympathetic with our weaknesses as Hebrews 4:14-16 says, *“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need”*.

God looks at us always and sees us in Christ and restores our soul, and leads us back into the fellowship with him. And here is what the Bible tells us to do in the first letter of John. The apostle John wrote in 1 John 1:8-9 & 2:1-2, *“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world”*; *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”*. So, God is encouraging us to not let ongoing and un-confessed sins remain in our life as Christians, because that give opportunity to Satan to shake our confidence before God. And so, we easily doubt that we have been forgiven, accepted, and that our debt has been paid by Christ, our Redeemer. Jesus is our Divine Defense

Attorney, our Lawyer in Heaven. It is through His intercession that our prayers of confession of our sins are made acceptable to the Father. His incense, His blood, has been mingled with the prayers of the saints. He is the one who comes alongside to help us, a defender who pleads on our behalf, and we are covered at all times by his precious blood.

Zechariah 3:1-7 tells us how Christ our advocate defends us against Satan's accusation. God showed the prophet Zechariah a vision about Joshua the high priest who represents us, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. *The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebukes you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"* Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. *The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes."* Then he said to Joshua, *"See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you."* Then I said, *"Put a clean turban on his head."* So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by"

Satan's efforts to accuse Joshua and proved him guilty had failed miserably. The Angel of the Lord represents Christ in that vision, defends Joshua and said to Satan, the accuser, *"The Lord rebukes you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you! Is not this man a burning stick*

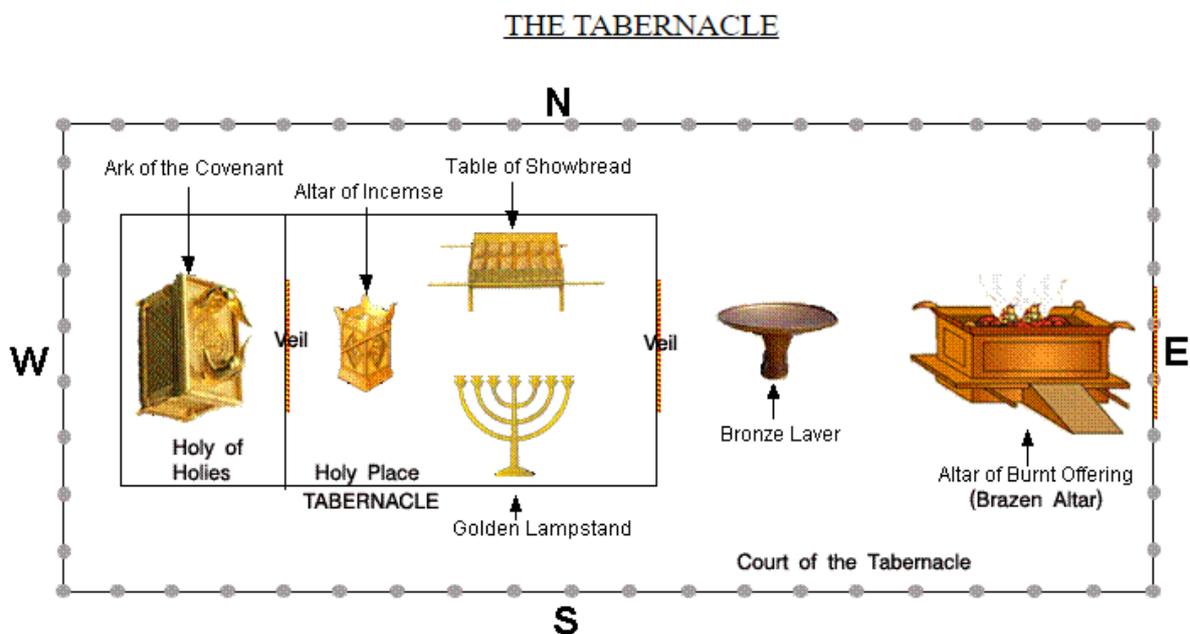
snatched from the fire?" In other words, the Lord is saying, I chose my people, and saved them. I delivered them from the fire. Who are you that you accused them, go away. And then, the Lord removed the filthy garments that Joshua was wearing and clothed him with "rich robes".

Like Joshua, Satan is always looking for opportunities to fill our mind with guilt and distorted thought about God that affect our fellowship with our Father God and discourage us in our every effort to serve the living God. Yet, our Lord, Jesus Christ, based on His perfect sacrifice on the cross, stands as our Advocate and Intercessor. Satan cannot condemn us before God, for the Bible says, "*Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us*" (Romans 8:31-34)

The altar of incense speaks of the wonderful intercession of Jesus our advocate, and of His work in heaven for us as our Defender, not our Prosecutor. In him, our ongoing acceptance before God is finally grounded in Christ's perfect sacrifice and its sufficiency on the cross. Praise God. So as the Bible says "*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that openly profess his name*" (Hebrews 13:15). Praise the Lord. Amen.

The Veil of the Tabernacle

There were three beautifully colored curtains in the tabernacle. The first the curtain gate to the tabernacle where God's people enter to see how their sins removed. The second stood between the outer court and the Holy Place where the priest enter to continue their ministry. And the third is called the Veil, that stood between the holy place and the holy of Holies, where the High Priest only entered once a year for the day of the atonement.



Each curtain made of fine-twined linen into which were twisted threads of four colors; blue, purple, red and white. Blue is the color of divinity. Purple is the color of royalty. Red is color of blood of sacrifices, that points to God's promise to His people "*Though your sins be as a scarlet, they shall be as white as snow*" (Is 1:18). White is the color of Holiness and

purity. The 4 colors also symbolize the life of Christ as presented in the 4 gospels. Blue stood for the deity of Christ. And of Christ who came from heaven, the Bible says that in Christ, God was manifest in the flesh. Purple, stood for royalty. Jesus was crucified, because of his claim to be King of the Jews. In Rev 19:16 He is King of Kings. And in Philippians 2:9-11 All will bow to Jesus as Lord and King. White, symbolized purity. In Heb 4:15 Jesus was the sinless one. And in Luke 23:4, 14 Pilate said of Jesus "I find no fault in this Man". Red points to the blood of Jesus as the lamp of God and His sacrificial death on the cross for our sins. Mark 10:45, says that Jesus give His life a ransom for many. In Col 1:14 says, "*Redemption through His blood*".

The Veil speaks of Christ's Death as the only Way to enter into the presence of God. When Christ died for our sins the veil was torn from the top to the bottom. What was the significance of the veil being torn in two when Jesus died?

The veil, speaks of 3 important historical facts: It speaks of separation, it speaks of manifestation of God in the flesh- the body of Christ hid the glory of His Divinity, and the Veil speaks of Redemption- the veil abolished and torn from the top to bottom by Christ's Death. The word "veil" means "to separate." That is what the three veils did. Although they were beautiful to the eye, they were not designed to be objects of admiration. They acted as a barrier between God and man,

shutting the man out and shutting God in. God is holy. Man is sinful. A holy God could not look upon evil nor could sinful people meet God's standards of holiness and righteousness, so man is in need for a Mediator.

To mediate between God and his people, God appointed a high priest. Aaron was the first in that line, the only person authorized to go through the barrier – the veil - between God and man to atone for the sins of the people. Once a year, the high priest entered the holy of holies from the far right end of the veil, applied the blood and waved the censer before the Ark to atone for sins. He then went out to bless God's people. But God's love did not start with the Tabernacle that was built by Moses or even with Abraham, whom God calls to bless all nations through His seed, which is the Christ. But, from the moment Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God promised to restore mankind to a right relationship with himself through the Promised Saviour, the mediator, the seed of the woman which is the Christ. The Bible is the unfolding story of God's plan of salvation. The Promised Savior, the Mediator, is Jesus, the way to God as the Bible says in 2 Tim 3, *“God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people”* (2 Timothy 2:3-6). Thanks be to God, He manifested Himself in the flesh, *“the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us”* (John 1:14; 1 Tim

3:16). Christ, who is the very essence and nature of God, emptied Himself, none of His glory was visible, but hidden in the veil of His flesh. He took on the limitations of humanity without surrendering any attributes of His divinity. Hebrews 10:20 calls the very body of Christ a veil that hid the Deity of Jesus from the eyes of men. Even though that glory was hidden during His earthly ministry. His disciples, by divine revelation, were at times able to see beyond the veil of His flesh and behold glimpses of His glory. They believed that Jesus was indeed the Son of the living God. Christ, revealed to them that His body was about to be broken “*as a ransom for many*” to give them eternal life. He said, “*I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*” (Mark 10:45; John 6:51).

The veil abolished and was torn from the top to bottom by Christ's Death. The glory of the Son of God came to its peak at the moment when He died on the cross of Calvary. The veil was torn in two from the top to bottom. At that time the priests would be busy in the Temple preparing for the evening sacrifice. Hundreds of people would be in the outer court. They would have been witnesses to this miraculous event taking place. Suddenly, as if grasped by giant unseen hands, that most sacred veil that guarded the Holy of Holies, barring all but the high priest from entering in, was torn in two. The Bible says in Matthew 27:50-51, “*Jesus cried out in a loud*

voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split”.

No one but God could have done such a thing because that veil was 60 feet tall and four inches thick. The direction of the tear meant God destroyed the barrier between himself and humanity, an act only God had the authority to do. The tearing of the veil meant God has put away our sins forever, by the death of Christ who was the veil that was torn for our sins. The tearing of the veil meant also that every believer in Christ can now approach God directly, without the intervention of earthly priests. Hebrews 10:11-23 says, *“Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest – **Christ**- had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God... For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy... And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary. Therefore, brothers and sisters, 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, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies*

washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”

Now we are able to come before God with confidence and worship Him who has done so much for us as the Bible says in Hebrews 2:14-16, *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”*. Through the death of Jesus on the cross, all barriers have been destroyed. Now God dwells by His Holy Spirit, in his people, and working in us to sanctify us and prepare us to live with Him forever in the New Heaven and in the New Earth.

Of sanctification, our great High Priest prays to the Father for us, *“Holy Father... I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth”* (John 17:15-19). The Bible also says in Ephesians 5:25-27, *“Christ loved the church and gave himself*

up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless”.

Awe and amazement must have struck the priests as they heard and saw the stroke of God tearing the veil in half. The Holy of Holies stood wide open before all the priests as if to bid them enter in, a privilege no priest except the high priest had enjoyed since the very beginning of the tabernacle fifteen centuries years earlier. Now all could enter. At the Death of Christ, God proclaimed to all those gathered there that the ministry of the priesthood had come to an end. No longer would high the priest have to sacrifice an animal on the Day of Atonement. Jesus, the true High Priest, had opened the way for mankind to come into the presence of God through His sacrifice, pouring out the atoning blood for our sin. That gap that once separated the holy righteous God from the sinful depraved human race was bridged by the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Those who have entrusted themselves to Christ the Redeemer, have continuous access to God's presence, and that will be forever as we waiting His coming of Christ to bring us into the New Heaven and in the New Earth.

The Ark of the Covenant



In the Holy of Holies, stood the Ark which was a box made of acacia wood covered inside and out with pure gold. Its cover made of solid gold had two gold cherubim, or angels, on it. They faced each other, with their wings overshadowing the lid. God said, "*There, above the cover between the two cherubim... I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites*" (Exodus 25:22).

A brief biblical history of the Ark!

With God's desire to be with his people, He instructed Moses to build the Tabernacle, and place the Ark in the Holy of Holies as a place for His presence to dwell spiritually and symbolically among His people. God's people knew that as long as God was with them, then God's provision and God's protection would also be with them as well. Sadly to say, the nation of Israel began to see the Ark not as representative of

God's presence but as a good luck charm. In 1 Samuel 4, after being defeated by the Philistines they decided to bring out the Ark because that would ensure certain victory. It didn't. They were defeated losing 30,000 soldiers faced the embarrassment of the Philistines capturing the Ark. But, the Philistines returned the Ark to Israel, and later the Ark was placed in the Temple in Jerusalem. The last time the Ark is mentioned in the Bible is 2 Chronicles 35:1-6, and it is believed the Ark was destroyed during the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple at the hands of the Babylonians. They took the Jews into captivity, and carried most of the items of the Temple to Babylon (Daniel 1:1-2; Jer 27:18)

Speculation About the Ark's Location

The first speculation is found outside the Bible in 2 Maccabees, a Jewish history book that states that the prophet Jeremiah took the Ark to Mount Nebo, where he hid it in a cave and sealed the entrance. In the 1981 movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, fictional archaeologist Indiana Jones tracked the Ark to Egypt. Today, theories place the Ark at Saint Mary of Zion Church in Axum, Ethiopia, and in a tunnel under the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Yet another theory says the copper scroll, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, is a treasure map which gives the location of the Ark. None of these theories has been proven true.

As I mentioned earlier, the last time the Ark is mentioned in the Bible is 2 Chronicles 35:1-6, and it is believed the Ark was destroyed during the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple at the hands of the Babylonians who took the Jews into captivity, and carried most of the Temple's items to Babylon (Daniel 1:1-2; Jer 27:18). And in Jeremiah 3:15-18, the prophet Jeremiah talks about a time when the Ark will no longer be needed or missed. At that time, the believers in Christ, the church, the heavenly Jerusalem, itself, will be God's throne. *“People will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, **nor will another one be made.** At that time they will call Jerusalem the Throne of the Lord, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord”.*

What is the real significance of the Ark of the Covenant?

The Ark of the Covenant speaks of God's presence, a place where God and man could meet, based on what took place on its cover which is called the “Mercy Seat”. The term ‘Mercy seat’ is in the Hebrew word **הַכַּפֹּרֶת** *ha-kappōret* means “to cover, appease, cleanse, cancel, make atonement for or propitiation” This was the only place in the world where this atonement could take place. It was here that the high priest, only once a year, entered the Holy of Holies to atone for the sins of God's people.

The Ark was an important foreshadowing of our Lord Jesus, the Christ as the sole place of atonement for sins. The Mercy Seat on the Ark was a symbolic foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice for all sin, the blood of Christ shed on the cross for the remission of sins. In the New Testament, based on His perfect Redemption on the Cross, Christ replaced the Ark becoming the only way to salvation and to enjoy His presence as Emmanuel God, who leads us and gives us comfort against all troubles we may face.

God opens the Apostle Paul' eyes, a former Pharisee and one familiar with the Old Testament, to see Jesus Himself, is the Christ who is "the Mercy Seat" our covering for sin. The Spirit of God led him to write, "*We are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith*" (Romans 3:24-25). Just as there was only one place for atonement of sins in the Old Testament, the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant, so there is also only one place for atonement in the New Testament and current times, the cross of Christ, Jesus. As Christians, we no longer look to the Ark but to the Lord Jesus Himself as the propitiation and atonement for our sins.

God desires to meet with His people, and the blood of the spotless lamb is the only means by which that meeting is made possible. The mercy seat of the Old Testament, and the

blood sprinkled upon it by the high priest, prefigured Christ to come. Christ did come, and Christ did make the sacrifice, and Christ was raised from the dead. Make no mistake about it, these are historical realities. The tabernacle was real. The ark of the covenant was real. The mercy seat was real. The cross was real. Christ is our mercy seat. There, in and through Christ, God meets us. Our journey through the Tabernacle of the Lord is complete, yet it goes on

We are encouraged today to take advantage of what Christ has done for us and spend time in that Most Holy Place, in the presence of the Lord. This is the Lord who saves all who put their trust in Him. This is the Lord who cares for His own through every circumstance of life. This is the Lord whom we love and serve forever. This is the Lord for whom we are waiting to come. This is the eternal plan of our God, who wants us to be there in His presence forever, because His desire has not changed. Yes, He wants us to enjoy the eternal blessing of His presence, that was revealed to His servant, the apostle John as he writes in Revelation 21:1-5, *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be*

his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

The last chapter of the Bible leaves the bride of Christ, waiting her bridegroom who promised to come three times *"I am coming soon"* (Rev 22: 7,12,20) and His Church is encouraged by this hope to invite others. *"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life."* And always our prayer is to call Him, "Amen! Come Lord Jesus".

The Offerings in the Tabernacle

In the beginning of our study, we have seen that the Tabernacle with its furniture were object lessons, that teach God's people of the Old Testament through pictures, the way to approach God and enjoy His presence and His blessings. But it was not possible for anyone to come in the tabernacle without sacrifices. So God instructed His people to bring five kinds of sacrifices and in four of them an animal was killed. The other one was the grain or meal offering in which the fruit of the field was offered. These five sacrifices, or offerings, can be categorized as either voluntary or mandatory offerings. Each of these sacrifices had a specific purpose.

Why did God instruct His people to offer sacrifices?

Here is what God said in Leviticus 17:11, of the significance of blood of the sacrifice, *“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life”*. The Old Testament points toward the Great Sacrifice that was to come, that of Jesus' sacrificial giving of His own life on our behalf.

Why should we study the Five sacrifices of the Old Testament, since we are no longer required to offer it?

Study of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, helps us to understand *how* the work of Christ saves people like us from sin and its guilt. Each of the sacrifices points to a different aspect of Christ's sacrifice of himself. It makes us amazed how Christ the Redeemer saves people like us from sin and its guilt, so we can "*offer up to God spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter 2:4).

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were "*a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ*" (Col 2:17). When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him, he said, "*Behold! the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world... "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him... And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God"* (John 1:29-34). As Peter says, "*For Christ suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God*" (1 Peter 3:18)

Here are the five sacrifices; the Burnt offering; the Grain or meal Offering; the Peace or fellowship offering; the Sin offering; and the Guilt or Trespass offering. They had to be brought only to the tabernacle of the Lord and not anywhere else. It was there that God met man's need for atonement in that place. The first three offerings, were called, the sweet savour offerings. The sin offering and the trespass offering were called, non sweet savour offerings. The sweet savour offerings to the Lord; were voluntary acts of worship. Anyone

could bring these sweet smelling offerings whenever he or she wanted to. They were prompted by the love and gratitude of the worshipper. We may simply call them, a sweet smelling of thanksgiving. The non-sweet savour offerings, the sin offering and the trespass offering were compulsory acts of worship, in which the offender's sin and guilt must be covered and removed. Confession of sin and application of the blood of the sacrifice in the Tabernacle was the way God ordained to atone for sin and cleanse from defilement. Naturally, we cannot stand a bad smell. In the same way sin is non-sweet savour to God and must be to His people too.

The Burnt Offering

קָרְבַּן עֹלָה

The burnt offering (*korban Olah*) was a voluntary act of worship, an expression of gratitude, devotion and thanks to God. Its elements were a bull, a ram, or a lamb, without blemish. The poor could bring a pair of doves or pigeons, and this what Mary and Joseph did (Leviticus 1:6-17 & Luke 2:24). It was called burnt offering, because, all its meat, bones and organs were to be totally burnt on the bronze altar. This was a picture of our Lord Jesus who gave Himself wholly to God, “*a lamb without blemish or defect*” (1 Peter 1:19)

Bringing the burnt offering was a very personal experience, and the person who brings the offering identified himself with the animal by doing two things: First, laying his hand on the animal's head, and then killing the animal. By doing so, he/she was saying "*Thank you Lord my God, You have given me this animal to die instead of me.*" The priest prays and says, Lord our God, the king of the universe, thank you for your provision as you said, "*The life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life*" (Leviticus 17:11). O Lord our God in your mercy accept this offering. Amen. Then, the priest applied the blood on the north side of the altar against the gate that God's people might see, and then laid the animal on it to be burned as a sacrifice to the Lord.

During these rituals, the Levites sang to the Lord songs of praise with the worshippers, while the priest went into the holy place to burn incense, and then came out to pronounce God's blessing on the person who offered the sacrifice. "*The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace*" (Numbers 6: 23-27) And then all the congregation sing together a song of praise like Psalm 116 "*I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy... I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on*

the name of the Lord. I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord. Praise the Lord”.

The Burnt Offering in the light of the New Testament

As the burnt offering was burned wholly to God on the altar, in same way the New Testament tells us that our Lord Jesus gave Himself completely to God on our behalf , as the Bible says in Ephesians 5:1-2, *“Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God”.*

When the Lord Jesus came into this world He did nothing but the will of the Father. He gave His life, His will completely to the Father and so His perfect life made His death for us to be of great value as it is written in Hebrews 10, *“When Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll, I have come to do your will, my God... And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hebrews 10:5-10)*

We as Christians follow Jesus’ example and ought to give ourselves to God as a living sacrifice a sweet smelling to the

Lord as it is written in Romans 12:1-2, *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy (Jesus' death for us), to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship”*.

Offering our body as *“Living Sacrifices to the Lord”* represents our obedience to the Lord and this is considered our spiritual act of worship as we come to God's house today and desire to come to it when we are forced to be in lockdown because of Covid 19.

When God's people were forced to be away from the house of the Lord, whether some of them under siege or lockdown by captivity in Babylon, they cried and said, *“As the deer pants for the water, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, “Where is your God?” When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast”* (Psalm 42: 1-4). But, when God's people were free to come to the house of the Lord, they were rejoicing and said, *“I rejoiced with those who said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord”* (Psalm 122:1)

But obedience to the Lord and offering our body, our life as *“Living Sacrifices to the Lord”* and surrender our will to God is not easy. Surrendering our will is an ongoing battle, because the sin nature –the flesh- that resides within each of us battles for supremacy against what the Spirit of God is doing to sanctify us (See Romans 7; Galatians 5; Ephesians 6) The Bible says, *“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish”* (Galatians 5:16-18).

The flesh wants to rule. And the devil uses it to devour us in fear, anxiety and sorrow as the Bible says in 1 Peter 5:8, *“Be alert and vigilant; because your enemy the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith”*. But if we are led by the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The Bible says 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, *“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies”* So let us offer to God our spiritual sacrifices of obedience which is our act of worship and willingly crucify the old self and surrender to the will of God and be led by His Word. That is the way to choose His way rather than our own.

There are another two spiritual sacrifices which are a sweet smelling to the Lord, that we should offer *in response* to the Lord Jesus' sacrifice for us: In addition to giving ourselves to the Lord, praise and good deeds to others are sweet smelling to the Lord as well. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:15-16, "*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name... for with such sacrifices God is pleased*". This was what the prophets of the Old Testament said. Psalm 50: 14, 23 says, "*Offer to God thanksgiving... Whoever offers praise glorifies Me*". And in Hosea 14:1-2 "*O Israel, return to the Lord your God... Take words with you, And return to the Lord. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; Receive us graciously, For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips"*".

Good deeds of love to others is another spiritual sacrifice we can offer to God as sweet smelling to the Lord. Today when we say that something was "a real sacrifice," we do not mean that blood was shed. For us, *sacrifice* means giving something up or taking something on that costs us a little money or comfort or convenience. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:16 says, "*And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased*". And in Romans 12:13, the Bible encourages us to "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality". We are even encouraged to do good to our enemies as the Bible says in Romans 12:20, "*If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is*

thirsty, give him something to drink". And that act of real love reflects the love of God and brings the message of salvation to them accompanied with our prayers that they may come to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. God is pleased and will reward every kind action we do to others and motivated by our sincere desire for their salvation and for the glory of God. Our Lord Jesus said, *"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done"* (Revelation 22:12).

But we don't offer spiritual sacrifices for what we will get out of it. We offer sacrifices of the heart to the Lord and for His glory alone, not ours. Let us then dear sisters and brothers follow our Lord's example *"who went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil"* (Acts 10:38). This is what the Lord wants us to do, as He said to Paul, *"I send you to the world to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me"*. Let us then offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, a burnt offering in practice, a sweet smelling offering to the Lord; to express our gratitude to our Saviour Jesus, who gave Himself to us. And that what the Burnt Offering is all about.

The Meal Offering

קורבן מנחה

This offering is called meal or grain offering (*Korban Menha*), because is bloodless, and the fruit of the field was offered, in one of these forms: A bag of fine flour, or roasted grain. or unleavened bread, or cake. It was offered with salt, oil and frankincense but No yeast or honey was allowed! (Lev 2:1-16). The priest takes a handful of the offering with a bit of oil and incense, and burn them on the altar an aroma pleasing to the Lord, and the rest go to the priests. It was freewill offering, described as a sweet- savour and a memorial portion to the Lord. Its purpose was to remember God's covenant, His faithfulness and His provision. That is to express gratitude and thankfulness to the Lord.

Here what the Bible says, 'When anyone brings a grain offering to the Lord, their offering is to be of the finest flour. They are to pour olive oil on it, put incense on it and take it to Aaron's sons the priests. The priest shall take a handful of the flour and oil, together with all the incense, and burn this as a memorial portion on the altar... an aroma pleasing to the Lord. The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons. If you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, either thick or thin loaves made without yeast and with olive oil mixed in ... Every grain offering you bring to the Lord must be

made without yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or honey in a food offering presented to the Lord. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings. If you bring a grain offering... to the Lord, offer crushed heads of new grain roasted in the fire. The priest shall burn the memorial portion of the crushed grain and the oil, together with all the incense, as a food offering presented to the Lord" (Leviticus 2:1-16).

Q: What does the meal offering speak of, to the Jewish mind before Christ and to the believers in Christ of the New Testament?

The purpose of the meal offering is to remember God's Covenant, His Faithfulness and His Provisions. The key to understand the purpose of the meal / grain offering is that: it was called **a memorial portion to the Lord** as God said, *The priest shall take a handful of the flour and oil, together with all the incense, and burn this as a memorial portion on the altar... an aroma pleasing to the Lord (Leviticus 2:2).* The emphasis on this memorial again is as God said, *"Season all your grain offerings with **salt**. Do not leave **the salt of the covenant of your God** out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings" (Leviticus 2:13).*

Q: What does it mean “the salt of the covenant of your God”?

Salt has been used to express friendship or promises between people. Still, today in the east, when two people say, “bread and salt” that means they agreed to protect and stay faithful to each other. In some cultures, people throw salt over their shoulders when they make a promise. The Bible says in Numbers 18:19, *“All the offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the Lord, I give to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord with you and your descendants with you.”* King Abijah’s speech in 2 Chronicles 13:5 said to those who opposed his right to be on the throne of David that covenant: *“Don’t you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?”* Here, Abijah refers to the strong, legally binding promise of God to give Israel to David and his sons forever.

Today, as God’s people of old did, every time we come to worship God our Saviour and our Redeemer, let us always recognize and remember His Covenant of redemption, His Faithfulness, His Provisions, and how He is always our Emanuel who cares for us all the days of our life. Yes, trust Him, for He cares for you. He will never leave or forsake you.

Q: Why no yeast or honey allowed in the meal offerings on the altar?

There are some references in the Bible that give us hints and shed some light and explain the reason for prohibiting honey and yeast. At the time of the Exodus from Egypt, God told the Israelites to eat unleavened bread as they fled Egypt. This is why bread without yeast is eaten during Passover feast, to remember the exodus from Egypt in haste, and how God saved them from Pharaoh's army. Bread (or wafers or cakes or whatever was made) without yeast is fast food that can be made quickly and in haste. And here, the Meal Offering is described as a memorial to the Lord, and the one who offers it has to remember God's covenant of redemption from Egypt and His faithfulness and His provision to His people during the 40 years of wandering in the desert and before they reached the Promised Land.

So for us today whenever we bring offering to the Lord, do not forget God's redemptive covenant of grace, be thankful and recognize His grace, mercy, His faithfulness His provision, His care for to us all the days of our life.

Also, God did not allow his people to offer on the alter yeast or honey, because, these were used in the Egyptian and Canaanite worship, and God was very intentional in separating His people from anything that might connect them

to the false gods of Egypt and Canaan. This is what God said to Israelites, *“Be holy for I am Holy”*. Holiness does not mean that we have no sin but is to be different in our worship than others. God said to His people in Leviticus 18:1-3 & 19:1, *“Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy... You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices”*

Another symbolic reason why God did not allow his people to offer yeast or honey on the altar, is because, they symbolize the pride of man. The Bible says in Proverbs 25:16; 27, *“Have you found honey? Eat only what you need, that you not have it in excess and vomit it... It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glory to search out one’s own glory”*. As yeast makes the dough puffed up, so any offering with a prideful mind is rejected. Here what our Lord Jesus said about the pride of man in worship,

“Two men went to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thanking God that he was not as sinful as other people, or even as this tax collector. He said to God: I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, humbly standing afar off, would not raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ The Lord Jesus said that the tax collector, rather than the Pharisee,

went home justified before God. God accepted the tax collector and his prayer, but He rejected the Pharisee and his prayer, *“for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted”* (Luke 18:9-14).

So, whatever offering we bring to the Lord, let us bring it with grateful heart remembering His mercy and grace toward us and thank Him for what He has done for us in Christ. If we stand by our own merits with a prideful heart, (symbolically our offering has too much honey with puffed dough) God will not accept any offering that has sin of pride. The apostle Paul said to the believers of Corinth, in 1 Cor 5, *“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the entire lump of dough? Leave behind the old leaven that you might be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover, has been sacrificed for us.”*

But like the Tax Collector when we rely on God’s mercy and grace and in the light of the New Testament, when we trust only in Christ’s work on the cross, clothed with His righteousness alone, in this way our offering is symbolically without yeast or honey, but filled with incense that goes up to the Lord as a sweet-smelling offering to Him (Psalm 141:2)

The meal offering speaks of our attitude in worship to God and our services to our fellow man. Through Christ we can learn the correct approach. His service to man was always *an*

offering to the Lord. Christ is our example. He never stopped giving because His offerings of service were always to the Lord. They were never to glorify Himself. Christ our Redeemer was the grain / meal offering, *the memorial portion on the altar, an aroma pleasing to the Lord*, and the Father said of Him, *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him”* (Matthew 17:5)

Our Lord Jesus said in John 12:24, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”*. And in John 6:35-51, He said, *“I am the bread that came down from heaven... Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day... I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”*

The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11: 23- 26, that we should remember Christ our Redeemer as the memorial

portion who gave himself for us on the altar of the Cross, *“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”*.

We are not required to offer physical grain offerings today, but we can offer spiritual offerings to the Lord Jesus and in remembrance of Him and what He has done for us. We can offer our hearts, our minds, our worship, our adoration, our praise. The ways in which we can be pleasing to our God, a spiritual meal offering, a sweet smelling to the Lord, through the LORD Jesus Christ are practically limitless, as the Apostle Paul said to the believers in Rome, *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”* (Romans 12:1-2) And that is what the Meal/ grain Offering is all about.

The Peace Offering

קורבן שלמים

The peace offering (*Korban Shalamem*) was the third of the five sacrifices of the Old Testament. It was more than a sacrifice; it was a joyful meal, the only offering shared and eaten by the priests and the worshipers before the Lord.

"The person offers an animal from the herd, male or female... a lamb... or a goat , he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord... And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall throw the blood against the sides of the altar. And from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as a food offering to the Lord, he shall offer the fat.. then Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar... a pleasing aroma to the Lord... If his peace offerings for thanksgiving he shall bring his offering with loaves of leavened bread... And the flesh of the sacrifice... it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what remains of it shall be eaten" (Leviticus 3:1-17).

The peace offering could be a male or female: a lamb or a goat but it had to be perfect and the offering include of loaves of bread and drink to commune with God and his servants the priests. The offerer put his hand on the animal's head and thanked God for his goodness and his provision then killed it.

The priest sprinkled the blood on the altar, and burnt all the fat and the inner parts of the animal on it as a pleasing aroma sweet savor to the Lord . Then with the song of praise, the offerer's family and the priests ate the rest of the offering together in the court of the Lord's house. In fact, the worshiper was allowed to bring family and friends along to spend a couple of days enjoying the meat in the presence of God at the tabernacle. That is why it was called the peace or Communion or fellowship offering.

According to the law of the peace offering in Leviticus 7:11–18, the peace offering was given under three circumstances:

First, it could be given as a freewill offering. The worshiper was given this offering as a way to say thank you Lord and to praise Him for His goodness.

Second, it could be given alongside a fulfilled vow. A person made a vow to God and God had answered his prayers and now he/she comes to God and says "*Thank You Lord for answering my prayer*".

Thirdly, it could be offered as thanksgiving and praise God who delivered the person from a terrible situation.

None of these three reasons to sacrifice had anything to do with sin or confessing of sin and looking to God for

forgiveness, but it was a way of saying to the Lord; “Thank You Lord for Everything”. All of these peace offerings are seen in Scripture. A good example of this was Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel. In 1 Samuel 1, we read that Hannah fulfilled her vow to God by bringing a peace offering to express her gratitude to God for answering her prayer.

The Bible says that, *“There was a man from Ramah, the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah. He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none. Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her. Because the Lord had closed Hannah’s womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah would say to her, “Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don’t you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don’t I mean more to you than ten sons?” Hannah stood up and in her deep anguish she prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, “Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to You Lord for all the days of his life. Eli the high priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the*

Lord's house. Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine." Not so, my lord, I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord... I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." Then Hannah went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

So it happened that the Lord gave Hannah not only one son but seven and Hannah named the first Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the Lord for him." When her first son Samuel was eleven years old, Hannah and her husband took him and dedicated him to serve in the house of the Lord. After they offered the peace offering, Hannah said to Eli the High Priest, "*Pardon me, my lord. I am the woman who stood here beside you (12 years ago) praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord*". Then Hannah prayed and praised God and said: "*My heart rejoices in the Lord; in the Lord my horn is lifted high, for I delight in your deliverance. There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God... She who was barren has borne seven children... The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord*

sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor”.

Then Elkanah and Hannah went home to Ramah, but Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest.

Now, let us remember that the Peace Offerings were a sweet-savor to the Lord, that illustrates God’s satisfaction. Likewise, the priest receiving his portion shows him being satisfied, and the offerer and his family with his portion are also satisfied. "Filled," "contented," "accepted," "pleased," and "assured" all capture the intent of the symbolism of the Peace offering. All parties: God, priests, and the offerer, share the same meal and that shows all in satisfying communion with each other. And that was the reason why that offering was called the peace or fellowship offering.

In the light of the New Testament, Christ on the altar of the Cross, the place of meeting, he symbolically was all three parts: He is the offering, sacrificing His life in service; He is the priest, serving mankind at the altar as Mediator; and He is the offerer, bringing His sacrifice to the altar. On the Cross, Christ Jesus purchased reconciliation and peace with God for all who will trust Him; and we have peace, fellowship,

communion with God and other believers because of His blood shed for us.

Here is what the New Testament said in 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, *“If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ”*. And in Colossians 1:20, the Bible says, *“God through Christ reconciles to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”* And in 1 John 1: 7, *“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin”*.

The expressions of satisfaction, and communion portrayed in peace offerings, was a way of saying to the Lord; *“Thank You for Everything”*. It reminds us as Christians of the New Covenant, that we should never forget or take lightly the peace we have with our God through Christ our Redeemer and our Peace. The Bible says in 1 Peter 2:4-5 & 9-10, *“As you come to Christ, the living Stone, rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of*

darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy”.

Each time we think on the truth that through Christ, we are called, justified, and have peace with God, that should move us to praise Him and with grateful heart to His mercies and grace, we declare the good things that God has done for us. And that is what the peace offering is all about.

The Sin Offering

קִרְבַּן חַטָּאת

The Sin offering (*Korban Chatat*) speaks of man, as a sinner in his need; and God, the Redeemer in His fullness and love to man. The elements of offering were three grades, depending of the guilty party, because the sin of the leaders is worse than the sin of the common people. A bull should be offered for the priest, a male goat for the ruler, a female goat for common people. The poor could bring a pair of doves or pigeons, and in case of the very poor, one kilogram of flour could be offered. Here is what God said,

“The priest who sins, shall present a young bull without any defects and sacrifice it to the Lord for his sin... If it is a ruler who sins, he shall bring as his offering a male goat without

any defects. If any of the common people sins, he shall bring as his offering a female goat without any defects... If you cannot afford a sheep or a goat, you shall bring to the Lord... two doves or two pigeons... If you cannot afford two doves or two pigeons, you shall bring one kilogram of flour as a sin offering” (Leviticus 4:3, 22, 27-GNB).

The sin of the leaders is worse than the sin of the common people. The sin offering had to be brought to the Lord no matter who the sinner was; and the higher the sinner’s position , the more expensive the sacrifice. Whatever animal was brought, the offender had to identify with the sacrifice by laying hands on it, as God said, *“And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering” (Leviticus 4:29).* At that moment, the person confesses his sins, and symbolically and by faith, the guilt is transferred from him/her to the animal and then he had to kill the animal, and the priest apply its blood on the altar.

In the case of a Sin offering for the whole nation, 12 elders representing the twelve tribes put their hands on the animal and confessed the sin of the nation and asked God for forgiveness. The animal was totally burned outside the camp in atoning for all God’s people. This was a picture of our Lord Jesus who died outside the city of Jerusalem for our sins, as the Bible says in Hebrews 13:11-15, *“The high priest carries*

the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name”.

In the sin offering, something unusual was done with the blood! For the individual sin, the priest applied the blood on the bronze altar and sprinkled some blood seven times before the veil of the Holy Place. But for the sin of the whole nation, the blood was applied inside the Holy Place, on the horns of the altar of incense. And then the High priest alone went inside the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood before the Ark and some on the ark. The rest of the blood was poured out at the base of the bronze altar. The message is clear: It is the blood that atoned for the sin as we read in Hebrews 9:22, *“Everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins”*

The blood cleansed the tabernacle, the priests, the people, and the land from the sin of the people. There was blood before the veil, blood on the horns of the two altars, and blood on the ark. Everywhere the sinner looked was an unavoidable

scene of the sin of man and his need for atonement. And while all of these sacrifices might seem like an unbearable burden to us, wouldn't you be relieved, as an Israelite, to know that, instead of paying the penalty for sin yourself, God would accept a substitute in your place?

There was certainly a big burden, but God provides the substitute. Imagine the time burden, if you didn't live near the house of God. You would have to travel and find a place to stay and buy an animal to offer. Imagine the emotional or spiritual burden as you made this walk, knowing that you would have to identify and confess your sin to the priest in offering your sacrifice. Imagine watching your sin offering burning, and the priest declare your sin forgiven, imagine the sense of relief you felt. You would thank God saying, "*It should be me O Lord. I am the one who deserves to die. But this innocent animal has become my substitute. This animal has died so I can live*". This was good news for every man or woman in the Old Testament.

As for the people of the New Testament, thanks be to God Christ has come, and taken our place on the Cross, and said, "It is finished". No more sacrifice. No more condemnation. Praise God. This is good news indeed. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:11-18, "*But when Christ came... he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He*

did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls... sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!"

Isaiah 53 portrayed our sin and what Jesus the Messiah did for us, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all... It was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin... After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities... He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors"* (Isaiah 53:5-12)

But what do we do in case we sin again? The voice of God through the apostle John says in 1 John 2:1-2, "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if

anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world". And in 1 John 1:9 he says, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"*. Praise the Lord that sin offerings are no longer required, because we have been redeemed forever "with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish" (1 Peter 1:19) Praise the Lord, Jesus was the Sin Offering for Us. He paid it all. Blessed be His wonderful name: Jesus our Emmanuel. Amen.

The Guilt- Trespass Offering

קָרְבַּן אֲשָׁם

The Guilt offering was the last of the five sacrifices, the Lord God instructed his people of the Old Testament to offer. According to Leviticus 5:14-6:7, the trespass offering speaks of restitution or compensation for sin of man against God and sin of man against his fellow man.

Trespass against God: Withholding from the Lord that which rightly belonged to Him. Here is what God said to his people in Malachi 3:8-12, "*Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings... Bring the whole tithes to my house... Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it", says the Lord Almighty*".

For example if an Israelite failed to bring his tenth to the Lord, he had to make it up and add twenty percent, with a ram without blemish to be a guilt offering. Suppose he received a monthly income of 100 pieces of silver (\$100). He should give ten to the Lord. If he failed to bring it in due time (the first Sabbath of the month), he then had to bring it, with twenty percent added and offers a ram without blemish to the Lord.

Trespass against man: Dealing falsely with one's neighbor in matter of deposit or bargain or robbery or oppression. In this case, the procedure was the same in the case of trespass against God. In both cases, the offerer had to pay the twenty percent penalty, with a ram without blemish, and this reminding the sinner that sin against God or his fellow man is unprofitable and costly.

According to the law of the guilt offering, if a man cheats his neighbor, he needs to bring a guilt offering. If he finds property and does not return it, he needs to bring a guilt offering. Along with the guilt offering, he also returns what was stolen, plus 20 percent. That immediately reminded us of the words of our Lord Jesus, *"When you are offering your gift at the altar (any freewill offering- burnt, grain or peace offering), if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift"* (Matthew 5:23-24).

The guilt offering is a potent reminder that God does not exercise his right of forgiveness at the expense of people harmed by our misdeeds. Restitution brings healing, acceptance, forgiveness, peace and salvation to the one who does it. That immediately reminded us of Zacchaeus; a chief tax collector who climbed up on a sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus, and Jesus said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." Zacchaeus

came down at once and gladly welcomed the Lord in his house. There and in front of all the guests, Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and *if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.*” Jesus said to him, “*Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*”

Like Zacchaeus, when restitution is possible, make it. But, what if restitution is not possible to make it? Like the repentant thief on the cross, who caused damage to others, and was not able to make restitution. All he did, he put his trust in Jesus and believed in Him as the Messiah the Lord. Jesus promised Him, the enjoyment of Paradise of God, the everlasting joy in the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Symbolically, the guilt offering points to that aspect of the work of Christ on the cross as the one who is able to intercede for the transgressors as the Bible says in Isaiah 53:12, “*For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors*”.

The Guilt offering of the Old Testament, was not the final solution. It pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ by which sinners can be restored to fellowship with God and with each other. We are guilty of violating many things. We are guilty of

unknown sins, and we have wronged our neighbors. The good news comes from the prophecy of Isaiah 53: 5-12, that portrayed our Lord Jesus as our guilt offering. The prophecy says, *“But he was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all... It was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin... After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities... He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors”*.

The word “justify” in that prophecy means to declare “not guilty.” The moral and legal debt is canceled, praise God. But there is more. The Bible says in Hebrews 10:10-18, *“We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts; and I will write them on their minds.” Then He adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will*

remember no more.” And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin”.

Today we should recognize Christ’s atoning death on the cross as the only needed sacrifice for sin and guilt, offered once for all. His death opened the way to come freely and enter God’s presence and offer our “sacrifice of praise”. Unlike the Old Testament believers who had to offer the five sacrifices in order to have a right relationship with God every year, thanks be to God, Jesus our redeemer “*offered one sacrifice for our sins forever*” (Heb 10:12). Christ our Redeemer provides all that we need. He is our burnt offering, and we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. He is our grain offering, the seed crushed and put through the fire of the Cross, that we might have the bread of life; and we must feed upon Him. He is our fellowship offering, making life a joyful feast. He is our sin and our guilt offering, for He bore our sins on His body, and paid the full price for our sins. He is the eternal solution to our sin, and we are forgiven forever through His perfect atonement offered which God for us. He paid it all. We must fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. Let us then offer the sacrifice of praise and join the blessed Mary and sing, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour”. Blessed be His wonderful name: Jesus our Emmanuel. Amen.

Conclusion

The work presented in this book *"The Tabernacle of the Lord"*, is simple explanation of the meaning and significance of the Tabernacle in the light of the New Testament. God desired and instructed His people whom He delivered from Egypt to build that tabernacle so that He could live and meet with them, and they could worship him, and cast their burdens before Him.

The Tabernacle with its furniture, was object lessons, that teach God's people of the Old Testament through pictures, the way to approach God and enjoy His presence and His blessings; and all these elements were a type and point to Lord Jesus the Promised Saviour. Our first approach to God's presence was the entrance through the only gate into the court of tabernacle. our Lord Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me... I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture"* (John 14:6; 10:9). I trust each of my readers has taken that step.

Our second approach to God's presence was through the five sacrifices on the bronze altar. Study of sacrifices of the Old Testament help us to value the work of Christ our Saviour on the cross and makes us amazed how Christ the Redeemer saves people like us from sin and its guilt. Then we can *"offer up to God spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... For Christ suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God"* (1 Peter 2:4 & 3:18)

Our next step was to the bronze laver that speaks of daily cleansing and our sanctification by the work of the Holy Spirit in us and through His Word. Then in the Holy Place, we looked at the Golden Lampstand that speaks of Jesus as the light of the world, as He said "*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life*" (John 8:12).

Then at the Table of Shewbread, we hear our Lord Jesus saying, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst... If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world*" (John 6:35; 51).

At the altar of incense, we stand everyday praying in partnership with our Great High Priest who intercedes for us, "*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

Our last step was at the Holy of Holies, where we stand before the Ark of the Covenant, which speaks to us of Jesus, our Saviour, as our Emmanuel God whose eternal plan is to dwell with His redeemed people forever. He is faithful to His Word. He came first to wash away our sins, and He is coming again to take us and enjoy His eternal presence. His servant' John writes, "*Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will*

wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true” (Rev 21:1-5).

The tabernacle speaks of a life on earth, and there remains only one step more to take and God only knows when that step will be taken. It is the last step here on earth and leads into the Father's mansion with many rooms. We are waiting and praying for the coming of the Lord.

O Sovereign Lord, help us to trust in you and believe that you are in control of everything. When we are tempted to give up, help us to keep going. When things don't go our way, help us not to fear or to flee but always to take our refuge in you. When the outlook is grim, grant us the eagle wings to rise above the storm and overcome the enemy of our souls. Help us to walk by faith not by sight. Speed your coming, O Lord. Come, Lord Jesus. We want to live forever in your presence. Amen.

The Authors' Publications

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1. Questions Frequently Asked by Young People
2. Sitting at the Table with a Muslim Friend
3. Sitting at the Table with a Buddhist Friend
4. Sitting at the table with a Hindu Friend
5. Sitting at the Table with a Jewish Friend
6. Keyes to What Every Christian should Know
7. What Will Happen When The Lord Jesus Returns
8. The Call of Grace in the Letter of Ephesians
9. The Wonders of God's Names
10. The Visions of the Book of Revelation
11. The Wonders of Jesus Names
12. Dreams and Visions of the Book of Daniel
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6. Psychological Problems in the Light of Scriptures
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9. Be Conformed to the Likeness of His Son
10. Know Your Enemy
11. Our Father In Heaven
12. Stop Worrying and Enjoy Life
13. Sons of the Kingdom
14. Christ Is Risen
15. The Coming of the Lord in Glory and Majesty
16. Heaven of Glory and Hell of Fire
17. Build a Joyous Marriage
18. The Da Vinci Code and the Lies of the Anti-Christ
19. The Book of Daniel
20. The Book of Ruth.
21. The Message of the Thessalonians letters
22. The Book of Job ~ The School of Suffering
23. The Wonders of The Christmas story
24. The Wonders of the Cross
25. The Wonders of Providence in the Book of Easter
26. The Wonders of Grace in the Book of Ephesians
27. Egypt In the Bible Prophecy
28. It Is Well With My Soul

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“The Tabernacle of the Lord”

Rev. Dr. Botros Botrosdief

The Tabernacle was object lesson that teaches God’s people of the Old Testament through pictures, the way to approach God and enjoy His presence. All its elements were a type that point to our Lord Jesus the Promised Saviour. It help us to value the work of Christ our saviour on the cross and make us amazed how Christ the redeemer saves people like us from sin and its guilt, and then we can “offer up to God spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... for Christ suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”.

Dr. Botros has authored 44 books; 16 in English and 28 in Arabic. He is the minister of

Mernda and Whittlesea Presbyterian Church

Come and Join us every Sunday

9:15 am @ Mernda, 1345 Plenty Rd

10:30 am @ Whittlesea, 7 Lime St