

Abounding Grace Christian Church

Seeing Christ in the Old Testament: A Study of the Types of Christ – Part 7

I. Seeing Christ in the Book of Exodus (continued).

A. The Tabernacle of Moses – Exodus 25-40.

1. To demonstrate how important the Tabernacle of Moses is, Ervin Hershberger writes:

“God used two relatively short chapters (Gen. 1 and 2) to record the creation of the universe. But He used fifty chapters (13 in Exodus; 18 in Leviticus; 13 in Numbers; 2 in Deuteronomy; 4 in Hebrews) to explain the construction of the Tabernacle, its features, furniture, and the services to be held there.

Obviously the Tabernacle was very important to God.”¹

2. What was the Tabernacle of Moses?

a. The Tabernacle was a portable tent with various curtains and coverings over a wooden structure. It had three sections to it. The Scripture refers to each of these as (1) The Holiest of All or Most Holy Place, (2) The Holy Place and (3) the Outer Court. In each of these sections there were particular pieces of furniture:

1) The Holiest of All or Most Holy Place contained The Ark of the Covenant.

2) The Holy Place contained:

- a) The Golden Altar of Incense.
- b) The Table of Shewbread.
- c) The Golden Candlestick.

3) The Outer Court contained:

- a) The Brazen Altar.
- b) The Brazen Laver.

3. What was the Purpose of the Tabernacle of Moses?

a. The first purpose of the tabernacle could be summed up in the key verse found in Exodus 25:8 which reads; **“Let them make me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them.”**(cf. Exodus 29:46-47). God’s desire has always been to dwell with His people.

b. David Levy writes:

“For almost 500 years, the Tabernacle served as a place for God to dwell among His people and a place where His people could commune with Him (Ex. 25:8; 40:34-37). Throughout Israel’s history, there was a propensity toward idolatry; thus, the Tabernacle stood as a visual reminder to Israel that they served the true and living God. It helped keep Israel from the idol worship that was practiced by those living around them as they made their pilgrimage in the wilderness.”²

c. Another purpose is revealed in the book of Hebrews. Dr. Vern Poythress writes:

“The earthly tabernacle was a copy or a shadow of the true dwelling place of God in heaven (Heb 8:5; 9:24). It showed what God was like and what was needed to deal with sin. In this way it symbolized what the Messiah was to do for our salvation. We may say that it ‘foreshadowed’ the Messiah and his work. It was like a shadow of the Messiah cast backward in time into the Old Testament period.”³

4. How is the Tabernacle and its Furniture Types. or Foreshadows of Christ?

a. The Building of the Tabernacle (Tent).

1) God commanded it to be built according to a particular “pattern” (Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30). The word “pattern” means; **“construction, shape; pattern; model; copy, reproduction”**⁴ Regarding this, Kevin J. Conner writes:

“A study of Exodus 39-40 reveals that seventeen times we are told that Moses built the Tabernacle ‘as the Lord commanded Moses.’ In addition, at least seven times in other places he is told to make all things according to God’s pattern. Nothing was left to the mind or imagination of man. Everything was to be made according to God’s pattern. God can only bless and seal with glory that which is done

¹ Ervin N. Hershberger, *Seeing Christ in the Tabernacle*, (Harrisonburg, VA: Vision Publishers, 2007)

² David M. Levy, *The Tabernacle: Shadows of the Messiah, its Sacrifices, Services and Priesthood*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2003)

³ Vern S. Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1990)

⁴ *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017).

according to the standard of His Word. The New Testament Church will also have to measure up to the pattern of God.”⁵

2) Moses did as the Lord commanded. Moses finished the work (**Exodus 39:32-43; 40:33**). The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (**Exodus 40:34-38**) “God can only fully bless and place His Shekinah Glory upon that which is according to His Word and Divine Pattern. (**Colossians 4:17; Zechariah 4:9; John 17:1-6 and 19:30**)”⁶

b. **The Ark of the Covenant** (Note: There are several ways the ark is referred to in Scripture. E.g. “Ark of the Testimony” – **Exodus 25:22**; “Ark of God” – **I Samuel 3:3**; “Ark of Your Strength” – **Psalm 132:8**.) The word “ark” means; **coffin; money-chest**.⁷ Most often used in the Bible for the Ark of the Covenant. The “**Ark of the Covenant**” was a rectangular chest (approximately 3 ¾ ft long, 2 ¼ ft. wide and 2 ¼ ft. high) made of wood and overlaid with gold. On top of the ark was a lid which was called the “**mercy seat**”. Gazing toward each other and down upon the mercy seat

were

two **cherubim** (angels) made of gold.

1) The Ark is the most important piece of furniture in all the Old Testament. It was the only piece to be placed in all three different Sanctuaries or Tabernacles. The other two were the Tabernacle of David and the Temple of Solomon (cf. **I Chronicles 16:1; I Kings 8:9**).

2) The Bible says that God dwelt between the cherubim, seated on the mercy seat. **Leviticus 16:2; I Samuel 4:4; Psalm 99:1**. **The Ark of the Covenant** represented:

- **The Throne of God on the earth.**
- **The Presence of God amongst His people.**
- **The Glory of God revealed.**
- **The Fullness of the Godhead Bodily.**

3) The Ark was made out of Acacia wood – **Exodus 25:10**. This is an extremely durable wood. “**Insects find the taste of acacia wood distasteful, and its density makes it difficult for water or other decaying agents to penetrate.**”⁸ Kevin Conner points out that “...the Septuagint version of the Old Testament translates the word as ‘in corruptible’ or ‘non-decaying’ wood.” Conner further states:

“This wood, then, becomes a fitting type or symbol of the sinless, incorruptible humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was ‘a root out of dry ground’ and ‘hath no comeliness...no beauty that we should desire Hin’ (**Isaiah 53:2**). In the midst of desert conditions of evil and corruption, He remained uncorrupted, in corruptible and unstained in His nature and character (**Psalm 16:10; Luke 1:35; I Peter 1:23; and I John 3:5**).”⁹

4) The Ark was overlaid with Gold – **Exodus 25:11**. Gold can sometimes be symbolic of deity or the Divine nature. Jesus Christ is both Human and Divine. “**And the Word became flesh and dwelt (“to fix one’s tabernacle, have one’s tabernacle¹⁰”) among us.**” (**John 1:14**). Graham Truscott writes:

“**For the Ark of the Covenant is essentially a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The Ark of the Covenant was the place of deep, spiritual intimate communion and fellowship with God; a place of victory, The place where God manifested His Power, Presence, and Glory.**”¹¹

⁵ Kevin J. Conner, *The Tabernacle of Moses*, (Portland, OR: Bible Temple Publishing, 1975), 10.

⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁷ *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017).

⁸ Stephens Bill, “Acacia,” in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. Chad Brand et al. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 15.

⁹ Kevin J. Conner, *The Tabernacle of Moses*, (Portland, OR: Bible Temple Publishing, 1975), 20.

¹⁰ Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 578.

¹¹ Graham Truscott, *The Power of His Presence*, (Burbank, CA: World Map Press, 1969), 33.

