

The Tabernacle and God's Plan of Salvation

Part 2: Creation, the Commandments, and the Tabernacle

In Part 1, we began to see how the tabernacle God commissioned the Israelites to build in the wilderness formed a 3D model not only of God's heavenly tabernacle, but also of His plan for mankind. We examined the altar, the laver, and peered inside the Holy Place, but have not yet examined anything within the Holy Place.

Before we move on, I'd like to spend a little more time on the altar, the laver, and entering the Holy Place. You see, God used this tabernacle pattern at Creation, He used it in delivering the Israelites from slavery, and He used it in giving the ten commandments.

As King David exclaimed, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psa. 19:1). We'll soon see another facet of God's creation declaring His glory!

Let's get started.

In Gen. 1, on the first day of Creation, we read, "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness" (Gen. 1:3-4).

Now, God's Word shows that darkness represents sin, but light represents God's way. Prov. 2:13 tells us that Godly wisdom will keep us "from those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness."

Isa. 5:20 warns, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

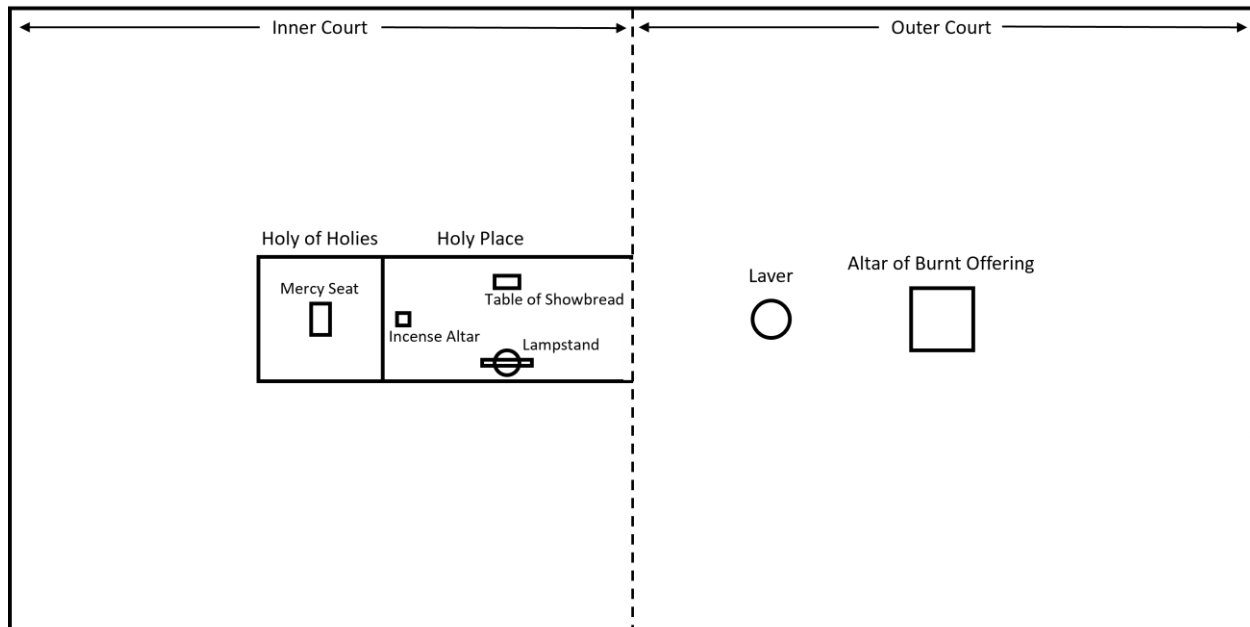
Here's 1 Pet. 2:9: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

On the first day of Creation, God said, "Let there be light." Our Creator calls us out of darkness into light. How does this happen? What makes this possible?

We find in John 8:12, "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'"

Then we read, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6).

The Tabernacle (Exodus 25-31, 35-40)



Holy of Holies: 10L x 10W x 10H	Laver: dimensions not given
Holy Place: 20L x 10W x 10H	Altar of Burnt Offering: 5L x 5W x 3H
Whole Tabernacle: 30L x 10W x 10H	Inner Court: 50L x 50W
Mercy Seat: 2.5W x 1.5L	Outer Court: 50L x 50W
Incense Altar: 1L x 1W x 2H	Entire Courtyard: 100L x 50W
Table of Showbread: 2L x 1W x 1.5H	Entrance to the Courtyard: 20 cubits
Lampstand: dimensions not given	

So we see that it's only through Jesus Christ that God calls us "out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9)! It's only through Jesus and His sacrifice that we can be justified and reconciled to God the Father (2 Cor. 5:18).

What holy day represents Jesus' sacrifice? Passover! When did He die? On the afternoon of Nisan 14th, the same day God commanded the Passover lambs to be killed! Year after year, century after century, the death of the Passover lambs foreshadowed the death of Jesus Christ, as demonstrated in *The Lord's Passover* by this author.

During Jesus' crucifixion, God sent darkness over all the land at noon (Mat. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). At the 9th hour, when Jesus died, the light returned, just as those same passages tell us. Through His death, we can be called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Furthermore, as we saw last time, the altar of burnt offering represents Yeshua/Jesus' sacrifice. It only makes sense, then, when we read God's instructions to Moses, "And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out" (Lev. 6:12, 13).

Fire gives light, and the Light of the World never goes out. Therefore, the fire on the altar could never go out, either.

So now we have a link between the first day of Creation, Passover, and the altar of burnt offering. What about the first commandment?

As Timothy Griffith demonstrated [in a blog post](#), the first commandment, or more properly, the first statement, is this one: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Ex. 20:22). This tells us who God is, and why He is worthy of worship. Without it, none of the others matter.

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” When did God bring Israel out of Egypt? At Passover! When did He deliver us from spiritual bondage, by the sacrifice of His Son? At Passover!

Furthermore, we read shortly after Israel departed and the Egyptians pursued them, “And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night” (Ex. 14:19-20).

God divided the light from the darkness, just as He did on the first day of Creation. And thus we come back full circle again, from the first commandment to Passover, and from Passover to the first day of Creation.

The first day of creation links to Passover, which links to the first commandment. The three of them in turn link to the altar of burnt offering, which represents Yeshua/Jesus’ sacrifice. The only way to enter the tabernacle is to pass the altar, just as the only way to be reconciled to God the Father is through His Son.

Now, let’s move on to the second item in the tabernacle courtyard, the laver, and with it the second of everything else: the second day of Creation, the second commandment, and the second holy day.

For the second day of Creation, we read, “Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so” (Gen. 1:6-7).

God divided the waters. Doesn’t this remind us of something?

How about this: “Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea” (Ex. 14:21-22).

Again, God divided the waters. When did this happen? As noted last time, the timeline in the Book of Exodus indicates that this was at least during the Days of Unleavened Bread, and very likely on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread — the second holy day. The Biblical pattern indicates that it was this day indeed.

As we also saw last time, Israel's crossing of the Red Sea symbolized baptism: "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:1-2).

Let's return now to Exodus and pick up the story. After Israel crossed over, "Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore" (Ex. 14:28, 30).

What does this tell us about baptism? Here's Rom. 6:4: "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

So we see that baptism is a form of death and renewal. But what dies?

Continuing on in Rom. 6:5-6, we read, "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."

When we're baptized, our old man, our old self, dies. We're no longer slaves; our old master has died. As Col. 3:5 tells us, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

The Egyptians who died in the Red Sea represented the old man which we put off at baptism. The Israelites' former masters died. When we get baptized, our former master, too, dies and is left behind in a watery grave.

The water connection between the second day of Creation and the second holy day extends to the second station in the tabernacle courtyard, the laver, as we saw last time. The laver, too, pictures baptism, as we also saw last time.

In order for them to be consecrated, God required the priests to be washed with water (Ex. 29:4; 40:12). So, too, He requires us to be washed with the water of baptism.

God further instructed Moses concerning the laver, "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die" (Ex. 30:19-21).

Hands represent the work we do; feet the way in which we walk. Just as the priests had to continually wash their hands and feet, so we, too, must take great care to keep our hands and feet clean in God's sight — that is, we must be diligent to obey Him and walk in His ways.

After being consecrated, the priests dedicated themselves to God and His service. Their old life ended; they now belonged to God, as Lev. 21 illustrates for us in detail. So it is with us.

When we get baptized, we commit ourselves to God, our old life is over, and our life now belongs to Him.

As Yeshua/Jesus instructed, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). We cannot allow anything to distract us from our purpose. We must focus on God and His Kingdom, no matter what.

And that brings us to the second commandment. Here it is: “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth” (Ex. 20:3-4).

Anyone or anything that we value more than God and His Kingdom is an idol, a false god. It’s forbidden by the second commandment, and it’s something we cannot allow ourselves to have once we dedicate ourselves to God at baptism. God must be our first priority; all else comes after that.

The second day of Creation links to the second holy day, which links to baptism, which links to the laver in the tabernacle courtyard, which links to the second commandment. The pattern continues!

Now, let’s move on to the third phase.

Here’s the third day of Creation: “Then God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear’; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth’; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good” (Gen. 1:9-12).

This was the first life on earth. God created life on the third day of Creation. When do we receive new life? When we receive the Holy Spirit!

In John 6:63, our Savior said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”

Now God sent the Holy Spirit on the third holy day, the Day of Pentecost, as we can read in Acts 2:1-4. Through His Spirit, God dwells within us, and we become the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16). We are now able to enter the Holy Place, the tabernacle.

Furthermore, God, through His Spirit, writes His laws on hearts. As we read in Heb. 8:10 (quoting Jer. 31:33), “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Now, when did God give the law to Israel on Mt. Sinai? As the timeline in Ex. 19 shows, it had to be near the Day of Pentecost, and likely on that very day! God gave the law on the Day of Pentecost, and He gave the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. On that day, He began to put His laws in our minds and write them on our hearts.

When God gave the law, Israel assembled before Him at the base of Mt. Sinai, as we can read in Ex. 19. God came down on Mt. Sinai, as we read in Neh. 9:13, “You came down also on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments.”

God dwells in the heavenly tabernacle/temple, as we saw last time, yet at that time, Mt. Sinai became His tabernacle, with Israel assembled at the entrance! God’s covenant with Israel on Mt. Sinai foreshadowed the New Covenant, as we read in the Book of Hebrews,

“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, but you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant” (Heb. 12:18, 19, 22-24).

When God gave the law to Israel, He prohibited the Israelites from touching the mountain (Ex. 19:12, 21, 24). On the next day (Ex. 24:4), He permitted Moses, Aaron, and seventy elders of Israel to ascend the mountain. “Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity” (Ex. 24:9-10).

Though all Israel gathered before God, He permitted only a few to enter His presence, His tabernacle. Many were called, but few were chosen. As we read in 1 Cor. 10:5-6, “But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples.”

So what does receiving new life through the Holy Spirit, and entering the Holy Place in His tabernacle, have to do with the third commandment? Let’s take a look!

Here’s the third commandment: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Ex. 20:7).

Here’s Eph. 4:29-31: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.”

It’s not just with our words that we can take God’s name in vain, though. We can do it through our actions as well.

When we take on God's Spirit, we are His dwelling, His property. We are part of His family and must conduct ourselves accordingly, lest we bring shame upon His name.

As Nathan the prophet rebuked King David after he sinned with Bathsheba, "By this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme" (2 Sam. 12:14). With his actions, David had taken God's name in vain.

Therefore, we must take great care to, as the Apostle Paul exhorted us, "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called" (Eph. 4:1). And again, "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9-10).

"The LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain"!

On the third day of Creation, God created the first life on earth. The third holy day, Pentecost, represents our new life that we have through the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit, we are not only able to enter the Holy Place in His tabernacle, we are His tabernacle! In this new life, we must take care to represent God's name and His family honorably, and see that we do not take His name in vain or bring shame upon it, just as the third commandment tells us.

So we can see now that the first three steps in entering the tabernacle parallel the first three holy days, the first three days of Creation, the first three commandments, and Israel's journeys in the wilderness. Amazing, isn't it?

That wraps up this installment in our study of the tabernacle. And this study is still just getting started!

To be continued...

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