

The Tabernacle and God's Plan of Salvation

Part 6: The Heavenly High Priest Returns!

Hebrews 9:11-12 proclaims, "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

Jesus Christ is the High Priest of the heavenly sanctuary. God commissioned the earthly tabernacle built by Moses to be a model of this heavenly reality and of His plan for mankind. God's goal is to bring His children out of the east (sin) and into His presence (the Holy of Holies), as we've seen throughout this tabernacle series so far.

In Part 4 and Part 5, we saw the culmination of this plan for the firstfruits. Those in the First Resurrection, accompanied by Jesus Christ, will enter the heavens on the Day of Trumpets and stand before God's throne in the Holy of Holies.

This isn't the culmination of God's whole plan, though. In fact, it's just getting started! God's purpose is "to bring many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10), not just the few in the First Resurrection.

So what happens after the First Resurrection on the Day of Trumpets? We know that Jesus Christ will return to earth accompanied by His 144,000 firstfruits, and we also know that the next holy day is the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement is a magnificent, awe-inspiring day, as we'll see shortly. It's also one to reverence! Lev. 23:26-32 tells us,

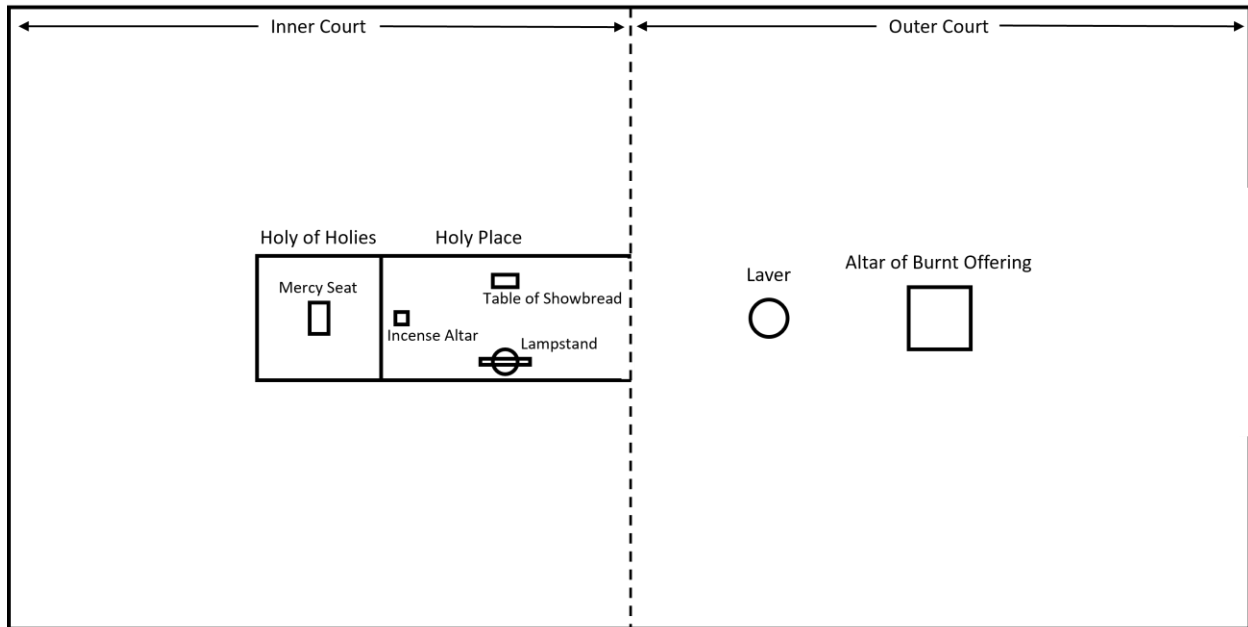
26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

27 "Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.

28 "And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.

29 "For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people.

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 | |

30 “And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people.

31 “You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

32 “It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest [lit. Sabbath of Sabbath-keeping], and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate [lit. Sabbath-rest] your sabbath.”

Three times, God forbids work on this day; four times, He uses some form of the Hebrew word *shabbat* or Sabbath; and three times, He commands all to afflict their souls.

Yet the Day of Atonement also calls for celebration. Here’s Lev. 25:9-10: “Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants.”

So what does this have to do with the tabernacle? Does the tabernacle show us anything about Christ’s Return, or any connection with the Day of Atonement? Indeed it does!

On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest carried the blood of a bull and a goat inside the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat (Lev. 16:11-17, 29-34; Heb. 9:7). Jesus Christ fulfilled this when, as we read above, He entered the heavenly sanctuary with His own blood: “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12).

Now, after carrying “the blood of another” (Heb. 9:25) into the Holy of Holies, the High Priest returned to the altar of burnt offering with the remaining blood and sprinkled it on the altar (Lev. 16:18-19). In like manner, our High Priest, Jesus Christ, “was offered once for the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

The altar, as we saw in Part 1 of this series, represents Yeshua/Jesus’ crucifixion and sacrifice on mankind’s behalf. When Israel’s high priest returned from the Holy of Holies to the altar on the Day of Atonement, that foreshadowed Jesus Christ returning from heaven to the earth, the site of His sacrifice.

Let’s explore this a little further.

God commanded that the ashes from the altar be carried out of the tabernacle, out of the camp, and disposed of outside the camp (Ex. 29:14; Lev. 4:12, 21; Lev. 16:27; etc.). The only way in and out of the tabernacle, remember, was on the east, so the ashes had to be carried eastward from the altar and out of the courtyard.

In fulfillment of this, we find, “**We have an altar** from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, **suffered outside the gate**” (Heb. 13:10-12).

So Yeshua/Jesus fulfilled the whole sacrificial ceremony! He fulfilled both the sacrifice on the altar and the disposal of the animals outside the camp. Remember, these things happened to the east of the tabernacle itself.

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem played a key role. It was on the Mount of Olives that, a few days before Passover, Jesus began His ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Mat. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-38). It was on the Mount of Olives that Jesus taught His disciples the signs of His return (Mat. 24; Mark 13; Luke 22). It was on the Mount of Olives that He was arrested (Mat. 26:30-57; Mark 14:26-53; Luke 22:39-54). And it was from the Mount of Olives that He returned to heaven to the Father (Acts 1:9-12).

Putting all this together, we can deduce that Yeshua/Jesus suffered outside the camp on the Mount of Olives, east of the temple in Jerusalem. Here, He also fulfilled the sacrifices on the altar. The Mount of Olives, then, is the altar on which He was sacrificed.

When Jesus returns, where does He return? To the Mount of Olives, the altar where He was crucified! “And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two. Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You” (Zech. 14:4, 5).

This will fulfill, once and for all, the high priests of old returning from the Holy of Holies to the altar on the Day of Atonement! Jesus Christ will return from the heavenly Holy of Holies to the Mount of Olives, where He was crucified.

Paralleling Zech. 14:4-5, here’s Rev. 19:11-14: “Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.”

Who are these “armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” following Him? They are the saints! How do we know? Just a few verses above, in Rev. 19:8, we’re told, “The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. **And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**” As Rev. 14:4 also says, “These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”

Again, it should be clear to all that at the First Resurrection on the Day of Trumpets, Jesus Christ will take His firstfruits into the heavenly Holy of Holies before His Father’s throne. When He returns to earth on the Day of Atonement, they will follow Him as “the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean”!

Now, notice also that at Jesus’ return, He is “clothed with a robe dipped in blood” (Rev. 19:13). Just as the earthly high priests returned to the altar with blood, so will Jesus Christ. Whose blood? His own, but not just His this time. As we read in Rev. 19:15, “Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

This passage parallels another in the Book of Isaiah. We discover in Isa. 63:1-4,

1 Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? — “I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

2 Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

3 “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes.

4 For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come.

This is why Yeshua's robe is soaked in blood upon His return. It's not just His own blood; it's also that of His foes!

Now on the surface, there might appear to be a contradiction between this passage and the others we've read. As we've seen, the saints, the armies in heaven, return with the Messiah. So why does this say "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me"?

It's simple: Yeshua/Jesus is the one who slays the wicked. Turning back to Rev. 19 again, vv. 17-21, we find,

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

In many other passages, God's Word speaks of this slaughter on "the Day of the Lord" as a sacrifice. For example, here's Zeph. 1:7: "Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD; for the day of the LORD is at hand, **for the LORD has prepared a sacrifice**; He has invited His guests."

Where do sacrifices happen? At the altar!

This is the Day of the Lord, the day of His return. The day of vengeance on those who blasphemed His name and persecuted His people.

It's not just the day of vengeance, though; it's also the day of deliverance, the day of liberty! The two are one and the same. Here's Isa. 61:1-2: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, **to proclaim liberty to the captives**, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and **the day of vengeance of our God.**"

Yeshua/Jesus quoted this passage at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 4:16-21) and said, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (v. 21). Now, what was one of the main purposes of His ministry?

It was to preach “the gospel of the Kingdom of God” (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43; 8:1; etc.). By preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, Jesus preached liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to those who are bound, the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God!

When He returns, He will carry these things out. He will free the captives, take vengeance on the wicked, and proclaim liberty throughout the earth.

And what day is the day of liberty and the day of vengeance?

As we already saw at the beginning, God decreed the Day of Atonement to be the day of liberty. “Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants.” (Lev. 25:9).

We’ve now seen that when Yeshua returns with His saints on the Day of Atonement, He returns to the Mount of Olives, the altar where He was sacrificed. He tramples the Beast and his armies in the winepress of God’s wrath, and slaughters them in a sacrifice so great that “blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs” (Rev. 14:20).

But on this day, there’s one more enemy to take vengeance on, one more enemy that He will deliver the earth from and proclaim liberty from. Here’s Rev. 20:1-3:

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.”

The day of vengeance and the day of liberty. The Day of Atonement. The day Jesus Christ returns with His saints from the Holy of Holies to the altar and sets up His kingdom on earth.

As we’ve seen throughout this series now, God uses the tabernacle, the holy days, the days of Creation, the ten commandments, and more to reveal His plan. How do the days of Creation and the ten commandments tie in with the Day of Atonement? We’ll see next time!

One more article, probably, will be sufficient to wrap up the Day of Atonement and this portion of the series on God’s tabernacle and His plan.

To be continued...

Written by Brett Gray.

This work may be redistributed and reproduced in whole or in part, provided that proper attribution is given to the author.