

# The Tabernacle and God's Plan of Salvation

## Part 4: The Last Trumpet and the Ark of the Covenant

In our journey through the tabernacle, we've surveyed the altar of burnt offering, the laver, and the Holy Place. We now stand at the entrance to the Holy of Holies. Inside awaits the holiest and most revered item in the tabernacle: the Ark of the Covenant.

A veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies — a veil torn asunder at the death of Jesus Christ in AD 30. Now, then, let us continue our journey into the Holy of Holies!

In Solomon's temple, the Holy of Holies was a cube: 20 cubits long, 20 wide, and 20 tall (1 Kings 6:20). That's about 30 feet in each direction. By putting Ex. 26 and 36 together, we can deduce that the dimensions in the tabernacle were smaller but followed the same pattern, being 10 cubits in each direction. Ezekiel's temple follows the same dimensions as Solomon's (Ezek. 41:4). For now, the important thing to know is simply that the Holy of Holies is a cube.

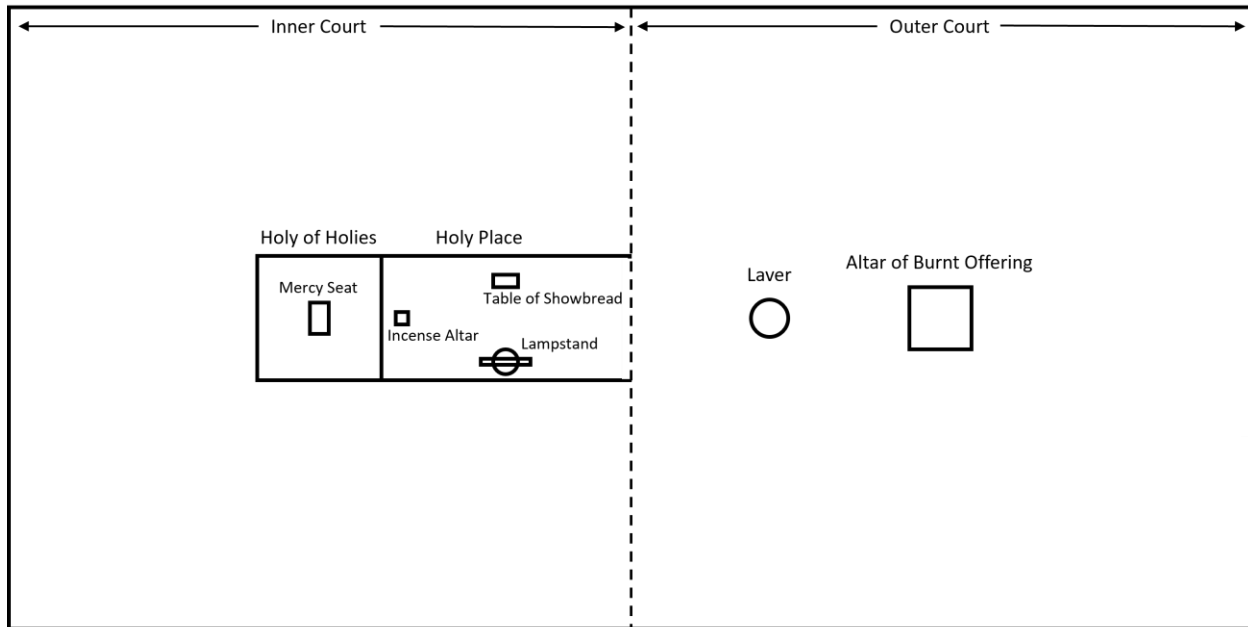
The Holy of Holies contained only the Ark of the Covenant. On top of the ark, God commanded Moses, "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat" (Ex. 25:17-18, 20).

A mercy seat between two cherubim who covered it with their wings. What does that sound like? It sounds like an earthly model of God's throne!

In Psa. 80:1, we find, "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth!" Again, in Psa. 99:1, we read, "The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He dwells between the cherubim; let the earth be moved!"

The Book of Ezekiel, in chapters 1 and 10, describes "four living creatures" (Ezek. 1:5) which it later calls "cherubim" (Ezek. 10). These creatures possessed four heads, wings, and wheels covered with eyes, leading one to wonder what the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant looked like!

## 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	

Revelation, after giving a nearly identical description of the four living creatures, adds this: “And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back” (Rev. 4:6).

So God dwells in the midst of the cherubim in heaven. The Ark of the Covenant on earth portrayed this heavenly reality.

The Mercy Seat, then, is God’s throne. Not the Judgment Seat, as many would expect, but the Mercy Seat. All too often, people think of the “God of the Old Testament” as a harsh being who rained down fire and brimstone on people for the slightest infractions. This is a gross misunderstanding — a Satanic deception!

God is a God of judgment and justice, it’s true, but He’s also a God of mercy, patience, and compassion. Always has been; always will be. God never changed from the Old Testament to the New; He’s the same yesterday, today, and forever (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8).

Jam. 2:13 tells us, “For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.” And in Heb. 4:16, we find, “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

There we have it. God's throne is the throne of grace, the Mercy Seat. Though God will sit to judge the wicked and destroy the unrepentant, He desires that all turn from their wicked ways and find mercy: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

So now we understand why God spoke to Moses from the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant: "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel" (Ex. 25:22). It was the earthly model of His throne.

Within the Ark itself, the golden chest, there were three items. Heb. 9:4, drawing on several passages from the Old Testament, tells us that the ark contained "the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant" (Heb. 9:4).

As we've seen [elsewhere](#), the number 3 represents man's relationship with God, so it should come as no surprise that these three items tell us more about our relationship with our Creator. The manna from heaven? Yeshua/Jesus is the true bread from heaven (John 6). The rod or branch that budded? Yeshua/Jesus is the branch (Isa. 4:2; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). The tablets of the covenant — God's Word? Yeshua/Jesus is the living Word of God (John 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:13).

These three symbols within the Ark all represent our Savior because He is, in fact, the reason God's throne is the Mercy Seat and the Throne of Grace. Without His sacrifice, we would still be dead in our sins. Only His sacrifice enables us to find mercy and reconciles us to God the Father: "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5:18).

Now, in ancient times, the Ark of the Covenant disappeared. The last mention of it in the Old Testament was by Jeremiah the prophet during the reign of King Josiah (Jer. 3:6, 16), Judah's last righteous king. There's no evidence that it fell into the hands of the Babylonians a few decades later, nor did they ever list it among their plunder from Jerusalem. It simply vanished from history.

In the New Testament, however, the Ark of the Covenant suddenly reappears — but not in a way anyone would have expected! First, we find in Rev. 11:15, at the last trumpet, "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" Next, we read, "Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple" (Rev. 11:19).

At the last trumpet, God's temple is opened "and the ark of His covenant" seen once more. What else do we know about the last trumpet, the seventh trumpet?

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet

will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:51-52). The first resurrection, the resurrection of God’s firstfruits, happens at the last trumpet.

Again, we read, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

Now, we’ve previously seen that God’s holy days follow the tabernacle pattern, and we’ve examined the first three: Passover, the Seventh Day of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost. The next holy day is the Day of Trumpets. And what holy day is associated with trumpets and shouting? The Day of Trumpets!

Let’s turn to Lev. 23:24: “In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.” The phrase “blowing of trumpets” is the Hebrew word *teruah* (Strong’s #8643) and means, according to Brown-Driver-Briggs and Gesenius, “shout; blast of war, alarm, or joy; tumult; loud noise; the sound of a trumpet.” Throughout the Old Testament, the word signifies either shouting or blowing a trumpet.

The Day of Trumpets. A day of shouting and blowing the trumpet. A day of alarm and of rejoicing.

For on this day, at the last trumpet, “the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

The Day of Trumpets corresponds to the Holy of Holies, and on this day, the Holy of Holies is opened and God’s ark is seen in His temple. What does this mean?

Notice that 1 Thessalonians says those in the first resurrection will “meet the Lord in the air.” Where do they go from there? What happens next?

Let’s turn to Rev. 4:6 once again: “Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.” A sea of glass before God’s throne.

As for those in the first resurrection, we read later, “And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God” (Rev. 15:2). The saints are standing on the sea of glass before the throne of God — in the heavenly Holy of Holies!

We read in Rev. 14:1-3,

1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.

3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

Again, we see the 144,000 firstfruits singing praise to God before His throne! But what is Mount Zion? Where is it?

Here's Heb. 12:22-24:

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, **the heavenly Jerusalem**, to an innumerable company of angels,

23 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,

24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Mount Zion is the heavenly Jerusalem! When the 144,000 firstfruits stand before God's throne on the sea of glass and sing praises to Him, they are literally standing before God's throne in heaven in the Holy of Holies!

At the first resurrection on the Day of Trumpets, the day of shouting and blowing trumpets, Jesus Christ will gather His people and take them into the Holy of Holies. This, then, is why we read that at the seventh trumpet, "the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple" (Rev. 11:19).

Even the shape of the Holy of Holies reveals this. Remember, as noted earlier, that the Holy of Holies is a cube: equal in height, width, and length. The dimensions changed from the tabernacle to the temple, but it remained a cube. To the best of my knowledge, the only other cube mentioned in Scripture is the heavenly Jerusalem: "The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal" (Rev. 21:16).

Again, in Rev. 15:5, after the seventh trumpet but before the seven bowls, the seven last plagues, are poured out in the earth, we read, "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened." A few verses later, we notice, "The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed" (Rev. 15:8).

Wait a minute! Doesn't that contradict everything we've already seen? No. Interestingly, the Greek word translated "enter," *eiserchomai* (Strong's # G1525) means, "to go out or come in." In other words, there's no more traffic until the seven plagues are over; those who are inside will remain there, and those who are outside will remain there. During the seven plagues, the door is shut, so to speak, as Jesus alluded to in His parable of the ten virgins (Mat. 25:1-13).

After the seven plagues, Yeshua/Jesus and the 144,000 will return to earth. But that's a topic for another day.

So the first resurrection happens at the seventh trumpet on the fourth holy day, the Day of Trumpets. On that day, the 144,000 firstfruits, guided by their Savior, will enter the Holy of Holies, stand on the sea of glass before their Creator's throne, and sing praises to Him.

How awesome is that?! Let us strive to be among them! As Heb. 4:11 tells us, "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience." Rev. 20:6 adds, "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection."

As we've seen previously in this series, the ten commandments and the seven days of Creation parallel the holy days and the tabernacle pattern. The Day of Trumpets and the Holy of Holies, then, would correspond to the fourth commandment, the Sabbath, and to the fourth day of Creation.

The question is, How? And what does that mean for us?

To be continued...

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