

# The Tabernacle and God's Plan of Salvation

## Part 7: The Tabernacle and Fishers of Men

This is Part 7, the final part of this series on the tabernacle. That doesn't mean we've learned all there is to know about it, mind you; there's always much more to learn from God's Word! We frail humans could never plumb the full depth of God's mind and His Word, not in ten thousand lifetimes! But this wraps up our current study of the tabernacle in relation to the Holy Days, the days of Creation, and the ten commandments.

Last time, we saw that, on the Day of Atonement, Jesus Christ returns to the earth with His 144,000 saints, slays the Beast and his armies, and casts Satan into the bottomless pit. He will return from the heavens, the Holy of Holies, and stand on the Mount of Olives where He was crucified. Under the Old Covenant, this was foreshadowed each year when, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest returned from the Holy of Holies to the altar of burnt offering and sprinkled it with blood.

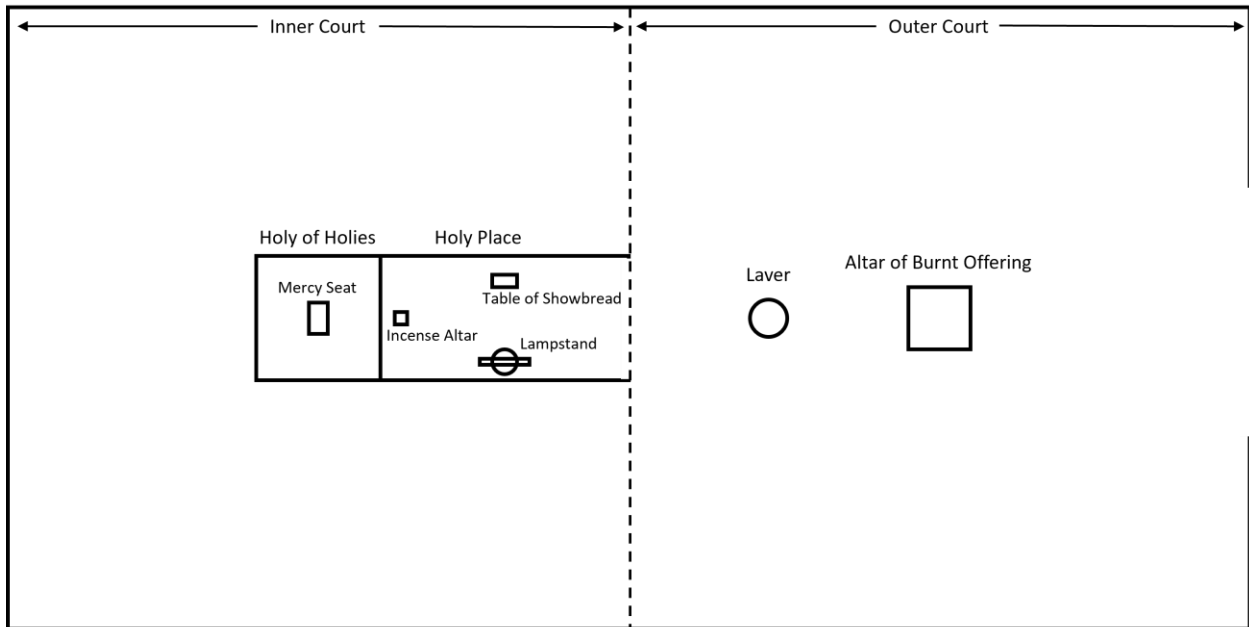
Jesus Christ's thousand-year reign, then, also begins on this same day, the Day of Atonement. From the altar where He died, Jerusalem, He will begin to draw a new generation of people to Himself, to sanctify them and reconcile them to God the Father. Remember, God planned three eras of salvation: these 6,000 years, the Millennium, and the Second Resurrection.

With each new era, and for each new person, the process begins all over: God draws people out of the east, out of sin, and toward His presence in the Holy of Holies. Each new generation must repent and accept Yeshua/Jesus' sacrifice (the altar), be baptized (the laver), receive the Holy Spirit, and walk in newness of life (the Holy Place). God's process doesn't change.

The ten commandments illustrate this. When Jesus returns, once He has slain His enemies, what will He do? He will introduce Himself anew to the peoples of the earth: "I am the LORD your God" (Ex. 20:2). He and His 144,000 firstfruits will teach these people God's ways, all those who survive the Great Tribulation, and it all begins with the first commandment or statement: "I am the LORD your God."

As Jer. 23:7-8 tells us, "Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.'"

## 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 what about the other commandments? If the fourth commandment, the Sabbath, corresponds to the fourth holy day, the Day of Trumpets, but the Day of Atonement returns to the first commandment, what about the other six? Where do they fit in?

The last six commandments all relate to man's relationship with his fellow man:

1. Honor your father and your mother
2. You shall not murder
3. You shall not commit adultery
4. You shall not steal
5. You shall not bear false witness
6. You shall not covet

The first four, however, like all seven Holy Days, concern man's relationship with God and how to conduct oneself in His presence:

1. I am the LORD your God
2. You shall have no other gods before me, or any images of them
3. You shall not take God's name in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy

As the Apostle John explained, it's not possible to love God without loving one's fellow man (1 John 4:20), nor is it possible to truly love one's fellow man without first loving God and obeying Him (1 John 5:2).

As Yeshua/Jesus taught, "the first and great commandment" is "you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mat. 22:37). He continued, "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Mat. 22:39).

Thus the six commandments regarding man's relationship with his fellow man connect to the first four, but God's overarching plan is to bring mankind into a relationship with Him. That's why He created us in the first place.

Each era of salvation begins with God calling people to repentance and introducing Himself to them: "I am the LORD your God." This 6,000 years, the Millennium, the Second Resurrection, each individual human being — it's always the same process. There is no other way.

Now that we see how God always uses the same process of sanctification, perhaps we're beginning to see why so many have noticed parallels between the Day of Atonement and Passover. Let's look at some of these parallels.

Jesus Christ ATONED for us when He offered Himself up as our Passover sacrifice. The tabernacle and temple ceremonies on the Day of Atonement featured the slaughtering of a goat as a sin offering and the sprinkling of its blood on the people, the priests, the altar, and inside the tabernacle (Lev. 16) — a parallel of the original Passover ceremony in which a lamb was slaughtered and its blood smeared around the doors of the Israelites' dwellings (Ex. 12). Both ceremonies, of course, foreshadowed Jesus' death as our Passover Lamb.

Furthermore, the Day of Atonement ceremony included two goats: one killed as a sin offering, and one set free and exiled in the wilderness (Lev. 16). Similarly, when Yeshua/Jesus stood trial before Pontius Pilate, Pilate asked the mobs to choose between two men, one to be slain and one to be set free. The mob demanded Yeshua's death, so Barabbas, a robber and murderer, was set free (Mat. 27:16-26; Mark 15:7-15; Luke 23:18-25; John 18:39-40).

There's yet another similarity, but also a contrast. On the tenth day of the first month (Nisan / Abib), the day God commanded the Israelites to choose lambs for the Passover (Ex. 12:3), Jesus entered Jerusalem, "lowly and riding on a donkey" (Zech. 9:9; Mat. 21:5; John 12:15). When He returns on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, He will be a conquering King riding a white horse (Rev. 19:11-16). He came in humility; He will return in glory.

Atonement points to Passover, and Passover points to Atonement. Jesus came to die at Passover; He will return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords on the Day of Atonement. And when He returns, He will rule over the earth and teach the peoples God's way of life, a journey which begins with Passover.

God's Holy Days and His tabernacle tell a progressing story, yet there are also cycles and repetition within them.

So what, then, about the days of Creation? On the fifth day of Creation, "God said, 'Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens'" (Gen. 1:20).

Does the fifth day of Creation — fish and birds — have anything to do with the fifth Holy Day, the Day of Atonement? Yes, actually!

Of Christ's return, we read in Rev. 19:17-21,

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.**

Yes, birds do have something to do with Christ's return and the Day of Atonement. What about fish?

When Jesus came to this earth 2,000 years ago, He told His disciples, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mat. 4:19; Mark 1:17). Their calling was to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). When Jesus returns with His 144,000 firstfruits, what will be our mission, should we be counted worthy to be among those firstfruits? To teach the peoples God's way of life, that is, to be fishers of men!

To wrap this up, I'd like to look at another fascinating foreshadow of Christ's return, a foreshadow which takes us back to Israel in the wilderness. In Part 2, we saw that God gave His laws to Israel from Mt. Sinai on the Day of Pentecost, just as He would later give the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in the New Testament (Acts 2:1-4).

On the next day, the day after Pentecost, "Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights" (Ex. 24:18). As Moses recounted later, he "neither ate bread nor drank water" (Deut. 9:9) the

whole time he was there in God's presence. At this time, God engraved His ten commandments on two stone tablets (Deut. 9:10).

When Moses came back down the mountain, he saw that the Israelites had already forsaken God and were dancing around and bowing down to a golden calf. Enraged, Moses hurled the stone tablets of the ten commandments into the ground and broke them (Deut. 9:17). These were, in essence, two rocks on which God engraved His words, and they were broken because of Israel's sins. Who is the Rock? Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). Who is the living Word of God? Jesus Christ (John 1:1-14; Rev. 19:13). And why was He broken and killed? For our sins!

After this, Moses interceded with God on behalf of the Israelites and begged Him to forgive them. As he did so, Moses fasted for yet another forty days and forty nights (Deut. 9:18, 25). Just as Moses interceded with God on Israel's behalf, so Jesus Christ intercedes with the Father on our behalf (1 Tim. 2:5). In yet another parallel, Christ remained on earth after His resurrection for forty days before He ascended to the Father (Acts 1:3).

After this, Moses went back up the mountain to God once again, and remained there another forty days and forty nights. As at the first, he fasted in God's presence, neither eating bread nor drinking water (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 10:10). While there in God's presence, Moses continued to intercede on behalf of Israel, and, as he later told the Israelites, "the LORD also heard me at that time, and the LORD chose not to destroy you" (Deut. 10:10).

Through this all, we can clearly see that Moses was a type of Jesus Christ. If we couldn't, the Bible itself tells us, for God told Moses, "I will raise up for them **a Prophet like you** from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him" (Deut. 18:18). Acts 3:22-23 tells us that this passage foretold Jesus Christ.

So, beginning on the day after Pentecost, Moses fasted for three separate periods of forty days and forty nights, with little time in between. If we add up 120 days from Pentecost on the Hebrew calendar, it brings us right to the doorstep of the Day of Atonement. Whether you believe in a Sivan 6th Pentecost, as I do, or a Sunday or Monday Pentecost, 120 days from Pentecost brings us to no more than two or three days before the Day of Atonement. It's likely, then, that Moses returned from God's presence on the mountain the second time — his second coming, if you will — on the Day of Atonement.

On the Day of Atonement, Moses returned in glory, just as Yeshua/Jesus will in the future: "Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him" (Ex. 34:29-30).

Throughout the Bible, in many different ways, God both reveals and conceals His plan! He uses the same pattern over and over to illustrate His plan for us to be in His family, whether

it's through the tabernacle, the Holy Days, the days of Creation, the ten commandments, or Israel in the wilderness.

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