

The Court Of The Tabernacle

Our thoughts will be upon the Mosaic Tabernacle, the pattern of things in the heavenlies, the pictorial representation of the great mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh, first in Christ and then in a multitude.

The Tabernacle is a wonderful allegory of type and lesson: God enthroned in Israel—first in Israel naturally, and then spiritual Israel. This is the deepest and most beautiful subject in Scripture; this is the heart of the divine purpose. Yahweh Elohim: “*He who shall be Mighty Ones,*” Emmanuel, God with us—the eternal purpose of God to tabernacle with men.

The whole Tabernacle was a picture of the way of salvation. It is called the Tabernacle of Meeting, for there God met with man. It is called the Tabernacle of Witness or Testimony, for it is God’s witness, testimony or revelation of Himself—His characteristics, His desires and His purposes concerning man.

A tabernacle or tent is a temporary dwelling place, nothing fixed or final; it speaks of pilgrimage, or a wilderness journey, of no continuing city. The present is the tabernacle wilderness state. We look to the future for the permanent Temple state. We must be ready at all times to move with the Truth wherever it leads. Present considerations are secondary and unimportant.

Turning our attention directly to the Court and its contents, we note to begin with that the Tabernacle of God’s presence in Israel did not stand exposed in the camp. It could not. It was surrounded by a walled court, a wall of 60 pillars and linen curtains, about 100 feet by 200 feet.

The word for court means enclosed or surrounded: “*A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse*”—the same symbolism under a different form.

This Court was many things. First, it was a barrier. Secondly, a protection. Thirdly, a separation, a line of demarcation. And finally, a way of approach, for it led around to the gate.

The Court hanging was of fine linen, which stands for righteousness. A separating wall of righteousness is the only way that God could be present in the camp. It was a barrier of righteousness, and yet it led around to a merciful gate of entrance. God is a wall of protection and righteousness. Christ is the gate of mercy and entrance, and we note that there is only one gate to the Court, only one way in.

All the Priesthood had to wear linen. They could wear no wool which represented the carnal and animal aspect. We read it was fine twined linen—actually it was fine linen, twined or twisted together; that is, in multiple threads, each tightly twisted together for strength—“*a threefold cord is not easily broken*”—many individual threads forming one piece, so finely woven together as to be indistinguishable as separate threads.

The ancient fine linen which they have found in tombs had up to 150 threads to the inch. No thread by itself; each twisted together tightly with its close companions for strength—a pure white, shining, righteous unity, made up of myriads of fine and firmly twisted and interwoven threads.

The wall being a hanging or curtain further conveys the idea of concealment, a veiling of something. This was a characteristic of the Mosaic dispensation. It was a portrayal in veiled shadows of what was to be made clear, and open, and manifest in Christ Jesus.

A gate is a way of entrance—a welcome, an invitation, a point of decision, of commitment, of transition from one state to another, from outside to inside.

The Court was 50 by 100 cubits; that is, it was 300 cubits all around. The gate was 20, and so the wall itself was 280, that is 7 times 40—the fullness or perfection of probation. It hung—it was held up or manifested on 60 pillars of brass, and these pillars stood on brass sockets and had silver capitals. Brass stands for the flesh; silver for redemption in Christ Jesus. This combination then would be redeemed flesh, of which Christ, the silver, is the capital or head, manifesting—holding up the white linen righteousness of God.

The pillars were not like pillars usually are, rooted in the ground, but like the boards of the Tabernacle they rested upon sockets, which in turn rested upon the surface of the ground. The Tabernacle was on the earth, but not in it. Here two principles are clearly manifested—separation from and a lifting above the world by the Christ foundation; and secondly, the thought of pilgrimage, impermanence, no fixed part in the earth.

We notice that the number 5 is a factor of nearly every measurement of the Tabernacle. It appears to stand for the Law, not just the Law of Moses, but for the Law of God generally. The 10 Commandments were on 2 tables of 5. There were 5 books of Moses, as there are 4 gospels of Christ, and so we find fittingly, 5 and 4 marking the pillars of the entrances—4 pillars to the gate, 5 pillars to the entrance of the Holy Place, and again 4 pillars to the entrance of the Most Holy.

If 5 stands for the Mosaic dispensation or the legal aspect, and 4 for redemption in Christ, the Covenant in Christ, we may wonder why the first outer one is 4 as well as the closest inner one. This appears to illustrate the fact that the Covenant to Abraham—the everlasting covenant, completely encloses the Mosaic dispensation. It is both the old and the new covenant, and therefore we find the first entrance has 4 and so does the last, with the one with the 5 pillars in between. It was as John said, a new commandment, but still it was not a new commandment, it was the same that they had from the beginning (1 John 2:7, 8).

The Mosaic was merely a brief period in between, until the Messiah should

come. Each set of entrance pillars held up a hanging or curtain, or veil that represented Christ. Each was of white linen interwoven with blue, purple and scarlet. The last hanging, the third or inner one—the veil of the Most Holy, also had Cherubim woven into it of fine needlework—workmanship to beautify and to glorify—“*a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen—with cherubims*” (Ex. 26:31,32).

Blue appears to stand for heavenly things, the things of the Spirit, and red for fleshly things, earthly things. Adam was so called because he was taken of the red earth. Purple, blue, and red combined is royalty and kingship.

We saw that there were 60 pillars in the Court, that is, 5 times 12—the Mosaic figure times the basic Israelitish figure. There are 48 boards in the Tabernacle, the more inner dispensation; here is 4 times 12. 4 seems to apply to the gospel dispensation, as 5 to the Mosaic. 4 is the number of the Cherubim—the glorified multitude in whom God is to dwell and be manifested. This in turn is the foundation back in the fourfold camp of Israel, for “*Salvation is of the Jews.*”

The 60 pillars of the Court clearly represent the faithful stalwarts of the Mosaic dispensation, who held up the wall of righteousness during their period of probation. The term pillar for upstanding men in the Truth is too familiar to be proven.

In the Song of Solomon we read: “*Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke ... Behold his bed which is Solomon’s; three score (or 60) valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war*” (Song 3:6-8), which of course is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

The symbolism is quite clear. The bed or litter of Solomon turns our mind to the Chariot of the Cherubim—that in which God is pleased to dwell and be manifested.

The pillars were bound one to another with bars of silver called *fillets* in the A.V. This word means *to join* or *to cling*, and is often translated figuratively *delight, love, desire*. Here again the picture is unmistakable, for it is redemption in Christ that binds all in one and makes the enclosing wall—all the separate pillars—into one solid unity of righteousness.

The pillars had silver hooks. A hook or peg is to hang things by. Solomon says, “*The words of the wise are as nails fastened by masters of assembly.*” These hooks or nails are the well established teachings of the Spirit’s valiant pillar men, upon which we may safely hang our faith, and there is no other safe place upon which to hang it.

Let us be sure that our views—our convictions—are not fleshly opinions, especially when they concern things we desire to do. Let us be sure we know what

the Word of God says on any matter and that we honestly accept it, and that we take the safe side in any matter of doubt. If there is any doubt about anything pleasing God, why should we jeopardize our salvation to please the flesh? How cheaply do we value eternal life? Isaiah says that Jesus, the Word made Flesh, is a nail or a hook fastened in a sure place on which all the glorious vessels of his Father's house shall be hung.

We come through the gate into the Court, and it is the Altar of sacrifice that is the first, largest and most prominent object that confronts us. We must make it so in our own lives—first, largest and most prominent. It is the great central object of the Court. It was of wood overlaid with brass about ten foot square and five foot high. It was right before the worshipper as he entered the Court.

Concerning altars generally, the Scriptural instruction is that no tool of man should be raised upon them, for anything man did would pollute it. It must be bare earth or undressed stones, for man can do nothing to provide the means of reconciliation and salvation. It must be wholly God's workmanship.

This Altar conveys the same lesson in a different form, for the pattern was of God. God selected the workmen and especially endowed them with wisdom and ability, strengthened them, made them strong for Himself, but the material of the Altar was wood and brass. It was material supplied by the freewill of eager men. This is a divine mystery—everything is of God, and yet we must do our part, but even that part is of God too—

“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” But Paul immediately adds, *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”*

Even our willing and doing is of God, for of ourselves we can do nothing. But we must on our part seek for it, prepare ourselves for it, with fear and trembling.

The word for Altar means *a place of slaughter, or sacrifice*. The first thing in the Tabernacle service is sacrifice—the shedding of blood, the giving of life. There can be no putting away of sin, no reconciliation with God without first the fullest repudiation of sin, and this can only be done by sacrifice—perfect unblemished sacrifice. Complete self-sacrifice is the ultimate of love and obedience—obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross—*“greater love hath no man than this.”* Herein is its power and its beauty; this alone has the power to take away sin.

The purpose and meaning of sacrifice is **not human punishment**, but divine vindication, as a basis of divine mercy, repudiation and condemnation—putting away sin—the establishment of a foundation of holiness.

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