

# THE END TIMES

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## INSIGHT INTO THE FUTURE REVEALED IN ANCIENT SANCTUARY

One harmonious theme runs throughout the entire Bible—the full relationship between God and man that was lost, and God’s plan to restore that relationship in due time. (1Tim. 2:3-6) This plan is termed ATONEMENT or at-one-ment, and is revealed through God’s Tabernacle among His people, Israel.

To the casual reader of the Bible, the account of the Tabernacle of Israel may seem a chronicle of no real import for Christians today. The sacrifice of bulls and goats upon a brazen altar may seem to be just another meaningless tradition. But, the Apostle Paul explains that this drama, played out among the Jews for over 500 years, was not only a *schoolmaster* designed to lead them to the Messiah, but also abounds with significance for the Christian—“a shadow of good things to come.” Gal. 3:24; Heb. 10:1

### GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS SANCTUARY IN THE WILDERNESS

God’s presence was manifested to Israel through this *tent of meeting*. This presence was demonstrated during their wilderness wanderings by a pillar of fire by night over the *Most Holy* of the Tabernacle and a cloud by day. Here Moses would actually speak with God, and here the high priest would learn of God’s judgments through the *Urim and Thummim*. Ex. 33:8-14; Num. 14:10; Ex. 28:30, Lev. 8:8

God also speaks to the church through the many symbolic lessons of the Tabernacle arrangement. The Apostle Paul states in Hebrews 8:5 that the Tabernacle and the priests who served it were but an example or shadow of heavenly (spiritual) things. Continuing this logic he again relates in Hebrews 9:6-9 that the first Tabernacle structure was an allegory or *type* of the spiritually discerned truths of God’s plan for the

atonement of mankind. In Hebrews 9:23-25 Paul plainly states that the activities of the Tabernacle represented Christ’s sacrificial sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven itself, into the presence of God.

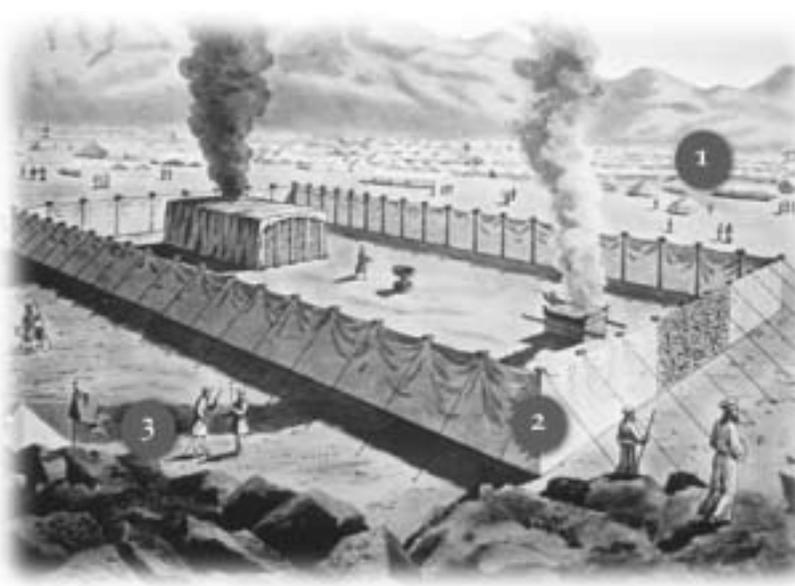
### SYMBOLIC LESSONS OF THE TABERNACLE

The Tabernacle, with its furniture, priesthood, animal sacrifices and holy days, represents the way of consecration—the way in which a Christian approaches unto God—following in Christ’s footsteps. (1Pet. 2:21; Phil. 3:10; 2Cor. 4:10, 11) It further demonstrates how the world of mankind may be reconciled unto God through Jesus Christ and his church. 1 John 2:2; Rev. 21:1-4; Rom. 8:19-22

The arrangement of the camp, court and Tabernacle symbolically represented the condition of several groups in their relationship to God. Surrounding the Tabernacle at a respectful distance, was **the Camp (1) of Israel**. The Israelites symbolize the world of mankind, separated from God because of sin. They could not see over the seven and a half foot **Curtain of White Linen (2)** encircling the holy things within. To them it was a veil of unbelief; to those within it was a wall of faith.

Encamped closer to the Tabernacle was **the Tribe**

**of Levi (3)**. Each year, this tribe had a most important role in bringing the alienated nation of Israel into harmony with God. The priests who served the Tabernacle were selected from the tribe of the Levites, and through their sacrificial service in the Tabernacle, **atonement** was provided between God and His people.



“And the Lord spake unto Moses,...let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” Exodus 25:1, 8

## LESSONS LEARNED IN THE COURT

The sacrificial activities of the High Priest and the underpriests were carried out in **the Court (4)**. Assistants for the priests were chosen from the remainder of the Levitical tribe, and these were permitted to enter into the court. Christ is spoken of as the *High Priest of our profession*. (Heb. 3:1) Christ's church is spoken of as a *Royal Priesthood*. (1Pet. 2:9) The Levites represent young, or immature Christian believers who enter the court by the one **Gate or Door (5)** which pictures our belief in Jesus as the one way or door to God. (John 10:9, 14:6) This is the condition of the Christian when he first approaches God. Like the Levites who had limited responsibilities in the Tabernacle, these have a limited relationship with God until they fully submit their wills to Him. *"Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you."* James 4:8

All articles in the court were made of or overlaid with copper, symbolizing that persons in the court condition were made *just* by the sacrifice of the perfect life of Jesus. The copper fitly represents the perfect man, Christ Jesus, as shown in the illustration of the copper serpent which the children of Israel looked upon to spare their lives. *"And as Moses lifted up the [copper] serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."* John 3:14-15

Once inside the court the first article approached was the **Brazen (copper) Altar (6)** which was made of wood overlaid with copper (mistranslated brass). This represents Jesus' *ransom* sacrifice of his perfect humanity. *"We have an altar, whereof they [the typical priesthood] have no right to eat which serve the Tabernacle."* 1Tim. 2:5,6; Heb. 13:10

Next in the court was the **Laver (7)** made of polished copper and filled with water from which the priests washed their hands and feet before performing sacrificial service. This symbolizes that the believer must wash with the water of God's Word to be clean from earthly defilements. *"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."* Eph. 5:26

## LESSONS LEARNED IN THE HOLY

Only the priests could enter into the **Holy (8)**—the first room of the Tabernacle. This pictures that just as the priests only could offer sacrifices, so, too, only believers who go on to consecrate their lives to sacrifice in God's service can enter into the condition of being spirit-begotten and fully justified by the merit of Jesus' sacrifice. *"... present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* (Rom. 12:1) *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace..."* (Rom. 5:1, 2) Sacrifice directly implies sufferings, especially if it is a *living* sacrifice. See also: Luke 14:25-33; 2Tim. 2:11, 12; Matt. 16:24-26; 19:21-30; James 1:18; 1Pet. 1:23; Heb. 3:1

All things in the Holy were made of, or covered with gold. Gold pictures the divine nature, and represents those who are called to be changed to the divine nature upon their resurrection. (1Pet. 1:4; 2Pet. 1:4) As copper is similar to gold, yet less valuable and less lustrous, this suggests the similarity between God, the Creator, and man the creature. In Genesis 1:26 God said, *"Let us make man in our image . . .,"* and so mankind reflects the ability to reason, worship and love. Yet, as copper tarnishes with time and needs to be polished, or maintained, so, too, perfect humanity is *mortal* and needs sleep, food and water. However, pure gold never tarnishes, it needs no maintenance. A divine being has life within itself and needs no sustenance—it is *immortal*. John 5:26; 1Cor. 15:53, 54

Once inside the Holy what an awesome display was seen! The walls were wood covered with gold. The ceiling was beautiful white linen, covered with cherubim, embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet thread, possibly picturing that those consecrated ones are now under the protection of God, through His ministering spirits—the angels. Heb. 1:13, 14; Matt. 18:10; Psa. 34:7

The only source of light in the Holy was supplied by seven lamps atop a solid **Golden Lampstand (9)** fueled by pure olive oil. What an apt picture of the holy Spirit—represented by the oil—enlightening the minds of consecrated Christians. Only these can see or comprehend spiritual truths. 1Cor. 2:7-15

