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## The Word Became Goat's Hair and Acacia Wood Exodus 25:1-31:18; 35:1-40:28

### Introduction

For each of the covenants there was a visible sign given to authenticate the covenant and to remain as a perpetual reminder of it. The sign of the covenant with Noah was the rainbow (Gen 9:11-13). God's covenant with Abraham was sealed and signed with the rite of circumcision (Gen 17:10-11). The covenant with David was sealed with the sign of the perpetual rule of the house of David (2 Sam 7:12-16). The covenant made at Sinai also had its sign, the tabernacle (Exod 29:42-46).

This is the second figure in Exodus which often suffers at the hands of interpreters. The first was the Passover. There are two extremes both of which fail in capturing the true importance and significance of the tabernacle. One extreme is to try to correlate even the smallest detail to some aspect of the life of Christ. The other extreme is, of course, to see nothing of Christ at all. It shall be the purpose of this section of the study of Exodus to mark a route between these extremes.

As with the Ten Commandments, consideration of the tabernacle could be a study in its own right. This chapter will discuss the structure and furnishings of the tabernacle, the priestly functions outlined in Exodus, the purposes for the construction of the tabernacle, and the fore gleams of Christ in the tabernacle. John celebrates the coming of Messiah with these words, "The Word became flesh and dwelt (*Greek scanai*, meaning tabernacle; literally *tabernacled*) among us." But before the Word became Flesh, in the symbolic form of the tabernacle, it literally was goat's hair and acacia wood, plus gold, silver, linen, etc.

### Structure and Furnishings

There are four passages in Exodus which discuss the structure and furnishings of the tabernacle: 25:1-27:12; 30:1-38; 36:1-37:20; and 40:1-12. In some sections specifications are given, while other sections discuss use of the furnishings and structure. The whole section is interrupted with the discussion concerning the breaking of the covenant. While the section 25:1 to 40:38 is not highly organized, it does reflect the general idea that sin always disrupts the perfect plan of God. This whole section beautifully illustrates this among many other points.

1. **Materials for construction 25:1-9; 35:20-29; 36:2-7; 38: 21-31.** One might tend to wonder where these nomads in the desert could obtain the materials needed for the construction of the tabernacle. At the time of the exodus from Egypt, God had placed it in the hearts of the Egyptians to let the Hebrews have gold, silver, and valuables upon leaving the land (11:1-3). They had ample wealth to be used in the construction of a place of worship.

God gave the people a list of materials which is presented in chapter 25:1-9. This was a general list of the kinds of things that would be needed. Nothing was related as to the amount with regard to any item. Chapter 35:20-29 records how the people responded by bringing an offering to provide the necessary material. So well did the people respond to the challenge that Moses had to call upon them to restrain giving of their own offerings (36:5-6). The material brought was more than sufficient for the need (36:7). A summary statement of amounts of the materials brought is given in 38:21-31.

2. **Skill for Construction 31:1-11.** Allowing for the fact that the materials were those that they brought from Egypt, one might wonder where these slaves, whose main work was that of brick masons, learned the delicate skills needed for the work of constructing the tabernacle. It is known that such skills were not uncommon during this time. The treasures uncovered in the tomb of Tutankamun bear witness to this fact. While the Hebrews may not have worked in these skills prior to this time, they were acquainted with them from their association with the craftsmen of Egypt.

In addition, there is the specific statement regarding the role of the Spirit of God as enabler and giver of wisdom and skill for this special purpose (31:1-2). The Spirit of God was there to help them produce an object of beauty for worship. The Jewish people believe that God never gives a gift by His Spirit unless a man already has some natural endowment or has educated himself in a particular skill. The men chosen to receive these gifts were Bezaleel and Aholiab (31:2, 6).

3. **Floor Plan 27:9-19.** One of the problems in calculating the size of the tabernacle is that there was no standard cubit. The Egyptian royal cubit was 20.65 inches while the Babylonian was 19.8 inches. The cubit used by the Hebrews is thought to be 17.5 inches or approximately 1- $\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Thus, we can only approximate the size with a fairly general estimate at 150 X 75 feet as the overall size of the outer court. This is based on the measurements given in 27:9-19 of 100 cubits by 50 cubits. Conversion of the overall measure will vary depending upon which cubit is used. It is clear that the outer court was to be twice as long as it was wide.

Note also that the inner sanctuary, the tent itself, was 10 X 30 cubits (26:8, 16). This would be approximately 15 X 45 feet. Note that the tent was three times longer than wide. A copy of the tabernacle plan will be included at the end of this lesson.

4. **The Superstructure, 26:1-37.** The superstructure of the tabernacle was composed of three parts: the curtains, the boards, and the veils. There were ten curtains of fine linen. These curtains were blue, purple, and scarlet with cherubim woven into the fabric (26:1-14). These curtains served as an inner lining and were themselves covered with goat's hair curtains (26:7-11). Over both of these was placed a covering made of ram's skins and badger skins (26:14). A wooden frame made of boards of acacia wood overlaid with gold was used to support the curtains. In addition, the tent was divided into two sections by veils which were hung across the breadth of the tent (26:31-37). The first of these divisions, from the east, was the holy place while the second and innermost was the most holy place (26:33).
5. **Furnishings.** The various articles placed in both the courtyard and the tent have special significance. Each of them is given separate attention in Exodus.
  - a. Curtains and Poles 38:9-20. The outer courtyard was enclosed by a series of curtains suspended on poles. There were six curtains that enclosed the courtyard. Five of them were white, each five cubits high and of varying lengths. One long curtain of 50 cubits made up the west end, two long curtains of 100 cubits made up the north and south sides, and two short curtains of fifteen cubits long on the east side. An opening of twenty cubits was left in the east side which was covered by the sixth curtain. This curtain was embroidered and served as the entrance. These curtains were suspended on a pole or pillar (one every 5 cubits). Each pole or pillar was covered with silver and sat on a base. Each was held in place by ropes and brass pins driven in the ground.
  - b. Altar of burnt offering, 27:1-8. This altar was the first object seen upon entering the courtyard. It was placed in the middle of the courtyard area. The altar was a square box made of acacia wood covered with bronze. The hollow box was five cubits by five cubits with a horn projecting upward from each corner. The horns were considered the most sacred part of the altar (Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30) as the blood of the sin offering was applied to them. Also, a fugitive could gain asylum by seizing the horns of the altar (1 Kgs 1:50-51).

- c. Bronze Laver, 30:17-21. Just behind the altar between the tent and the altar was a large bronze basin for ritual washing. Its actual dimensions are not given, but it must have been somewhat comparable to the altar. The priests were to wash here before entering the holy place symbolizing the need for cleansing in order to enter the presence of the Lord.
- d. Lampstand, 25:31-40. Located just inside and to the left in the holy place was the lampstand. It had seven arms each supporting a lamp (25:37) and was made of gold. It is called a menorah by the Jews. It was modeled after the almond tree and served the primary function of illuminating the holy place.
- e. Table of Shewbread, 25:23-30. On the north side of the holy place just across from the golden lamp stand was a table made of acacia wood two cubits long, one cubit wide and one-and-one-half cubits high. There were utensils of gold kept on the table (25:29). The Bread of the Presence was to be kept on this table. This bread was set out before the Lord every Sabbath arranged in two rows of six loaves each. While there is no general agreement as to their significance, it was considered holy bread. Perhaps it was a way of acknowledging God as the true provider of food.
- f. Altar of Incense, 30:1-10. Just before the veil which separated the holy place from the most holy place was an altar made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was called the altar of incense and was one cubit long, one cubit wide, and two cubits high. On this altar the priests were to burn incense each morning as a symbol of the prayers of the people.
- g. Ark of the Covenant, 25:10-22. This was considered the most important and most sacred object in the tabernacle. It was an oblong chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold two-and-one-half cubits long, one-and-one-half cubits wide, and one-and-one-half cubits high. It had gold rings in each corner into which poles were slipped and it was carried by means of these poles.

On top of the ark were two cherubim who formed the mercy seat. These two angelic beings faced each other with wings outstretched to form the seat. They were guardians of the sacred presence (Gen 3:24).

Into the ark was placed the two stone tablets of the law (25:16), a pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded (Heb 9:4-5). The ark with the mercy seat was the focal point of the tabernacle. It was here that the high priest came, once a year on the Day of Atonement, to sprinkle the blood of sacrifice and make atonement for the sins of the people (Lev 16:1-19).

The deepest significance of the ark is a matter of debate. There are those who consider the ark and the mercy seat as the earthly throne of Yahweh. It is called the footstool of God by the psalmist (Ps 99:5). Whether or not this was the original intention, it is clear that the ark eventually became associated with the idea of the throne of Yahweh (Numb 7:89; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2).

- h. Oil for the lampstand, 27:20-21. The lampstand was to burn pure olive oil (27:20). The lamps were to burn continuously, and it was the responsibility of the people to supply the needed oil. The priests were responsible for seeing that the lamps were filled and burning.
- i. Incense for the Altar, 30:24-28. The formula for the making of the incense to be burned on the altar of incense was given. It was to be composed of equal parts of various sweet spices (stacte, onycha, galbanum and frankincense).
- j. Oil of Anointing, 30:22-33. The oil to be used by the priests for anointing was also described in detail. It was to be composed of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and olive oil. Following the formula, various uses of the oil are specified.

The detail with which the structure and furnishings of the tabernacle is discussed is impressive. Nothing was left to the imagination. All of the various implements were carefully defined and described. The fact that these were given by God heightens their significance as implements of worship.

#### **Priestly Vestments, Consecration, and Priestly Duties, 28:1-29:46.**

The tabernacle was to be served by a priesthood. The priests were selected; they did not volunteer for the job. They were to wear certain garments and perform certain duties. The office was to be a mediatory one ministering on God's behalf before man and on man's behalf before God. They were to wear priestly garments as a badge of their office and as an adornment of the tabernacle. They were marked by these vestments as holy and separated for God's work (28:36).

1. **Vestments of the Priests, 28:1-5.** These verses form a general summary of the clothes worn by the priests. Most attention is given to those worn by the high priest. The priestly garments included a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a coat, a turban, and a girdle (28:4).
  1. Breastplate 28:15-30. More attention is given to the breastplate than any other single item among the priestly vestments. It was not a metal plate but a square piece of cloth which served as a pouch for the Urim and Thummim. It was to be held in place by chains of gold. On top of this breastplate were twelve stones each engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes. It was to be worn over the chest as a symbol of God's remembrance of the twelve tribes.
  2. Urim and Thummim 28:30. Closely associated with the breastplate of the Urim and Thummim. The two words literally mean "lights" (urim) and "perfections" (thummim). It is a matter of debate as to exactly what physical form these objects took. References to them and their use are limited (cf. Lev 8:8; Numb 27:21; Deut 33:8; 1 Sam 28:6; Ezek 2:63; Neh 7:65). According to Numbers 27:21, it is safe to say that one of their functions was that of determining the will of God in time of crisis.
 

Generally, it is thought that they were some means for casting sacred lots to determine the will of God. It seems that only the high priest was to use these stones. They were to be used to determine matters which could not be determined by ordinary human methods.
  3. Ephod, 28:6-14. The ephod was, at the time of the exodus, only a garment to be worn by the priest. Later, the same term was also applied to an idol (Judg 8:27) or an object consulted to learn the will of God (1 Sam 23:9-11).
  4. Girdle, 28:8, 27. The ephod was held in place by a girdle which is called a "curious girdle" in the Authorized Version. The term translated "curious girdle," probably means embroidered or woven of many colors. Rather than using a leather belt, the girdle of the ephod was made of the same material as the ephod itself.
  5. Robe of the Ephod, 28:31-35. A blue robe was woven without any seam and worn under the ephod. Along the hem at the bottom were blue, purple, and scarlet pomegranates and golden bells which jingled as the priest ministered in the tabernacle.

6. Turban, 28:36-38. A headdress of fine white linen was to be worn by the high priest. It was to be fastened in front by a golden plate on which was engraved, "Holy to the Lord" (28:36). It was to serve as a reminder that the people were set apart for service before the Lord.
7. Coat, 28:39. A coat was also to be made of fine linen. This coat was worn under the ephod and blue robe. It was to have embroidery work on it of blue, scarlet, and purple. This coat covered the undergarment of short breeches (28:42). No shoes are mentioned and due to the fact that the sanctuary was holy ground they probably wore none (Exod 3:5; Josh 5:15).

**2. Consecration of the Priests 29:1-28.** These verses present an account of the installation ceremony for the priests. Verses 1-9 are preparatory. All of the items needed are listed along with instructions for ritual washings in preparation for offering services (29:10-28). The ceremony is as follows:

1. Aaron and his sons were to be brought to the door of the tent and washed with water (29:4).
2. Aaron was to be dressed in the vestments of the high priest (29:5-6).
3. Aaron was to be anointed with the oil of anointing (29:7).
4. Aaron's sons were to wear their coats, girded with their girdles and a bonnet placed on their heads (29:7-8).
5. The office of priest shall be rewarded to them as a perpetual office (29:9).
6. A young bull was brought to Aaron before the tent. After laying hands on the bull, it was slain (29:10-11).
7. The blood of the slain animal was placed on the horns of the altar (29:12), the fat, liver, thigh, and kidneys were burned on the altar of burnt offering (29:13).
8. The flesh, skin, dung, and other inward parts were burned outside the camp as a sin offering (29:14).
9. A ram was slain after Aaron and his sons had laid hands on him (29:15).
10. The blood of the ram was sprinkled around the base of the altar (29:16).
11. The ram was cut in pieces and the whole burnt on the altar of burnt offering (29:17-18).
12. Another ram was killed after Aaron and his sons laid hands on him (29:19-20).

13. The blood of this ram was placed on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and his sons, on the thumb of their right hand, and on the big toe of their right foot. The blood was also to be sprinkled around the altar (29:20).
14. Blood was to be taken from the altar and sprinkled, along with the oil of anointing, on Aaron and his sons and their garments (29:21).
15. The fat of this second ram along with the rump, the thigh, and the two kidneys was to be given to Aaron and his sons. They were also given one loaf of bread, one of oiled bread, and one of unleavened bread. All of it was to be waved before the Lord and then offered as a burnt offering (29:22-25).
16. The breast of the ram of consecration was given to Aaron and his sons (29:26-28).
17. The holy garments of Aaron were passed on to the son who was to follow him in office. He was to wear them seven days as a period of consecration (29:29-30).
18. The ram of consecration was to be boiled (presumably the breast given 29:26-28) and eaten by Aaron and his sons (29:31-32).
19. They were also to eat any bread that was not used as an offering. If any was left, it was to be placed on the altar of sacrifice (29:33-34).
20. The ceremony was repeated for seven days and each day a bull was offered as atonement for sin (29:35-37).

This was an important and impressive ceremony. It was to emphasize the sacredness of the office and give a sense of completeness to the work of the priests.

**3. Duties of the Priests, 29:38-44; 30:1-38.** There is a major problem in any consideration of priestly duties. There is nowhere in the Old Testament a composite listing of all the duties and functions assigned to the priests and Levites. The passage here in Exodus and other passages elsewhere in the Old Testament do give a fairly good representative picture of priestly functions and responsibilities. Note the following:

1. The priests were to offer daily sacrifices on the altar of burnt offering (29:38). One was to be offered each morning and one each evening (29:39-44).
2. Aaron was to burn incense on the altar of incense before the most holy place (30:7). The incense was to be that which the priests made according to the formula given (30:34-38). No strange incense was to be offered (30:9) as may have been true in the case of Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1-3).
3. Once a year the high priest was to make atonement for the sins of the people (30:10; cf. Lev 16 for details of the Day of Atonement).

4. The priests were to collect a tax of a half shekel. This money was to be used for the upkeep of the tabernacle (30:11-16).
5. Ritual washings were also performed by the priests at the laver just behind the altar of burnt offering (30:17-21).
6. The priests were to make the oil of anointing (30:22-33). They used this oil in anointing people or things which were to be consecrated to the Lord.
7. Aaron was to light the lamps at evening (30:8). Exodus 27:20 says the lamp was to burn always. This may have meant day by day rather than twenty-four hours per day.
8. The priests were to place the shewbread on the table every Sabbath (Lev 24:5-9).
9. In addition to offering sacrifices, the priests also were to keep the fire burning on the altar of burnt offering (Lev 6:9, 13) and clear ashes away (6:10-11).
10. The priests blessed the people after the sacrifices were offered (Lev 9:22; Numb 6:23-27).
11. Certain duties were attached to feast days and special observances such as blowing of trumpets to gather the people (Lev 23:24).
12. Inspection of unclean animals or unclean persons was the responsibility of the priests (Numb 6:22ff).
13. In cases of adultery, the priests could mediate between the parties involved (Numb 5:5-31).
14. The priests were to examine and approve anything which was dedicated for use in the tabernacle (Lev 27:2ff).
15. The priests were initially the ones who were to give instruction in matters of the law and act as a court of appeals in difficult cases (Deut 17:8-13).
16. The priests were to give encouragement to the people as the men went to battle. War was considered holy war (Deut 20:1-20).

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but only suggestive of the various duties performed by the priests. They were responsible for the mediation of worship and enforcement of principles of the covenant.

### **Significance of the Tabernacle and Priesthood**

The consideration which we shall give to the tabernacle and the priesthood will be twofold in its thrust. We shall first attempt to define what these institutions meant in the context of the Old Testament and the time of Moses. Next, we shall attempt to define their Christological implications. In the context of the New Testament revelation of Christ, we shall attempt to define the place and significance of the tabernacle and priesthood.

**The Tabernacle and the Old Testament.** In the period of the exodus from Egypt and the wilderness, the tabernacle performed a vital function. It was the visible sign of the written covenant. It was the visible reminder of the invisible God. The following is an attempt to list some of the significant ideas which the tabernacle communicated to the people of Israel. Why was the tabernacle necessary or important? The answer to this question deserves serious attention. Note the following:

1. It was the dwelling place of God and meeting place of the people (Exod 25:18; 29:43-46; 40:34-37). It was important for the people to know that the Lord God who met Israel at Sinai would not be left behind but would accompany Israel wherever they went.
2. As a visible center for worship, it became a bulwark against idol worship. This was an important function in light of the prohibition of images (Exod 20:4-6). The tabernacle was a visible object for the Hebrews. Although it was not an object to be worshipped, its function was to call them to the worship of Yahweh (Exod 29:43-46).
3. The tabernacle, with the sanctuary and the ark, was a symbol of God's special presence. This came to be known as the shekinah in the Targums. It was the special glow of God's presence that filled the most holy place.
4. The tabernacle also provided a portable worship center for the nomadic community. They could not use a permanent worship center without being tied to a certain location. God wanted this permanent place reserved for the land of promise.
5. Everything in the tabernacle centered around the most holy place. All of its fixtures and rituals were designed to point men to God. The use of metals such as gold, silver, and bronze were carefully graded in terms of proximity to the most holy place. There was also a gradation of cloth quality and color.
6. The tabernacle was laid out on an east-west axis with the front facing east, the position of honor.
7. The tabernacle was to be a visible reminder that God not only dwells among men but that he is accessible to men. God may be approached if man meets the standards which God sets up (Exod 25:8; 29:45-46).
8. The tabernacle was also the place where man was to meet God. Therefore, it stood as a testimony to the fact that God demands worship and service. God promised to be the God of the Hebrews, but He also demanded that they should be His people (Lev 26:12-13).
9. The tabernacle was built according to God's plan. Nothing was left to man's imagination regarding materials and construction. So every detail was to reflect one divine will (35:1, 4, 10).

10. As the repository for the ark, the tabernacle was to form continuity between God's past revelation of His will and His continual revelation through the tabernacle. It was there that He would continue to meet with the people (Exod 29:42-46).
11. The structure of the tabernacle, with its courtyard and divisions, gave visible testimony to the holiness of God. The high priest bore the inscription "Holy to the Lord" (28:36). The priests were warned against improper administration of their office (30:21). Everything used in service to God must be holy (30: 32-37).
12. The tabernacle would serve as a reminder to observe the Sabbath. The first account of the tabernacle closes with the commandment to observe the Sabbath (31:12ff) and the second account of the tabernacle opens with the command (35:1ff).
13. The incident of the golden calf located as it is, between the two sections on the tabernacle, makes an important point. God will never accept perverted forms of worship. The alternative to true worship is set forth as a threat which will destroy the nation. In spite of man's sin, the construction of the tabernacle and God's coming in glory (40:34-38) assured Israel of God's forgiveness and His presence.
14. The smoke and fire on the altar were reminiscent of the pillar of cloud and of fire that was their guide. The cloud remained with the tent during the wilderness days as such a reminder (40:34-38). Perhaps after the wilderness days, the smoke and fire continued to remind Israel of God's guidance.
15. The divine presence and the ministrations of the priests along with the furnishings formed a perfect blend of sacred and secular. It was a manmade dwelling to house the divine presence.
16. Perhaps the greatest purpose of all which the tabernacle served was that of being the physical symbol of the Mosaic covenant. The relationship of Sinai and the tabernacle is expressed as Moses enters the cloud to receive the covenant (Exod 24:15-18), and then the cloud settles over the tabernacle (40:34-38).

There are other aspects of the tabernacle in its relationship to the people which may be discerned from the Book of Exodus. The above list seems sufficient to make the point that it played a most significant role in Hebrew life and worship.

**Priesthood and the Covenant.** The priests were mediators of the covenant. We have already defined the duties of the priests. The significance of these duties lies in their relationship to the covenant and their role as mediators of the covenant. Every duty performed was to be a reminder of one or more aspects of the covenant. Daily sacrifices were designed to mediate for sin and keep the covenant in force. The washings reminded the priests and all Israel of the need for personal

purity. The lampstand was to be kept burning as a reminder that the light of God's truth must be nurtured and cared for. The tabernacle tax was testimony of man's responsibility to the house of God regarding material things. Acts of anointing were testimony of God's selection and sanctification of both people and object for His use. Blessings from the priests were reminders of the blessings of God.

Administration of special feast days was opportunity to remember the past blessings and dedicate one's self to God for the future. The responsibility for instruction in matters of the covenant and law was to show the people that the standards were perpetual--- forever (see p. 77 for other priestly duties).

One other matter of importance is the stipulation in Exodus 19:5-6 where God declared His intention that Israel become a "kingdom of priests". If this be true, then the office of priest was not only mediatory for God but also was to be a pattern for the people that all might become mediators of the covenant to the world. It is in this responsibility that the Hebrew nation failed most miserably. It is to this responsibility that the New Testament church is called. 1 Peter 2:9-10 says,

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

The most outstanding commentary of the sacrificial system, the tabernacle, and the priesthood is the New Testament Book of Hebrews. Chapters five through eight define the order of the priests and set forth Christ as the perfect high priest.

Thus, the priest was to be one through whom a person could approach God. He was also to be one through whom a person could understand and interpret the Word. In early Israel, he was the main line of communication between man and God.

### **Christ, the Tabernacle, and the Priesthood**

It is appropriate once again to observe that this is an area which calls for a balanced approach to interpreting the symbols of the tabernacle and priesthood. There are certain aspects of application that the Bible makes for us. There are other aspects of these two institutions which are obvious in their application to Christ. One should guard against the temptation of picking up the less than obvious details and trying to force them into a Christological mold; that is, taking some small detail and trying to find some aspect or quality in the life and character of Jesus that can be attached to it. Remember that the Bible itself calls these types of Christ "shadows" or dim fore gleams of a coming reality.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ (Col 2:16-17).

Also, after discussing Moses and the Hebrews in the wilderness the Bible says,

Now these things were our examples (*typos*) to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted (1 Cor 10:6).

Now all these things happened unto them for examples (*typos*): and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come (1 Cor 10:11).

The word translated example (*typos*) is the word from which we get "type". It means an "image" or an "impression" like those struck on the face of a metal coin. It is only a vague representation of the real person or object. The tabernacle and the priesthood were just such "types" of Christ.

The following offers some of the more obvious reflections of Christ seen in the tabernacle and the office of priest.

1. The tabernacle itself represents Christ. The New Testament makes this application in John 1:14, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt (literally tabernacled) among us . . ." In the days of Moses, the word became goat's hair, badger skins, ram skins, linen, gold, silver, bronze, wood, etc., and dwelt among men. It was a dim view of the coming full splendor of God in flesh—Christ.
2. The tabernacle was conceived in the mind of God and its construction inspired by the Spirit (Exod 31:3). Jesus was the perfect representation of the mind and will of the Father (John 14:9; 17:22) and was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35).
3. The altar of sacrifice speaks of Christ, our lamb of sacrifice (1 Pet 1:19).
4. The laver reminds us of man's need of cleansing. The need is fulfilled by Christ. He provides the water of life (John 4:10ff) and His own blood for our cleansing (Rev 7:14).
5. The blood poured out on the altar prefigures Jesus' blood poured out for us on Calvary.
6. The lampstand represents Christ, the light of the world (John 8:12).
7. The table of shewbread represents Christ, the bread of life (John 6:48).
8. The altar of incense represents the intercessory work of Christ (Heb7:25).

9. The ark represents Christ as the embodiment of the law (Matt 5:17) and the physical embodiment of the Father (John 14:9-10).
10. The office of the high priest represents the high priestly work of Christ (Heb 5:1-10; 8:1-5; 9:1-29).
11. The death of Christ ratified the new covenant as the death of the sacrifice ratified the old (Heb 9:15-28).
12. Christ was to give us hope of better things to come even as the tabernacle and the priesthood gave men hope of Christ (Heb 10:1ff).

These represent some of the more obvious applications which ought to be made concerning Christ in the tabernacle and the priesthood. A careful reading of the Book of Hebrews as an aid in this area would greatly enhance one's study of the Book of Exodus.

The writer of Hebrews makes clear the applications of the types or images as they should be applied. As he says:

It is therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands; which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God for us... (Heb 9:23-24).

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect . . . For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins . . . Then he said, Lo I come to do your will, O God. He takes away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb 10:1, 4, 9, 10).

The essence of the significance of the writer of Hebrews' attention to these applications has been stated well by Brevard Childs.

At first one might have thought that the terminology of earthly patterns of a heavenly reality would have little need for a future dimension. Yet it is again evident that the New Testament writer does not move in a timeless world of shadows and forms. The 'true form' is that which is yet to come (10:1). Christ sits down at the right hand of God to await the final victory. The old forms must be

replaced by a new age which is different in kind (9:8ff). Thus the people of the new covenant need endurance to live by hope in the promise of a heavenly home which the Old Testament saints only greeted from afar (11:3).

### **Conclusion**

Although the Hebrews were forbidden the use of images and idols they were given a beautiful and most impressive physical embodiment of the law. The tabernacle in its form, structure, and composition pointed men to God. Furthermore it served as a constant reminder of God's initiative in redemption and in maintaining His covenant with Israel.

The priesthood with its most impressive ceremonies was God's invitation for man to participate with Him in the maintenance of the covenant. The ultimate realization of the goal of the covenant was not to be realized through these dim images. The God who made the covenant and gave the tabernacle and the priesthood also had a perfect plan for the future. The road which led from Egypt was another step along the road of redemption. It was another phase of the expedition whose ultimate end would be an eternal kingdom. The expedition into the wilderness and on to the land of promise was a clarion call to walk with God on an even nobler expedition—the expedition into eternity.