

# THE TABERNACLE OF OLD.



The Tabernacle when set up in the wilderness became the centre of the many thousands of Israel, and the meeting-place between Jehovah and His redeemed people (Exod. xxix. 42-46). *In* it God dwelt, and *out* of it He addressed His people in strains of richest grace (Lev. i. 1). It is several times termed "the Tabernacle of Witness," as eloquent in its testimony of heavenly and "better things to come."

The Tabernacle was erected, and set up in the wilderness on the first day of the first month of the second year of the deliverance from Egypt (Exod. xl. 2. Its flooring was the *sand* of the desert (Num. v. 17), unlike that of the Temple, which was of pure *gold* (1 Kings vi. 30). What mattered it whether sand or gold formed the floor of God's house? It was *His* presence which made the sacred enclosure all glorious and holy; which made it the most sacred and blessed spot on earth, for the glory of Jehovah *filled* it, and the majesty of Jehovah abode *thereon* (Exod. xl. 34).

When the Tabernacle was finished the glory of Jehovah so filled the sacred enclosure that Moses the Mediator could not enter (Exod. xl. 35). On the completion of the Temple the glory filled the house "so that the priests could not stand to minister" (1 Kings viii. 10, 11). When the new and spiritual house composed of *living* stones was formed, then the Spirit of God occupied it, with the result that every heart was stirred, and every tongue became eloquent in expressing the wonderful works of God (Acts ii.).

## DESCRIPTIVE OUTLINE OF THE TABERNACLE.

The Court in which the Tabernacle stood was 100 cubits—the cubit about 18 inches, see Josephus and other Jewish authorities—or 150 feet in length, and 50 cubits, or 75 feet in breadth. Its floor was the sand of the desert; its roof the heavens. There were 20 pillars on the north side, 20 pillars south, 10 pillars west, and 10 pillars east. In all 60 pillars. On the north and south sides of the Court, 100 cubits of fine twined linen were suspended on either side of these pillars. The pillars were five cubits apart, and rested on sockets of brass, while silver rods between the pillars and silver hooks secured the hangings of the Court. These Shittim wood pillars were five cubits high. On the back or west end, the pillars and linen with their sockets, fillets, and hooks were similarly arranged.

The only door into the Court was on the east side. The gate of the Court was 30 feet wide, and it, too, was of fine twined linen, the same material as the hangings all round the Court, but in the gate the colours blue, purple, and scarlet, were wrought into the texture of the linen. *Blue* (Christ from heaven), *purple* (Christ in suffering and death), *scarlet* (Christ inheriting the world's glory). *Linen* (Christ in His holy life down here).

Inside, and between the gate of the Court, and the door of the Tabernacle, stood the Brazen Altar and the Brazen Laver. The individual Israelite would learn, as he stood at the Altar and looked upon the blood on its horns, that his sins were forgiven and he himself accepted by God. Then the need of daily cleansing, of practical holiness, was taught him in the use of the Brazen Laver. Christ is both the Altar and the Laver; first the Altar, then the Laver.

The floor of the Tabernacle, as of the Court, was of sand. The floor of the Temple was gold. We enter into the Tabernacle, which was made of Shittim wood and covered with gold. Each board rested on two sockets

of silver, and was 10 cubits or 15 feet high. The door was 10 cubits in breadth, of pure linen, with the colours blue, purple, and scarlet wrought into it in needlework; it rested on five pillars, each resting on a socket of brass

The Tabernacle was 30 cubits in length and 10 cubits in breadth. It was divided by the beautiful Veil into two unequal-sized apartments. The Holy Place, the scene of *daily* ministrations (Heb. ix. 2), was 20 cubits in length and 10 in breadth. The Holiest of all only entered *once* yearly (Heb. ix. 3), was a square apartment 10 cubits by 10 cubits—fifteen feet by fifteen.

In the Holy Place in front of the Veil stood the Golden Altar, on which incense was burned morning and evening. On the south side, or left hand, stood the seven-branched golden Candlestick, lit in the evening and dressed in the morning. It threw its light on the beautiful shaft (Christ on high), and also on the Table of Shewbread exactly opposite—on the north side; thus *light* and *nourishment*. Those three were the only vessels in the Holy Place. Then the beautiful Veil is a beautiful type of Christ—unrent, the Person; rent, His death. The Veil was rent, and we draw near to the Throne, which was the Ark and its Mercy-seat. The former (the Ark) signifying the presence of God; the latter (the Mercy-seat), blood stained, the righteous ground on which God can meet any sinner, however vile.

Over the Tabernacle were thrown ten curtains of beautiful linen, wrought in colours and with cherubim, this latter signifying that the government of this world is in the hands of Jesus, Son of God. Over these were thrown curtains of goats' hair, and an additional one to hang down at the front doubled up—Christ's severe separation from sin, *not* from sinners. These again were covered by rams skins dyed red—Christ's devotedness, even to death; over these badgers' skins—Christ in His repelling evil without thus preserving all within.

The Tabernacle in its various parts, is a type of the heavens, whilst its vessels, materials, boards, etc., all point to Him—every whit of it uttereth His glory.

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### THE FREE WILL OFFERINGS OF THE PEOPLE.

(EXOD. xxv. 3.—7.)

“This is the offering which ye shall take of them:—

Gold	}	of <i>metals</i> .
Silver		
Brass		

Blue	}	of <i>colours</i> .
Purple		
Scarlet		

Fine Linen	}	of <i>fabrics</i> .
Goats' Hair		

Rams' skins dyed red	}	of <i>coverings</i> .
Badgers' skins		

Shittim wood—the *only wood named*.

Oil	}	<i>for anointing and incense</i> .
Spices		

Onyx Stones            *the Onyx alone named;*

Stones                *many other stones—twelve at least.*

The combined value of the foregoing offerings has been roughly estimated at £250,000—probably much more.

The materials so freely offered by the people are enumerated in Exodus, chap. xxv. 3-7, and are again named exactly in the same order in chap. xxxv. 5-9, when the work was about to commence.

## THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICATION OF THE OFFERINGS.

Israel left Egypt a wealthy people. Its gold, silver, jewels, precious stones, rich and varied stores of raiment were poured in profusion into the lap of the departing people; while of course their numerous flocks and herds accompanied them into the wilderness (Exod. xi. 2,\* 3); xii. 32, 36). Israel spoiled the Egyptians.

In considering the typical import of these things we must avoid dogmatism. The spiritual signification of the materials employed in the construction of the Tabernacle must appeal to minds taught of God. We cannot enforce *all* these teachings with a "thus saith the Lord," but surely much and real instruction is gained by those whose spiritual instincts are wisely used (Heb. v. 14).

The leading lines of truth are developed clearly enough in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Our spiritual understanding must fill in many of the details in this delightful branch of study; but these details must be in moral keeping with the general line of truth as unfolded in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

*Gold.*—Christ in His Divine Nature. Essential Glory and Divine Righteousness. Christ the Eternal Son in the Divine glory and dignity of His Person.

*Silver.*—Christ effecting Atonement and Redemption in the power and value of His own blood: see for Atonement, Exod. xxx. 12-16; for Redemption, Num. xviii. 16. It was the *Atonement* money that was used in the building of the Tabernacle—not the Redemption silver as is generally, but erroneously stated.

*Brass*, or native copper. Christ bearing the judgment of sin—endurance and stability. His ability, because God, to bear the cross. *Gold* signifies Righteousness in

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\* "Borrow" literally to ASK OR DEMAND.

the presence of God. *Brass*, Righteousness in judgment measured out according to failed human responsibility.

The colours were blue, purple, and scarlet which occur in this combination and order, about 28 times in the Book of Exodus.

*Blue*—*Christ the heavenly One on earth* (1 Cor. xv. 47-48; John i. 18). The nature of the Son as heavenly and Divine is inscrutable to all—only the Father knows Him (Matt. xi. 27).

*Purple*.—*Christ in humiliation and death*; see Num. iv. 13, for the meaning here given.

*Scarlet*.—*Christ invested with the insignia of earth's glory*; see Rev. xi. 15; Dan. vii. 14. Human glory.

The textile fabrics were fine linen and goats' hair.

*Fine Linen*.—Christ in spotless purity—practical righteousness, as exhibited by Christ in all His life and in all its detail, hence the challenge of the Righteous One "Which of you convinceth Me of sin"? (John viii. 46; see also Ps. xvii.

*Goats' Hair*.—Christ in prophetic character, and in practical separation from all evil—without and within.

The coverings over all were rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins. Thus the order was as follows: first, set of fine linen curtains; second, set of goats' hair curtains; third, a covering of rams' skins dyed red; fourth, over all a covering of badgers' skins. Two curtains and two coverings.

*Rams' Skins dyed Red*.—Christ's devotedness to God even unto death. The ram was the consecration animal (Exod. xxix. 27). The skin of the *sin* offering was

burned outside the camp (Lev. iv. 11, 12; Exod. xxix. 14). The skin of the *burnt* offering was given to the officiating priest (Lev. vii. 8). These rams' skins dyed red, told of absolute surrender to God, even to the death of the cross.

*Badgers' Skins.*—Christ in the absolute holiness of His Person and life repelling every form of outward evil. To the natural eye and mind “no form nor comeliness.”

The only wood referred to in the construction of the Tabernacle is the Shittim. There are four kinds specified in the building of Solomon's Temple, namely, the cedar, fir, algum, and olive. In Ezekiel's Temple the palm tree, emblematic of *rest* and *victory*, is the only wood named, and we may add, that neither gold, silver, nor brass are referred to in the millennial Temple of the prophet of the captivity, i.e., Ezekiel.

*Shittim Wood.*—Christ in the incorruptibility of His human nature. In Him there was neither taint nor corruption nor sin. “That HOLY THING which shall be born of thee (the virgin) shall be called the Son of God” (Luke i. 35).

Oil, and spices, these latter were four in number (Exod. xxx. 34), answering to the four-fold description of Christ in the Gospels, i.e., the King, the Servant, the Man, the Son and Lamb of God, setting forth the moral beauties and perfections of Christ.

*Oil for the Light.*—Christ the light of the world in the power of the Holy Ghost. The light is Christ; the oil is the Spirit.

*Spices for Anointing Oil.*—Christ in moral grace and beauty witnessed to by the Spirit.

*Spices for Sweet Incense.*—Christ in varied moral beauties and perfections displayed in His life here below, now filling heaven with fragrance. Christ in combined Divine and human perfection.

The only stone specially named is the Onyx, but other precious stones were abundantly supplied, though not here specified. Onyx stones and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.”

*Onyx Stones.*—Christ in many and varied excellencies.

*Stones for the Ephod and Breastplate.*—Christ in the many and diversified moral glories of His Person and ways manifested on behalf of His saints, and in which they appear before God.

#### PROMINENT VESSELS OF THE TABERNACLE.

1. *ARK made of shittim wood, and covered all over with gold inside and outside, surmounted with a golden crown, and with its rings and staves*—Highest type of Christ; in the twofold glory of His Person as *man* (shittim wood), as *Divine* (gold), and now crowned with glory and honour, and His perfect adaptation to all our wilderness circumstances (the rings and staves).
2. *ALTAR of incense, or Golden Altar, made of shittim wood, and overlaid with pure gold, with its rings and staves, and surrounded with a golden crown.*—Christ the holy meeting-place between God and the saint in respect to worship. By Him we offer the sacrifice of praise to God (Heb. xiii. 15). Crowned on high (Heb. ii. 9) and seated in the highest place (Heb. viii. 1), He presents the merits of His own glorious Person and the infinite perfection of his own accomplished sacrifice before the face of God, and

that too for us, who *there* act as kings and priests to God (Rev. i. 6). In yonder Man, "Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," the heart rests, in Him the affections delight; on Him we feed, and find present, full, and eternal satisfaction. As we gaze on Him, the heart is filled with worship, and we fill the holy place with songs of praise to Him Who loves *us* and washed *us* from our sins in His own blood.

3. ALTAR of judgment or Brazen Altar, made of shittim wood and overlaid with brass (copper) with its rings and staves, grating, etc.—Christ the righteous meeting between God and the sinner in respect of sin. Christ on the cross measuring the distance and the responsibility of the sinner to God. There our need as sinners is fully met, and our guilty conscience perfectly satisfied. The *golden* altar in the holy place is the expression of our nearness to God as happy saints; the *brazen* altar in the court is the expression of distance from God by sin, and of judgment due to the sinner.
4. BREASTPLATE of judgment, made of gold (divine), blue (heavenly), purple (suffering), scarlet (earthly glory), and of fine-twined linen (spotless humanity), with stones engraved (reflections of the glories of Christ), and set in the breastplate in gold enclosing (Divine security).
5. CHERUBIM (plural) made out of the same piece of gold as the mercy-seat or lid of the ark, one on either end covering it with outstretched wings—Divine attributes judicially displayed, or the moral supports of Jehovah's throne, as "justice and judgment." (Ps. lxxxix. 14.)
6. CANDLESTICK of pure gold, with beautifully carved shaft, and with its branches, bowls, knops, and flowers—The Holy Spirit's perfect display of Christ

in the exquisite and variegated glories of His Person, as the wondrous light of a heavenly people.

7. GOLDEN BELLS AND POMEGRANATES, *of blue, purple, and scarlet, hung alternately round the hem of the blue robe of the ephod worn by the High Priest in the presence of God*—The “golden bells” set forth the testimony of the Holy Ghost to us, as to the acceptance of Christ in all that He is, as now within the veil. The “golden pomegranates” set forth the fruit Christ has gathered out of this scene, and which He now presents to God in all the glorious efficacy of His Person. The “bells” are testimony to us; the “pomegranates” are fruit to God.
8. LAVER *of brass, with its foot also of brass and filled with water*—The ability of Christ in meeting His people’s defilement, so as to keep them practically clean for priestly service and priestly worship. The water figures the Word of God (Eph. v. 26) as constantly applied to our walk, ways, words, thoughts, and actions.
9. MERCY SEAT *of pure gold; the golden cover of the ark*—On this, and between the Cherubim, rested the cloud—symbol of Jehovah’s presence. It was on the mercy seat, and thus before the eye of God, that the high priest sprinkled the blood *once* on the yearly atonement day, and *before* it seven times, as giving us a standing in the Divine presence. The mercy seat was also the trysting-place between God enthroned in Divine majesty and the people represented by the high priest, who entered with incense and blood. Christ is our mercy seat (Rom. iii. 25).
10. TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD, *made of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold, surrounded with a golden crown, and shew-bread set before the Lord alway*—Christ, now crowned with glory and honour in the double glory of His Person as Divine and Human, is the

*table*; and Christ too the food set thereon, and all this He ever is before our God. He is our *light*—the candlestick; our *food*—the bread; and our *object* in worship—the Golden Altar: all these stood in the holy place. Is not Christ everything in these shadows?

11. VEIL of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine-twined linen, with Cherubim.—We know from Hebrews, chap. x. 20, that the veil represents “*His flesh.*” His varied glories and judicial and governmental attributes all centre in Him, Who is the *man* Christ Jesus.

#### THE PRESENCE AND GLORY OF JEHOVAH.

The glory of Jehovah filled the Tabernacle. Exod. xl. 34-38.

The glory of Jehovah filled the Temple. 1 Kings viii. 10-11.

The glory of Jehovah will occupy the Millennial Temple. Ezek. xliii. 1-5.

“To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages. World without end. Amen.”



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