

## **The Old Testament Tabernacle : Lesson #5**

### **The Altar of Incense, The Vail, and The Ark of the Covenant**

In the previous lesson we entered into the tabernacle of the congregation and looked at two items in the Holy Place. On the right side of the Holy Place which would also be the north side we saw the Table of Shewbread which represented the Lord Jesus Christ and also the Word of God. To the left across from the table on the south side of the Holy Place we saw the Golden Candlestick which was a type of the Holy Ghost.

In this lesson we are going to look at the last 3 items, the Altar of Incense, the Vail, and the Ark of the Covenant. We will not spend much time on the Vail because it will be discussed more in the last lesson which will be on the Day of Atonement.

#### **The Altar of Incense : (Exodus 30:1-10)**

The Altar of Incense was to be made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold just as the Table of Shewbread. The dimensions for it are given in verse 2, they are 1 cubit long, and 1 cubit wide. The height of it was 2 cubits. It was to have a crown just as the Table of Shewbread. It had rings on the side with staves of wood covered in gold which were used to transport it. The Altar of Incense also had a removable censer which was carried into the Most Holy Place by the High Priest (Hebrews 9:3-4).

#### **Some types we see in the Altar of Incense :**

The altar of Incense represents prayer (Psalms 141:2 ; Luke 1:9-10 ; Revelation 5:8 & 8:4). This is very fitting because inside the tabernacle of the congregation before getting to God we see a type of the word of God (Table of Shewbread), a type of the Holy Ghost (Golden Candlestick), and now a type of prayer. These are the 3 essential things in getting to God and being fruitful in regards to the things of God.

The coals to light the Altar of Incense were to come from the Brazen Altar (Leviticus 16:12). If they came from anywhere else they were called strange fire and God killed two people for offering strange fire on the Altar (Leviticus 10:1-2). This shows us that true intercessory prayer is connected with a sacrifice that takes care of our sin. As a result of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ we have the right to go before the throne of grace and get help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16). Remember also that it is in the name of Jesus that we pray.

The Holy Spirit is said to help us pray (Romans 8:26). Therefore we see that the Golden Candlestick lights both the Table of Shewbread and the Altar of Incense. So not only does the Holy Spirit help us with the word of God but it also helps us with our prayers.

#### **The Vail : (Exodus 26:31-35)**

The Vail was to be made from 4 different colors, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen. It was also to have cherubims on it. It was to hang on 4 pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold and it was to have 4 sockets of silver. It divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

The Vail is a type of the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ (**Hebrews 10:19-20**). Just as his flesh was torn so that we could come to God and be saved, God tore the Vail in the temple from top to bottom after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (**Matthew 27:51**).

Note the four colors and the four pillars these are connected with the 4 fold representation of the Lord Jesus Christ given to us in the 4 gospels. Matthew presents the Lord Jesus Christ as King, Mark presents him as Servant, Luke presents him as Son of Man, and John presents him as Son of God.

### **The Ark of the Covenant : (Exodus 25:10-22)**

Upon entering into the Most Holy Place which is just behind the Vail that is where the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat were located. This is where God would come and dwell between the cherubims that were on top of the mercy seat. The High priest was the only one to come into the Most Holy Place and he had to have blood with him when he came.

The Ark was to me made from shittim wood and covered with gold on the outside and the inside. It was 2.5 cubits long, 1.5 cubits wide, and 1.5 cubits tall. It had rings on the sides with staves overlaid with gold through them and they were not to be taken out. The Mercy Seat was made of pure gold and place on top of the Ark. Two cherubs were made of Gold and placed on top the mercy seat and their wings spread forth as they faced one another and they covered the mercy seat. The Lord was to meet with them and commune with them from above the mercy seat.

### **Some important things about the Ark of the Covenant :**

The Ark of the Covenant represents the presence and power of God. This is where he met with Israel. And everywhere they journeyed they followed the ark. Where we have the presence of God we also have the power of God. This is why people have been searching for the Ark of the Covenant since these days. Also with the Ark came many blessing sometimes (**2 Samuel 6:11**) and remember the gods of the Philistines could not stand before the Ark (**1 Samuel 5:1-12**).

It is important to note that even though the cherubs were on the ark there was no image of God anywhere to worship. This is why all other religions have some kind of image to worship.

The dimensions are also important to note because the mercy seat which sat on the top of the Ark would have been at a height of 1.5 cubits. The grate work of brass that was hung in the middle of the Brazen Altar was also 1.5 cubits high (the Brazen A.tar was 3 cubits tall and the grate work was hung in the middle of the Brazen Altar). This means that the sacrifice and the mercy seat were at the same level.

According to **Hebrews 9:4** there were three things that would be put into the Ark of the Covenant, and they were the Pot of Manna, the Tables of the Covenant, and Aaron's rod that budded. This shows us that God will provide our needs and that because of the law that put man under a curse because he can't live it we need a resurrected High Priest which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ to take care of our sin.

