

## INDWELLING OF GOD SERIES

### THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES

*"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are." (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)*

*"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)*

*"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Exodus 25:8)*

*"In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:22)*

The tabernacle of Moses was divided into three sections, and they illustrate how we can enter into an ever increasing indwelling of God in our lives. We will describe seven objects in the Tabernacle, which points to the seven-fold presence of Jesus in our lives.

#### 1. The Outer Court

The Outer Court was surrounded by white linen, which was more than eight feet tall. There is only one entrance thirty feet wide, which only Levites and priests can enter. The people can only watch the proceedings from outside. In this Outer Court, there were two sacred objects, the "bronze altar," or altar of burnt offering; and the "laver," or washbowl. The bronze altar is where they slaughter the animal sacrifices, and the blood is shed every morning and every evening as a sacrifice to God. There will be smoke and incense going forth as well. The bronze altar points to Jesus who would be that Sacrifice whose Blood would be shed for the forgiveness of sins. . That is the first thing you would see at the entrance of the tabernacle of Moses as you move into the entrance. After this, you would see just

before the veil the laver or washbowl where water is contained in it. The parts of the animals, the entrails and the feet of the animals are washed inside the laver. The entrails represent sin and feet represent sins. Both entrails and feet are dealt with at the laver. The laver represents Jesus the Word of God. Symbolically, this conveys us the powerful truth that both the sin nature (represented by the entrails) and the acts of sin (represented by the feet of the animals) can only be renewed and washed and transformed by much meditation and reading of the Word of God.

## 2. The Holy Place

The tabernacle proper was a rectangular tent forty feet long by fifteen feet wide. There were two chambers inside this tent. Only the priests were allowed into this Holy Place in order to conduct their ministry of worship to God. The Holy Place contained three pieces of furniture: the table with the consecrated bread, the lampstand, and the altar of incense which faced the thick curtain separating the Holy Place from the second chamber, the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies. The lampstand would light up the Holy Place, and points to Jesus the Light of the World. The altar of incense is where incense is burnt to release aroma to the Holy Place.

## 3. The Holy of Holies

And as you enter into the second veil, you would see the Holy of Holies where the ark of God dwells. The Holy of Holies was the smallest but most sacred tabernacle. Only the High Priest enters in the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement. The Ark of the Covenant has a covering called the mercy seat, and two cherubim carved in gold. Here the glory of God was revealed in visible form, the *Shekinah*. The presence of God became visible in the shape of a brightly lit cloud, appearing over the blood poured over the mercy seat and the cherubim of glory. There is no need for light in the Holy of Holies because God is the light there.

Putting the seven objects or instruments together, we get a composite picture of the sevenfold presence of Jesus in our lives. Increasing our contact with these seven fold aspects of Jesus would increase the indwelling of God in our lives.

First, the bronze altar points to Jesus the Lamb of God, whose Blood takes away the sins of the world. Exodus 38:1-2 *They built the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood; five cubits was its length and five cubits its width – it was square – and its height was three cubits. He made its horn on its four corners; the horns were of one piece with it. And he overlaid the altar with bronze.*

I want you to look at the utensils in verse 3, *He made all the utensils for the altars: the pans, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the fire pans; all its utensils he made of bronze.*

There are pans to carry the ashes. There are shovels to remove the ashes from the altar. There are basins to carry the blood. There are forks to lift animals to be sacrificed. There are fire pans to take the fire into the Holy Place. The fire that is to light the Holy Place and the incense must come from the brazen altar. If you offer any other fire, it is not acceptable to God. It is called strange fire. There were two guys who died in the Old Testament because of that - Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu. God required that the fire must come from the brazen altar. He wants the fire that comes from the consecration of your life.

All the various instruments speak of something. The pans that are used for carrying ashes away from the tabernacle represent the carrying of our sins away. And the shovels are to dig the ashes out - that is God dealing with our sin nature. Then we have the basins to carry the blood. The forks to lift up the animals to be sacrificed. The forks are attached to the flesh of the body, representing the putting to death the things of the flesh and the consecration of the body. The fire pans represent the carrying of the fire of the Holy Spirit that comes to purify our flesh life. So there are five utensils. Five is the number of grace. Each instrument represents an aspect of the work of Jesus. The brazen altar represents the power of the Blood of Jesus.

Second, the laver points to Jesus the Word of God. Let's see our experience of God from the meaning of the laver. The laver represents the power of the Word. As far as the laver is concerned, there is no dimension. You can't limit the Word of God. God has exalted His Word above His name Ps. 138. So, His Word will never pass away. Even heaven itself will pass away but the Word of God will never pass away. If you notice in Lev. 1:9 there are two parts of the animal sacrifice that will be washed in the laver, the entrails and the legs. The entrails represent sin nature. The legs represent sin contracted in the world. So, you will notice that the two pieces of instruments deal with the power of sin and sin in your life. The laver represents the power of the Word. Incidentally, it was made from the ladies bronze mirror. They don't have mirrors like ours. So they polish the metal until it shine and they use that as a mirror. The laver was made from the bronze mirror of the ladies. The Word is the mirror. James illustrated the Word to be a mirror of God where we behold ourselves in the Word and we know how much we need to be changed and to conform to God.

Third, the table of consecrated bread points to Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Then you will see the showbread. The showbread has two moldings.

The word *moldings* is from the Hebrew word *nerzer* which means, "crown." So there are two crowns. Jesus was crowned twice. The crown of thorns and the crown of God where He is exalted King of Kings and Lord of Lords. So, He was crowned Son of Man and Son of God. We have twelve loaves. The number twelve represents the number of government. In heaven, there are twenty-four elders. We talk about twelve apostles. It is the number of government. This is why we see here it has to do with Jesus Christ's government and kingship. The showbread represents the power of the name of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, the lampstand points to Jesus the Light of the World.

Fifth, the altar of incense which points to Jesus, our High Priest and Intercessor. We have the altar of incense. The altar of incense is the tallest piece of furniture, yet the tiniest, smallest in size. And incense is offered every day to God. It represents the power of praise and worship that is constantly offered onto God.

What Aaron must do when he enters into the Holy of Holies is recorded for us in **Leviticus 16:12-13**: *"Then he shall take a censor full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, then the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony lest he die.*

Aaron must put the incense on the fire before the Lord that the cloud of incense may cover the Mercy Seat that is on the Testimony lest he die. What does this mean? Sometimes people have the impression is that all he does is to enter with the blood. Let me emphasize that the blood is insufficient. You need blood plus something else. Verse 12 he emphasizes this. That he must take incense in his hand and censor. And as he enters into the Most Holy Place, he must quickly put the incense on the censor. As the smoke comes out all over and the incense covers him, he takes the blood, puts it on the Mercy Seat, and come out quickly. Because Lev. 16:13 tells us that unless he does that he will die. We all realize that the High Priest goes there only once a year into the Most Holy Place. On the Day of Atonement, he must sacrifice an offering for himself. And he must take the blood of the lamb for the Israelites. And as he takes it in the blood was not sufficient. So Lev. 16:13 says that he must put the incense on the censor. The clouds cover him. And as he enters, he must put the blood there on the Mercy Seat and come out quickly. The bible says unless he does that, he will die.

The incense represents praise and worship. We always think that praise and worship is to meet God's need. Let me tell you praise and worship meets our needs.

And praise and worship protects us from His awesome presence. The incense represents the power of prayer, praise and worship. If we don't have the incense covering our life and God manifests, we will die. That is why God does not answer some people's prayer. They know not what they ask. They pray, "Lord, reveal Yourself." If God does, they will be blasted into eternity. God can't stand ungodliness and sin. If He reveals Himself in the presence of sin, those in sin must die. So, God does not manifest Himself to protect us from His awesome presence. He is God. He is not a man. He is Almighty God who created the whole universe. Think about the Person who just spoke and the world come into being. What kind of personality and presence He has. His power is so great that He could right now and say, "Cease," and the whole universe will stop and go back to nothingness. That's how great His power is. And so, before we could approach His being we need the covering on our life. Praise and worship cover us.

Moses understood this principle. In the book of Numbers 16:42-48 relates what happened when the people were in rebellion.

*Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces. So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense in it and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun." Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So, he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped.*

Moses told Aaron, see the people are starting to die. They are in rebellion. The plague has started and Moses quickly said to Aaron to quickly take the censor, the same censor that he entered the Most Holy Place that protects him. And with the smoke coming out, Numbers 16:48 says the plague was stopped. That was not part of the program. God never authorize Moses to do it. It was not part of what He wanted to be done. It was not part of the service of the tabernacle. In fact, all those holy instruments were never meant to leave the Holy Place. But Moses understood this. When the awesome presence of God is there we need that incense to shield and protect us.

That is why in heaven there is constant praise to God. There are these four creatures around God, day and night saying, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty." There is always constant praise to God. God organized that system in heaven. Do you know why? Even the heavens cannot contain His presence. And if praise and worship ceases, the whole heaven will fall apart because the awesome presence of God cannot be contained. See on this earth He has designed it in such a way, that when praise and worship come, He can manifest Himself. Why does He do that? Because it is only praise and worship that protect us from being killed by His presence. He loves us so much that He would take us, cuddle us, and hold us close to Him. But we cannot stand His presence. So, He designs a way by which He could love us, He could embrace us and take us into His love. And He said let my people be a people of praise and worship, offering up spiritual sacrifices to God.

Sixth, the Ark of the Covenant points to Jesus, the Mediator of our Covenant.

The Outer Court represents our body. The Holy of Holies represents our soul. And the most Holy Place represents our spirit man. This is the first lesson on the indwelling of God in our lives.

The description of the Tabernacle of Moses found in Exodus 37 and 38 would list the furniture found in the Holy of Holies, then to the Holy Place and the Outer Court. But when we experience God, we experience the brazen altar first. And then we go inwards. God always work from the inside out. The devil always works from the outside in. Every temptation of the devil has something to do with the flesh or with a sense knowledge that is around you. He can't work without that. If you walk in the spirit and not in the flesh, you are immune to all his wiles and deceptions. So, when God works, He works from inside out. And He has never changed his method. It is we who need to change our methods. We need to change our ways. The principle never changes but the methods keep improving. God's methods are what we will call principles that He has revealed and always are constant. Unless He changes your inward life, He cannot change your life and ministry. Unless He changes your thought life and your emotional life and your will and He gets a hold of it, He cannot work through your body. No matter how much you sing that your body is a living sacrifice, if your thoughts are not consecrated to God, your emotions are not consecrated to God, your will is not consecrated to God, God cannot work through your life. He may do His best according to your percentage of yieldedness. That is all He can do. He works from the inside out.

As you enter the Holy Place, you will see the candlestick. The candlestick represents the power of the Holy Spirit. The ark represents the presence of God's

presence and glory. Each piece of instrument also represents an aspect of Jesus Christ. The brazen altar represents Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. The laver represents Jesus the Word of God. The candlestick represents Jesus Christ the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. The showbread represents Jesus the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The altar of incense represents Jesus our High Priest. When you get into the Most Holy Place, you will see Jesus Christ the fullness of God. Each piece of instrument speaks about the aspect of the work of Jesus Christ. See Jesus Christ has to work in our spirit, soul and body to bring us, to conform us to His very image. And God has always desired to live with us. The purpose for the creation of the tabernacle was so that He could live among us. Yet, it was only a shadow of what is to come. The greatest desire of God is that He could live in us. Even if Moses' tabernacle survives, God will not be satisfied. The original plan of God was that He could live in and with His people. This tabernacle of Moses was only a shadow. The best temple that God seeks after is the temple of human life. Individually we are temples of God. Corporately we are one temple in the Lord. But you cannot be a part of the temple of God unless you are individually part of the temple.

The word temple of God has been used two ways in the New Testament. One is used on an individual basis where Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said *know ye not that you are the temple of God*. You are the temple of God individually. And collectively the book of Ephesians speaks to us about the purpose of God. That He wants the whole church to be His temple. God's desire is that He would dwell in His people. The indwelling of God is the ultimate plan of God. It is the ultimate plan of the church of Jesus Christ.

The book of Ephesians talks about two parts. The first part speaks about the position in Christ. The second half speaks about our walk in Christ. Look at Eph. 1. After revelation has been poured forth, Paul prayed for the Ephesians to be filled with the spirit of wisdom and revelation. And when they are filled this is their objective. It says in **Ephesians 3: 22-23** *And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

I pray that God will give you a vision of His purpose and a vision of His heartbeat. Why He is doing what He is doing today? What is the purpose of salvation? Why has He called us? Why has He chosen us? It is because His Father's heart beats with the desire to fill His people with all of His fullness.

In Ephesians 2, Paul speaks about the grace of God and being brought near

by the Blood of Jesus, but that is not the end. Sometimes, people taste and remain in the Outer Court. They thank God for the Blood of Jesus that washes their sins. They thank God for the gospel. But they forget to announce their salvation and the gospel to everyone. See, there are two furniture with four horns. One is the brazen altar. The other is the altar of incense. The four horns from the brazen altar point to the four corners of the earth. That represents the gospel going forth. Jesus is being announced as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The four corners of the altar incense represent the Word going forth where it will be proclaimed that God's people will worship Him. The prayer, praise and worship must go forth. The Word and the message must go forth. Right at the beginning of the gate and right at the ending of all of human endeavor before we enter into the fullness of God, there are the two furniture with the four horns. It talks about the going forth of the message of God. One proclaims the power of the Blood of Jesus. The other offers praise and worship to God. As God's presence draws near, and as His coming draws near, the Word goes forth to get the people ready for the Lord. We are to praise Him, to worship Him and to honour Him so that we could get into the fullness of His presence.

Notice that His full purpose is revealed for us in **Ephesians 2: 21-22**, *Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being build together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.* Notice again the emphasis. You are being built into God's dwelling place.

**Rev. 3:12** says, *"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more.* The overcomer does not literally become a pillar. It is a figurative language. God is not going to take you and put cement on you and fixed you up in heaven. It is a figure of speech that speaks of God's purpose in our life to bring us as close as possible into His fullness. That is the purpose that we become the habitation of God. That God will be in His people and His people will be filled with His fullness. Paul, in his prayer for the Ephesians, mentioned about the love of God in **Ephesians 3:18-19** *May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width, the length, the depth and the height, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.* The greatest revelation that Paul had brought forth is the revelation that God dwells in His people.

I'd like you to understand that to the New Testament Christians who have just known all the outward workings of the Lord, it was a revolutionary

revelation. They even had to have a council meeting about that in Acts 15. When the Gentiles started accepting the gospel, the apostles had to have a meeting to decide whether the Gentiles should follow the Jewish outward rituals. Because it was such a revelation to them that God can now dwell among the Gentiles, some couldn't accept that and felt Gentiles must still follow Jewish customs to be acceptable to the Lord. But Stephen caught hold of that revelation when he spoke about how God no more dwelt in the temples made by the hands of men (cf. Acts 7:48). God now dwells in the temple He Himself has made without human hands. We are His temple. They have caught up to the revelation of the indwelling of God's presence among His people. And the indwelling of God in our lives need to be taught, need to be nurtured, need to be developed, need to be increased, so that we could know how to relate to God.

The greatest secret in Jesus' life was the indwelling of the Father in His life. This was His greatest secret. He said in John 14 that the works that I do is not I who do it but my Father who dwells in Me who does it. And He says if you cannot believe that the Father dwells in Me, believe Me at least for the works themselves. Every work, every miracle, everything that He did was the result of the indwelling of the Father in him (cf. Jn. 14:10-11). Then He turns around in verse 12 and says, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.* If you analyze the phrase *because I go to my Father*, it means that He is going to send His Holy Spirit. He explained that later in John 16:7, *It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.* Therefore, we can take the phrase *because I go to my Father* as relating to the indwelling of the Spirit in our lives. And we can pull it further to this conclusion that when Jesus says that he who believes in Him will do the works that He did and greater works than this shall he do because He go to the Father, we can interpret that as Jesus saying that we will do the works of Jesus and greater works through the indwelling of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in our lives. All through the Holy Spirit. The secret of the Christian life lies in the understanding of the indwelling of God in our lives.