

# ***The Sanctuary***

## ***Lessons From the Sanctuary***

Lesson #4 for October 26, 2013

Scriptures: Exodus 25:8; 31:2-11; 40:9-10; Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:14-16; Romans 3:25-28; 1 Kings 8:31-53; Psalm 27; 73:1-17.

1. This lesson will give us an opportunity to look at the design and function of the ancient tent-tabernacle built by Moses and the children of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai. We will briefly also compare Solomon's temple and Herod's temple.
2. Read Exodus 25:8 and Numbers 2. It was God's intent for the sanctuary to be the center of life and activities for the children of Israel. The worship of God and all the ceremonies connected with it were to be the center of their attention—the most attractive and beautiful part of their lives. Every one of the temples were absolutely beautiful.
3. Read Exodus 13:21-22; 14:24; and Deuteronomy 1:33. Not only was the temple or tent-tabernacle to represent God's presence, but also there was always the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day to guide them. How would you feel with those impressive, visible symbols of God's presence before you every day? Over the pulpit in your church?
4. What did the universe looking on think when their Creator—the Creator of the entire universe—the One who made everything that was ever made, (John 1:1-3) the Lord Himself, came down to dwell among those homeless wanderers in the desert? What does that say to us about harboring ethnic, class, or cultural prejudices?
5. Read Exodus 40:9-10. What is implied by the idea that everything connected with the sanctuary was to be holy? What does it mean to be holy?

The typical service was the connecting link between God and Israel. The sacrificial offerings were designed to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ, and thus to preserve in the hearts of the people an unwavering faith in the Redeemer to come. Hence, in order that the Lord might accept their sacrifices, and continue His presence with them, and, on the other hand, that the people might have a correct knowledge of the plan of salvation, and a right understanding of their duty, it was of the utmost importance that holiness of heart and purity of life, reverence for God, and strict obedience to His requirements, should be maintained by all connected with the sanctuary.—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1010.

6. Where was all of this explained in the Old Testament? Was it obvious to the children of Israel taking part in the rituals and ceremonies of the sanctuary that they pointed forward to the sacrifice of the Messiah-Redeemer to come? They certainly did not believe that the Messiah was to die! Today, we get many of our ideas about the meaning of the sanctuary services from the book of Hebrews; but that, of course, was not available to them.
7. Were there times when the entire group of the children of Israel gathered together and received instruction from Moses? Would that take place around the sanctuary? Why do you think God chose this method of teaching His children instead of establishing some kind of school system to instruct them? Or, was this a kind of sandbox school for them?
8. Read Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; and 1 Peter 1:14-16. From these verses it is clear that God intended not only to demonstrate His own holiness but also He wants us to be holy as well. What does that mean? To be "holy" or in Latin *sacred* or *sanctified* means to be set apart for special purposes. God wanted the children of Israel to be separate and different from all the nations around them in every aspect of their lives. Ultimately, that required them to live their lives on the basis of principle—doing right because it was and is right. They should have thus been a light to the entire world. Instead, they adopted the neighbor's ways.

9. So, how would that apply to us today? From what are we to be set apart? We cannot leave this world! How can we best avoid the mire of sin in which our world finds itself today? And how are we supposed to represent God to others and teach them about Him unless we associate with them? Why is it so difficult to buck peer pressure?
10. Moses was given very careful instructions and shown a very specific plan for the construction of the sanctuary. People were filled with God's Spirit to carry out those instructions in the building of that first tent-tabernacle. Read Exodus 31:2-11. Bezalel from the tribe of Judah and Oholiab from the tribe of Dan led out in the work. Many women also helped to sew the beautiful curtains that were used. When it was all finished, elaborate ceremonies were carried out to dedicate all of this to God.
11. Of course, the most important piece of furniture was the covenant box also known as the ark of the covenant found in the most holy place. In the ark were the two tables of stone with the Ten Commandments written on them. The lid of the ark came to be known as the "place of atonement" or the "mercy seat." And above the ark was the cloud representing the Shekinah glory of God. Only once a year the high priest entered the most holy place. That was on the Day of Atonement or *Yom Kippur* in Hebrew. (Leviticus 16)
12. This week we will focus on the events that took place in the courtyard and in the holy place. The holy places made with hands were to be "figures of the true," "patterns of things in the heavens" (Hebrews 9:24,23)—a miniature representation of the heavenly temple where Christ, our great High Priest, after offering His life as a sacrifice, was to minister in the sinner's behalf. (PP 343.2)
13. When God called for the children of Israel to bring gifts for the construction of the tent-tabernacle, they brought some of the most wonderful and expensive gifts one could possibly imagine. Where did they get all of those things? The Egyptians gave those gifts as the Israelites were leaving Egypt! The giving by the Israelites was so generous that Moses finally had to tell them to stop bringing their gifts.

No language can describe the glory of the scene presented within the sanctuary . . . ; all but a dim reflection of the glories of the temple of God in heaven.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 349.

As quoted from the *Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 50:

Imagine just the precious metals: according to Exodus 38:24, 25, the construction of this portable wilderness tent utilized over a ton of gold (29 talents, 730 shekels = 2,205 lb = 1,000 kg) and almost four tons of silver (100 talents, 1,775 shekels = 7,583 lb = 3,440 kg). Visualize the unsurpassed beauty of the Solomonic temple, which Ellen G. White indicates was "the most magnificent structure ever reared by human hands" and yet only a "faint reflection" of the "vastness and glory" of the heavenly sanctuary.—*The Great Controversy*, p. 414.

To assist your imagination, consider that, in 1 Chronicles 22:14, David collected for use in the temple 100,000 talents of gold—about 3,500 tons (worth billions of U.S. dollars in today's monetary value)—and one million talents of silver—about 35,000 tons. From this beautiful sanctuary we learn that (1) God is a great lover of that which is beautiful (*Exod. 28:2, 40; 2 Chron. 3:6*); (2) God's character as revealed in the sanctuary is beautiful—for example, His holiness (*Lev. 19:2, Ps. 96:9*); (3) God's ways of salvation, typified in the sanctuary (*Ps. 77:13*), are stunningly beautiful; and (4) He longs to give us that same beautiful character (*1 Pet. 1:16*).

14. The tabernacle was so constructed that it could be taken apart and borne with the Israelites in all their journeyings. It was therefore small, being not more than fifty-five feet in length, and eighteen in breadth and height. Yet it was a

magnificent structure. The wood employed for the building and its furniture was that of the acacia tree, which was less subject to decay than any other to be obtained at Sinai. The walls consisted of upright boards, set in silver sockets, and held firm by pillars and connecting bars; and all were overlaid with gold, giving to the building the appearance of solid gold. The roof was formed of four sets of curtains, the innermost of "fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubim of cunning work;" the other three respectively were of goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, so arranged as to afford complete protection. (*PP 347.1*)

15. In the first apartment, or holy place, were the table of showbread, the candlestick, or lampstand, and the altar of incense. The table of showbread stood on the north. With its ornamental crown, it was overlaid with pure gold. On this table the priests were each Sabbath to place twelve cakes, arranged in two piles, and sprinkled with frankincense. The loaves that were removed, being accounted holy, were to be eaten by the priests. On the south was the seven-branched candlestick, with its seven lamps. Its branches were ornamented with exquisitely wrought flowers, resembling lilies, and the whole was made from one solid piece of gold. There being no windows in the tabernacle, the lamps were never all extinguished at one time, but shed their light by day and by night. Just before the veil separating the holy place from the most holy and the immediate presence of God, stood the golden altar of incense. Upon this altar the priest was to burn incense every morning and evening; its horns were touched with the blood of the sin offering, and it was sprinkled with blood upon the great Day of Atonement. The fire upon this altar was kindled by God Himself and was sacredly cherished. Day and night the holy incense diffused its fragrance throughout the sacred apartments, and without, far around the tabernacle. (*PP 348.1*)
16. The daily service consisted of the morning and evening burnt offering, the offering of sweet incense on the golden altar, and the special offerings for individual sins. And there were also offerings for sabbaths, new moons, and special feasts. (*PP 352.2*)
17. In the offering of incense the priest was brought more directly into the presence of God than in any other act of the daily ministrations. As the inner veil of the sanctuary did not extend to the top of the building, the glory of God, which was manifested above the mercy seat, was partially visible from the first apartment. When the priest offered incense before the Lord, he looked toward the ark; and as the cloud of incense arose, the divine glory descended upon the mercy seat and filled the most holy place, and often so filled both apartments that the priest was obliged to retire to the door of the tabernacle. (*PP 353.1*)

How did the people respond to this?

18. Most of the services that took place in the sanctuary involved the high priest or the priests from the tribe of Levi. However:

The most important part of the daily ministrations was the service performed in behalf of individuals. The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary. In some cases the blood was not

taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying, "God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation." [355] Leviticus 10:17. Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary. (PP 354.2)

19. Have you ever wondered where the children of Israel got the supplies, for example, the olive oil to keep those lamps burning for forty years? And where did they get the wheat for making the bread as they were wandering in the desert?
20. Read 1 Kings 8:22-53 or 2 Chronicles 6:12-42. In Solomon's great prayer at the dedication of the temple, he suggested several things that should take place in the house of God.

At the dedication ceremony of the newly built temple, King Solomon offered seven kinds of specific prayers that could be offered at the temple. The seven functions exemplify the extensive role of the temple in the lives of the Israelites. The temple was a place for **seeking forgiveness** (vs. 30); for **oath swearing** (vss. 31, 32); for **supplication when defeated** (vss. 33, 34); for **petition when faced with drought** (vss. 35, 36) or **other disasters** (vss. 37-40). It was also **a place for the foreigner to pray** (vss. 41-43), as well as **a place to petition for victory** (vss. 44-45). [Do we need these prayers?]

That the temple was intended to be a "house of prayer for all the peoples" (Isa. 56:7, NASB) becomes evident from the fact that Solomon envisioned the individual Israelite, the foreigner, and the entire population as petitioners. *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Wednesday, October 23.

21. All of this would suggest to us that the sanctuary with its location in the middle of the camp was supposed to be the center of all activity for the children of Israel. As we know, that place of significance was later transferred to Jerusalem. In what ways could a modern Christian church fulfill a similar role? Certainly, the church is supposed to be the primary place where we are to meet with God. (Exodus 25:22; Leviticus 1:1) Do you think of your church as the center of your activities? Do you feel like the church services and the Sabbath school services provide a real communication channel with God?
22. When you pray, are you honest with God? Can you feel His presence close to you? Does He speak to you through the activities and influences of the Holy Spirit?
23. In the early years of David's life after he had become a national figure and was being pursued by Saul, he wrote a famous and important psalm—Psalm 27. David wrote this song while hiding in the desert of Engedi. It was at Engedi where he actually cut off a piece of Saul's robe. See 1 Samuel 24:1-22.
24. As David was running for his life and hiding in the caves of the desert, imagine his feelings as he thought about the tent-tabernacle sanctuary of God. As a member of the tribe of Judah and the future king, he was not allowed to actually enter either the holy place or the most holy place. What did he know about the inside of those structures?
25. In our study for today, what have we learned that teaches us about God? Do we feel God's presence as the Israelites must have there at the foot of Mount Sinai? Are we daily taking advantage of every possible means of learning about God so that we can follow God's instruction to "Be holy as I am holy"?

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