

SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 3

SANCTUARY SYMBOLISM STUDY GUIDE

As we've looked at the book of Revelation, we have noticed that it is divided into various sections. If we were to reduce that further, it could be summed up in two sections: Revelation 1 - 11 covers the seven churches, seven seals, and the seven trumpets. From Revelation 12 on to the end of the book are the seven vials or bowls. So now let's add to that a picture of the sanctuary. In the first half of the book, we find the candlesticks, the altar of incense, and the table of showbread, articles found in the Holy Place. The last half touches on the ark of the covenant and the law, items found in the Most Holy Place. So how does the sanctuary in the Old Testament help us to understand what these two halves of the book are about in relation to the sanctuary imagery? Let's go to the Bible to inform our understanding of the sanctuary.

THE OUTER COURTYARD

The Altar of Burnt Offering

We begin in the courtyard where we find the altar of sacrifice and the laver of water.

The burnt offerings of animals and portions of various offerings were burned on this altar. The sacrifice was made for sin. Sin separates us from God, leading to death. So the sacrifices pointed to the death of Christ as a consequence of our sin so that the sinner can have atonement or "at-one-ment" with God. Therefore, the work done upon this altar was a symbol of the work of Christ who became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). We must remember that Christ was the Lamb who was slain, and He could not begin the rest of the sanctuary work without first going through the sacrifice on the altar in the courtyard. The

services in the courtyard represented His work on earth, while the inner sanctuary represents His work done in Heaven. The altar is the Old Testament version of the cross of Christ (Hebrews 13:10-12; John 1:29).

The Laver

The other article of furniture that was in the courtyard was the laver of water, which symbolizes that God purifies us from the stain of sin. The New Testament opens with baptism, the symbol of cleansing represented by the laver in the courtyard. From John the Baptist in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the book of Acts you find the baptism of the early church. Here is outlined the process by which God cleanses us. The priests had to wash themselves before going into the Holy Place. Water is a symbol of the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit.



"And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst'"

JOHN 6:35 NKJV

THE HOLY PLACE

Table of Showbread

The table of shewbread, or showbread, was placed on the north side of the first section of the sanctuary known as the Holy Place. On the Sabbath, the Levites made twelve loaves of unleavened bread. During the entire week the bread

lay on the table in two stacks of six. At the end of the week it was removed and eaten by the priests. This bread represented Christ—the Bread of Life—and His living Word, made up of 66 books, that brings life. We are to eat this Bread of Life by reading the Bible and obeying its life-giving words. "And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'" John 6:35 NKJV.

KEY SCRIPTURES

John 6:35 TABLE OF SHOWBREAD

Revelation 1:12-20 SEVEN CANDLESTICKS

Romans 8:26, Hebrews 8:5 ALTAR OF INCENSE

Revelation 11:19 MOST HOLY PLACE

Lamp Stand

Across the room from the table of showbread was the seven-branched candlestick. Christ is standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks.

The golden candlestick with its seven golden lamps was on the south side of the first apartment or Holy Place of the sanctuary. It was made of gold beaten into shape by the workman's hammer. Christ, in explaining to John the meaning of what he had seen, said, "The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (Revelation 1:12). The churches, represented by candlesticks, are to hold the Light of the world, Christ, high for everyone to see.

Altar of Incense

The golden altar, or altar of incense, was before the veil in the first apartment of the sanctuary, which was straight ahead from the entrance to the building. The High Priest alone was to perform the sacred duty of placing incense before the Lord on this altar. The altar and the fragrant incense in the earthly sanctuary were representations of the work that our great High Priest, Jesus, is performing for us (Hebrews 8:5). The incense represents our prayers, as they ascend to God. The Holy Spirit mingles our prayers with the righteousness of Christ, to present them before the Father.

Romans 8:26 tells us that we "know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." This means that sometimes we don't know how to pray, but God can read our hearts, and through His Spirit, He is listening deeply to what we are saying.

Veil

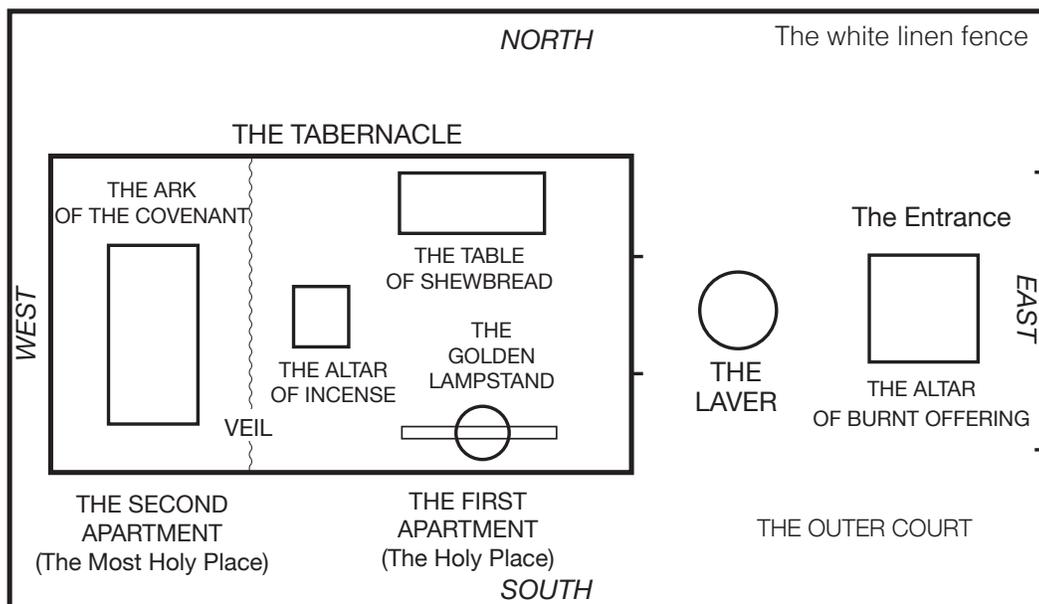
The veil hung between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. It served as a reminder that sin separates us from God. The only person who ever was allowed entry to the Most Holy Place was the High Priest, who went in to minister on the Day of Atonement, once a year. Yet, the prayers, symbolized by the incense from the altar of incense, were able to travel up and over the veil, and be present before the Mercy Seat. Although we cannot see God face to face in this world, we have the assurance that He will hear our prayers.

MOST HOLY PLACE

In Revelation 11:19 we're introduced to the Most Holy Place. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." This verse moves us from Holy Place imagery to the Most Holy Place in the context of sanctuary symbolism. This indicates that everything from Revelation 12 onward deals primarily with how God is going to finally eradicate sin, as the Most Holy Place focused on the day of judgment and final eradication of sin from the camp through the final atonement.

Mercy Seat (Ark of the Covenant)

The broken law contained in the Ark was the only reason for all the sacrificial services, both typical and antitypical. The cover of the Ark was called the Mercy Seat, and was of pure gold. There is great consolation in the fact that the Lord Himself covered the broken law with a mercy seat; and then He, the merciful God, took His position upon that seat, so that every sinner who comes confessing his sins, may receive mercy and pardon. ★



Sanctuary Symbolism

Question & Answers

1. How many parts were there in the Sanctuary? _____
2. Which area did the sinner bring his offering to? _____
3. Which piece of furniture was used to offer up the prayers before God? _____
4. Which piece of furniture represented the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit? _____
5. Which piece of furniture represents Christ, “the light of the world?” _____
6. Which item shows us that sin separates us from God? _____
7. Which piece of furniture shows us Christ, “the bread of life” with His people? _____
8. Who alone could enter the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement? _____

Personal Application

Do you want Jesus to be your High Priest, interceding for you with His shed blood before the Father? _____

