

## Lesson 6 Notes

### Hebrews 9

### Symbolism of the Tabernacle

They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” Hebrews 8:5

Heb 9:1 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary.

Heb 9:2 A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place.

Heb 9:3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, <sup>4</sup> which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

Heb 9:5 Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

Heb 9:6 When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry.

Heb 9:7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

Heb 9:8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.

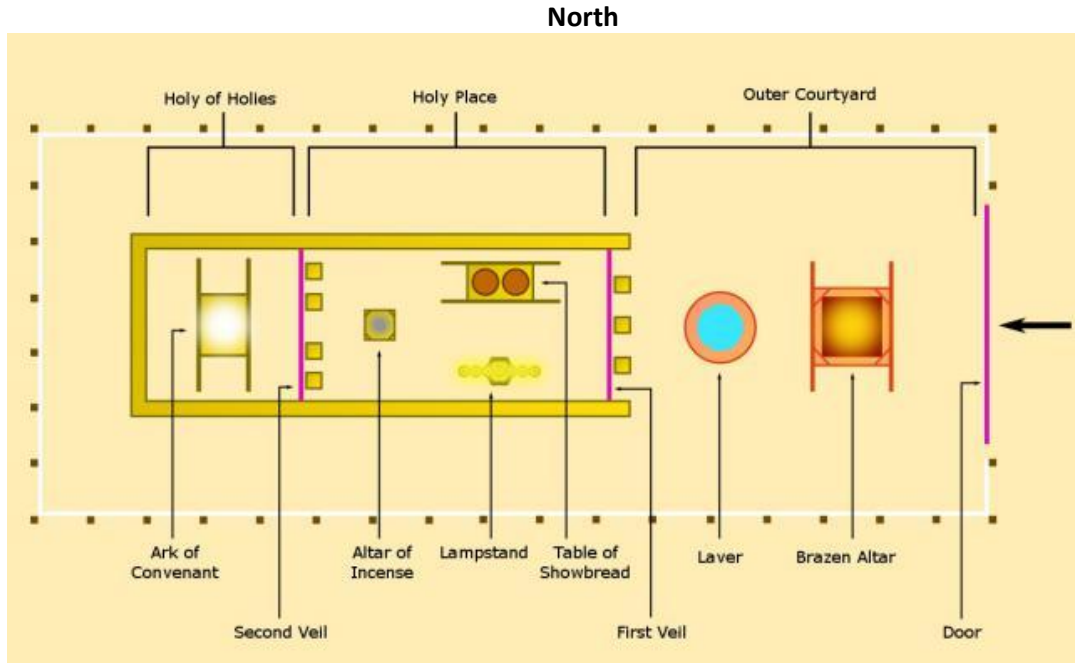
Heb 9:9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.

Heb 9:10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings — external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

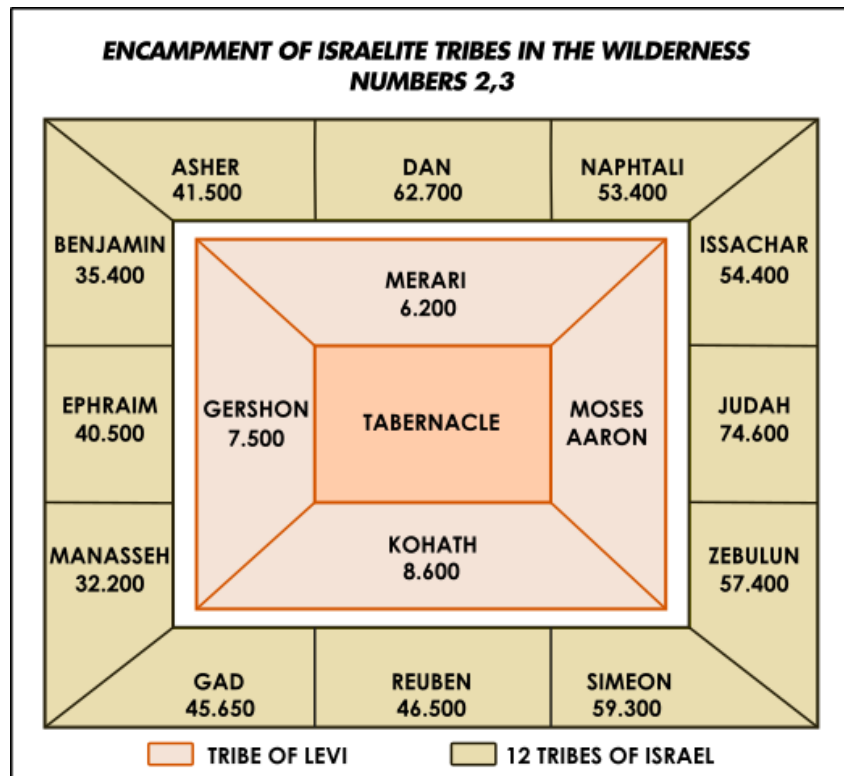
#### **The Plan of the Tabernacle**

The Tabernacle was a portable tent with a wooden framework to give it stability. The entire sanctuary consisted of three parts:

- (1) An outer court enclosed by curtains supported on pillars. It was oblong in shape and the entrance was on the east side.
  
- (2) The altar of sacrifice (bronze altar) was within the court, facing the entrance.
  
- (3) The Tabernacle itself was located at the western part of the court. The Tabernacle was divided by a veil or hanging curtain into two chambers.



The tabernacle was situated in the center of the Israelite camp and was surrounded by priests who offered sacrifices at the tabernacle. The 12 tribes camped around the priests.



## The Courtyard of the Tabernacle, Exodus 27:9-15

The Courtyard of the Tabernacle, was the area where Israelites brought their sacrifices to priests in accordance with Leviticus 1:1-3

<sup>Lev 1:2</sup> “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When any of you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.<sup>3</sup> If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

<sup>Lev 1:5</sup> He is to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

The courtyard measured 50x25 yards and surrounded the tabernacle. It was enclosed by 7 ½ foot high curtains made of fine white linen supported by 60 bronze pillars with bronze bases and silver hooks to hang the curtains from. The bronze pillars were held in place by cords and bronze tent pegs. The entrance to the courtyard was located on the east side of the enclosure. The entrance was 30 feet wide closed by an embroidered curtain of linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarns.

Linen is a strong and durable plant fiber that is also light weight and naturally white. White is symbolically associated with purity and righteousness. Therefore, the Law (Dt 22:11) prohibited mixing linen with other fibers (like wool or cotton) in garments.

Linen is difficult to make and therefore expensive. Linen garments were worn by only by priests or royalty (<sup>Ge 41:42</sup> Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.)

1. The symbolism of the curtain is shown in Revelations 19:7-9:

For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

<sup>Rev 19:8</sup> Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)<sup>9</sup> Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’

In the Old Covenant, the white linen curtain was a sign to approach God with reverence and repentance to make atonement for their sin. In the new covenant, the saints will be dressed in fine linen and gathered around Christ to celebrate eternal life with him (the marriage of the church and the bridegroom).

2. The Tabernacle faced east and was entered through the east side of the courtyard. East is the direction of the rising sun, a new day. There are several examples of the symbolism life associated with “east” in the Bible”

- The garden where God placed man was in the east of Eden, after man's fall and spiritual death, Cherubim guarded the east side of Eden so man could not return to the tree of life.
- Gethsemane is east of Jerusalem, Golgotha is west
- Christ will come again from the east

Therefore, the east facing tabernacle symbolically represented a new life in God and Christ who was to come.

Lk 1:76 And you, my child [John the Baptist], will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,<sup>77</sup> to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,<sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God, by which **the rising sun will come to us from heaven** to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Rev 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and **the bright Morning Star.**"

Isa 60:1 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.<sup>2</sup> See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.<sup>3</sup> Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Mal 4:2 But for you who revere my name, **the sun of righteousness** will rise with healing in its wings

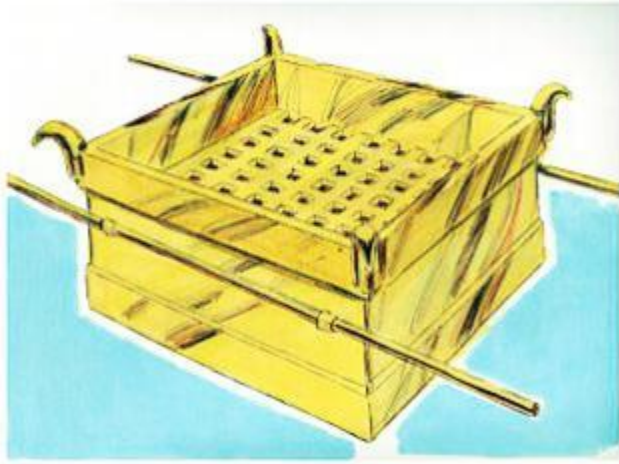
3. The curtain for the courtyard entrance was embroidered with white linen, blue, purple scarlet thread. No design is stated. The same colors were used in the other two curtains for the door and the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle.

The colors are symbolic:

- Blue: The color of the heavens.
- Purple: The color of royalty. God is above all earthly kings, Christ is the King of kings (1 Timothy 6:15, Revelations 19:16).
- Red: The color of the blood. Atonement for sin was only through a blood sacrifice. Jesus, our Redeemer, redeemed us through his blood (1 Pe 1:18-19).
- White Linen: The color of purity and righteousness.

The colors are symbolic of Christ, God's Son and King of Kings, who descended from heaven, to make atonement for our sins so that we might be presented before the father as holy, pure, and righteous, and then ascended to heaven to offer prayers and petitions to God the Father on our behalf.

### **The Bronze Altar, Exodus 27:1-8**



From Wikimedia Commons.

The Bronze Altar was placed in the courtyard in front of the Tabernacle and made of acacia wood covered in bronze. The altar was 4 ½ feet high and 7 1/2 feet square. Burnt sacrifices were offered twice a day in the morning and evening (Numbers 28:3-4) for the sins of Israel. Burnt sacrifices were to be totally consumed by fire and the fire was to be burned continually (Lev 6:13). Other sacrifices were also burned, either completely or partially, as food for the priests. Individuals also made burned offerings for sin, guilt, thanks, healing, purification, and consecration. These offerings were either totally burned or cooked and provided food for the priests.

The ritual of sacrifice was highly symbolic. The priest or individual laid his hands on the animal's head to signify sin was transferred to the animal, the animal was slain in front of the tabernacle and its blood was sprinkled on the altar. Then the animal was washed and completely burned signifying the complete removal of sin.

The ritual of animal sacrifice was a shadow of Christ's sacrifice, one perfect sacrifice for all sin for all time. Christ's altar was the cross.

### **The Wash Basin Exodus 30:17-21**



From Wikimedia Commons

The bronze wash basin was placed between the bronze altar and the tent (Ex 30:18, 40:7). Unlike the other objects of worship, details of its appearance are not provided, only that it was made with the mirrors of the women who ministered at the door of the Tabernacle (Ex 38:8). The priests were to wash their hands and feet with the water whenever they entered the tabernacle or they made an offering at the bronze altar. Failure to wash meant death to the priest (Ex 30:20).

<sup>Ex 30:19</sup> Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it.

<sup>Ex 30:20</sup> Whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting an offering made to the LORD by fire, <sup>Ex 30:21</sup> they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants for the generations to come.”<sup>n</sup>

Water is symbolic of spiritual renewal by the Holy Spirit through baptism. Just as the priest could not enter God’s presence and live without washing in the wash basin, so no one can enter God’s presence without washing in the blood of Christ and being reborn by the Spirit (Jn 3:3-5).

<sup>Jn 3:3</sup> In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

<sup>Jn 3:4</sup> “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

<sup>Jn 3:5</sup> Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”

The detail of the wash basin being made from the polished brass of the women’s mirrors who served in the courtyard is fascinating. I am not sure of its meaning. Perhaps the message is that we are intended for the service of others to the glory of God, not in the self-deprecating study of our own flaws.

<sup>Heb 9:14</sup> How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

## The Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting, Exodus 26:1-37

### THE TABERNACLE TENT

The entire tent was 45 feet (13.7 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high. It was a wooden skeletal structure, overlaid with gold, with no solid roof or front wall (Ex. 26:15–29). Five wooden bars (overlaid with gold) passed through rings attached to each frame (Ex. 26:26–30).

The Most Holy Place was a 15-foot (4.6-m) cube, containing only the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:10–22; 37:1–9). It was here that Yahweh would descend to meet with his people in a cloud theophany (divine appearance). The high priest could enter only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (see note on Heb. 9:7).

The framed structure was covered by four layers of cloth and skin (Ex. 26:1–14).

The table for the bread of the Presence (Ex. 25:23–30)

The Holy Place of the tabernacle tent was 30 feet (9.1 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high.

The veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place was made from blue, purple, and scarlet dyed yarns woven with fine twined linen and embroidered with cherubim (Ex. 26:31–33). It hung on four golden pillars.

The altar of incense (Ex. 30:1–5; 37:25–29)

The golden lampstand (Ex. 25:31–40; 37:17–24)

The veil that formed the entrance to the tabernacle was similar to the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, except that cherubim were not embroidered on it. It was suspended on five golden pillars (Ex. 26:36–37).

The tabernacle was a tent built of ten interlocking curtains hung on a frame of gold covered acacia wood set on silver bases. Frames were fitted with gold rings to hold gold covered cross bars in place. The tent was 45 feet long, 13.5 feet wide and 15 feet high. A curtain of blue purple, scarlet and white linen with cherubim divided the tent into two rooms called the Holy Place and the Most holy Place. The Holy Place, the front room, contained a menorah lamp on the south wall, a table with 12 loafs of bread (showbread) on the north wall, and an altar for burning incense in front of the curtain of the Most Holy Place. Priests entered the Holy place each day to burn incense and tend the lamps.

The curtains of blue, scarlet, purple and white linen were covered by three additional layers; goat hair, red-dyed rams skins, and an outer layer of leather derived from seal, manatee, or porpoise (sea cows).

The additional layers of the tabernacle were both functional and symbolic. Goat hair was the traditional material for a tent. Typically, it was black cashmere or angora wool which is naturally anti-fungal and resistant to mold. Goats are associated with sin in the Bible. The black curtain of goat hair was not seen, and covered by the red-dyed ram skins. Red dyed ram skins over the black goat hair curtain represent the blood sacrifice covering the sins of Israel.

The outer layer of durable leather would have appeared plain, not suggesting the gold or presence of God within. In the same way Christ set aside his beauty and majesty in Jesus to fulfill Isaiah 53:2-3:

“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

#### The Lampstand Exodus 25:31-40, Exodus 37:17-24



From Wikimedia Commons

The Lampstand was made of pure gold and stood on the south wall of the holy Place. The lamp had a central shaft and 6 branches. Each branch included 3 almond flowers with buds and blossoms with an oil-filled lamp on the top.

The lamps and fruit motifs are symbolic of the 7 feasts in Judaism:

- Passover
- Unleavened bread
- First fruits
- Pentecost
- Trumpets
- Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:1-34, Leviticus 23:36-32, Numbers 29:7-11)
- Tabernacles

The light of the lamp is symbolic of the spiritual light of Christ. Christ illuminates the will of his Father and his people no longer need walk in the spiritual darkness of sin. Jesus declared, **“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”**

The Jewish feasts are also symbolic in Christianity. Christ was crucified as the perfect sacrificial lamb on the day of preparation of Passover when the lambs were slain. He lay in the tomb for

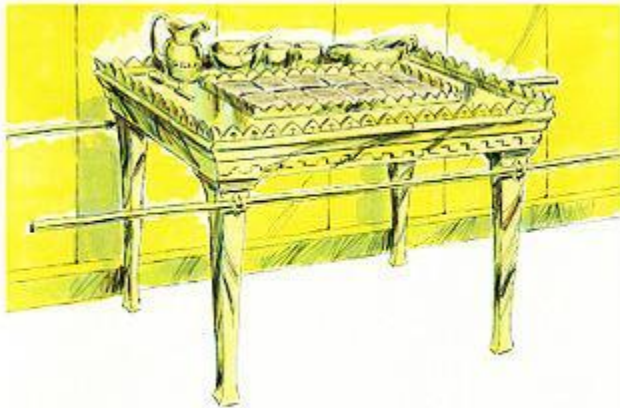


our sins of during the feast of unleavened bread when leaven is removed from Jewish houses as a symbol of removing sin from their life. And Christ arose on the Feast of Firstfruits, as a firstfruit offering of the resurrection of the saints to the Father.

Pentecost is celebrated when the Holy spirit was poured out on the church, Christ's body.

The feast of trumpets, Day of Atonement and feast of Tabernacles was a 15-day festival held for the forgiveness of the sin of Israel. The Day of Atonement was the only day of the year when a priest entered the Holy of Holies and offered a blood sacrifice on the Atonement Cover of the Ark of the Covenant. In addition to a bull sacrificed for the sins of the priest, a goat was sacrificed for the sins of the people. The priest laid his hands on a second goat (the scapegoat) symbolically transferring the sins of the people to the scapegoat who was released to the wilderness.

### **The Table of Showbread (Exodus 25:23-30. Exodus 37:10-16)**



From Wikimedia Commons

The Table placed on north side of the Holy Place held 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes of Israel. The table was made of acacia wood, covered with gold, and had a gold molding around it. It measured 3 feet long, 1.5 feet wide, and was only 2.24 feet high (Ex 25:23-24). The bread was eaten by the priests on the Sabbath and replaced by fresh loaves.

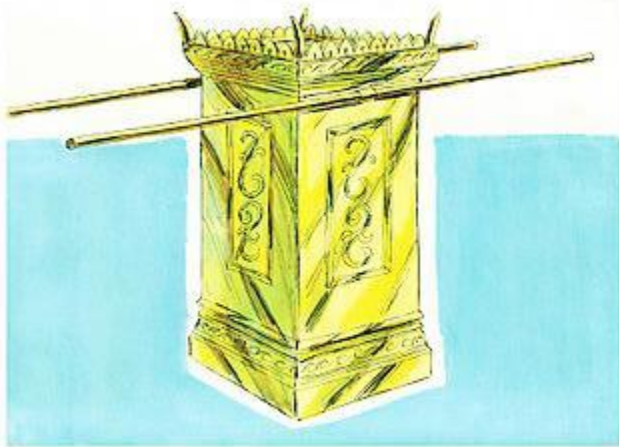
The table was symbolic of a – table but the bread meant much more. The Hebrew name for the bread was the “Bread of the Face”. Modern English translations call it the “the Bread of the Presence”. The bread on the table symbolically represented the 12 tribes in the covenant relationship they enjoyed in the literal presence of God (Lev 24:8).

Lev 24:8 This bread is to be set out before the LORD regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant.

The ritual eating of the bread by the priests in the presence of God on the Sabbath is still practiced in the Christian church during communion. We are the priesthood of believers, gathered in God's presence, in His rest, to partake in the body of Christ who declared,

Jn 6:51 **"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."** (John 6:51)

### **The Altar of Incense, Exodus 30:1-10, 37:25-28**



From Wikimedia Commons

The Altar of Incense was made of gold covered acacia wood and was placed in front of the curtain dividing the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Ex 30:6). It stood 3 feet high and 1.5 feet wide. It was fitted with gold rings so it could be carried with gold covered poles. Incense was burned on the altar, not burnt sacrifices. Once a year on the Day of atonement, the high priest applied the blood of the atoning sacrifice to the horns of the altar to consecrate it.

The smoke and aroma of incense are symbolic of the prayers of the saints rising to heaven.

"O LORD, I call to you; come quickly to me. Hear my voice when I call to you. <sup>2</sup> May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice" (Psalm 141:1-2)

"the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." (Revelation 5:8)

Likewise, incense is symbolic of the prayers and petitions Christ offered up during his earthly ministry and of the prayers and petitions he continues to offer in heaven at the right hand of his Father.

“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.” (Hebrews 5:7)

“but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.<sup>25</sup> Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:24-25)

### **The Ark of the Covenant, Exodus 25:10-20, Exodus 37:1-9**



From Wikimedia Commons

The Ark of the Covenant was placed behind the curtain of the Holy of Holies. It was made of acacia wood and covered with pure gold inside and out. It measured 3’8” long, 2’3” wide, and 2’3” high. Gold rings were attached so the ark could be carried on gold-covered acacia wood pole. The ark had a removeable cover, called the Atonement Cover, with 2 cherubim who faced each other with outstretched wings. Once a year, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies

Inside the ark were the stone tablets of covenant made by Moses, Aarons budded staff, and a gold jar of manna (Hebrews 9:5). These objects were to be a reminder of God’s law, God’s provision (manna), and Aaron’s staff was a warning against grumbling against God. The budding of the staff relates to the time God struck down 14,700 Israelites and 250 Levites who rejected the leadership of Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:1-17:13).

The ark of the covenant was the place where God chose to place his presence in camp of the Israelites and symbolized his covenant promises with Israel.

“I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you. <sup>10</sup> You will still be eating last year’s harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new. <sup>11</sup> I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. <sup>12</sup> I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.” (Leviticus 26:9-12)

## **The Glory of the LORD**

After Moses made the sacrifices commanded by God and set up the tabernacle according to His instructions, the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle as a sign of God’s presence with Israel.

<sup>Ex 40:34</sup> Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. <sup>35</sup> Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

<sup>Ex 40:36</sup> In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; <sup>37</sup> but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted.

<sup>Ex 40:38</sup> So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels

The glory of the LORD is his Shechinah glory. It was the visible manifestation of the presence of the invisible God. In the Old Testament, most of these visible manifestations took the form of light, fire, or cloud, or a combination of these. The Hebrew word Shechinah, from the root shachan, means ‘to dwell.’ The glory of the LORD dwelling in the tabernacle is the final image of Christ who was to come to dwell among his people. Even though he has ascended into heaven, he still abides with his people through his indwelling Holy Spirit:

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. (Hebrews 1:3)