

The Ministry From The Tabernacle Of Moses

by Brian Bailey

Introduction

In this study we would like to consider the Tabernacle of Moses and how it relates to our Christian walk and ministry. The Tabernacle of Moses consisted of three sections: the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. God instructed Moses in Exodus 25:8, *“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.”*

God’s desire has always been to dwell with His people and have intimate union and communion with them. This was the purpose of the Tabernacle, and this is God’s desire for His people today. He wants us to know Him intimately.

The Tabernacle of Moses was a type and shadow of heavenly and spiritual things (Heb. 8:5). Psalm 77:13 says, *“Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary.”* The ways of God and His purposes for His people can be seen in the Tabernacle of Moses, which was patterned after the heavenly Tabernacle. Spiritually, each of us is called to enter within the veil into the Holy of Holies into the literal presence of God. This is the ultimate call of every Christian. However, there are many progressive steps that we must take before we can go into the Holiest of all.

There were seven articles of furniture in the Tabernacle of Moses. In the Outer Court there was the brazen altar and the brazen laver. In the Holy Place there was the candlestick, the table of shewbread and the altar of incense. Within the Holy of Holies was the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat, which rested on top of the ark. This is where the fullness of God’s glory resided.

These seven articles of furniture are very important for our lives, as they speak of spiritual experiences that we must experience in order to know the fullness of God’s glory. Also, they are experiences that we want to lead our converts into. We want to have a well-balanced ministry that produces mature sons and daughters who shall be kings and priests unto the Lord (Rev. 5:10).

The Tabernacle of Moses can be likened to the three degrees of spiritual growth and maturity in the Christian life spoken of in 1 John 2:12-14, where John says: *“I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake. I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.”*

The three progressive degrees of maturity are little children, young men, and fathers. The Outer Court is spiritually the place where people are birthed into the kingdom of God as little children; they are adopted into the family of God. They experience forgiveness of sins. The Holy Place can be likened to young men, who have the victory over Satan, are strong, and the Word of God abides in them. This is a greater level of maturity. However, from this spiritual level we must progress on into the Holy of Holies, where a father's heart is produced within us and we know the Lord in a very intimate way. It is from this place that we reign in life by Christ Jesus.

The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled every aspect of the Tabernacle of Moses. This required a life of obedience to the will of His Father, completed by His death upon the cross of Calvary. Therefore, since Christ is our pattern, the spiritual experiences of the Tabernacle must be fulfilled in us. Then we can lead others into these experiences.

Depending upon the ministry God has called us to and our present circumstances, we could be ministering in the Outer Court, the Holy Place, or in the Holy of Holies. It is important that we understand these things and the ministry in each of these places. So in this first part of our series, we will now study the ministry of the Outer Court.

THE OUTER COURT

The Outer Court was the large outer area of the Tabernacle that was accessible to every Israelite, or we could say to every believer. It was 100 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 5 cubits high. It was surrounded by a linen wall and it only had one entrance—the gate on the east side. The Outer Court is the place where salvation and forgiveness of sins is experienced, and new converts are brought into the fold of Christ the Good Shepherd.

The Linen Wall

Linen curtains, hung upon 60 pillars of brass, served as the wall or fence of the Outer Court (Ex. 27:9-19; 38:9-20). The linen wall was 5 cubits high. This white linen covering separated those on the outside of the Tabernacle from those inside the Tabernacle. This is very important.

In the Word of God, linen speaks of the righteousness of God (Rev.19:8). We want to be covered with the Lord's righteousness and not our own, because our righteousness is as "filthy rags" (Isa.64:6). It is only the righteousness of God that can bring us within the heavenly Tabernacle and make us partakers of eternal life. We must experience this covering for ourselves, but we also must not forget to present the righteousness of God to those whom we minister to.

Considering now our ministry in the Outer Court, let us see how the Apostle Paul witnessed to an unsaved governor in Acts 24:25. Paul reasoned with Felix about "*righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.*" This message caused Felix to tremble. We must clearly define to unbelievers and to new born Christians what the righteousness of God is, and what it is not. Ezekiel 18:5-9 lists seventeen acts of a righteous man. By contrast, Galatians 5:19-21 lists the seventeen works of the flesh, and we must warn people that if they practice these sins, they will prevent them from entering the kingdom of God.

"*The Kingdom of God ... is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Rom.14:17). One of the first messages we should declare to people is the righteousness of God, represented in the Tabernacle of Moses by this linen wall. The Lord's righteousness is the dividing factor. It either denies people entrance or gives them an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. May we always be clothed upon with the Lord's righteousness, as well as seek to make righteous those to whom we minister to.

The Door

There was only one entrance to the Tabernacle. On the east side there was a door, which was also called "*the gate of the court*" in Exodus 27:16. There were four pillars at this gate. Four in biblical numerics has the meaning of being universal, thus signifying that the invitation is open to all; whosoever will may come (Jn.3:16). The door of the court was distinctly different in color than the rest of the white linen fence. It was made of fine white linen woven with blue, purple and scarlet material.

Spiritually, Christ is the door. He declared, "*I am the door*" in John 10:7-9. Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. He said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (Jn.14:6). Acts 4:12 says, "*Nor is there salvation in any other [than Jesus Christ, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.]*"

We must accept His righteousness and His atonement for our sin. In order to be saved, people must believe in their hearts that Christ is Lord and Savior and confess Him with their mouths (Rom.10:9-10). Therefore, the ministry in the Outer Court must point people to Jesus Christ as the only door and the only means of salvation; and it is through the righteousness of Christ alone that we can enter into His kingdom.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

The first piece of furniture inside the Tabernacle in the Outer Court was the brazen altar where the animal sacrifices were offered (Ex.27:1-8; 38:1-7). This wooden box made of acacia (shittim) wood was overlaid within and without with brass. It was 5 cubits long, 5 cubits wide, and 3 cubits high. This is where the shedding of blood took place, and the Israelites received atonement for their sins.

Leviticus 17:11 says, "*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.*"

Spiritually, this brazen altar represents the supreme once-and-for-all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, and our acceptance and forgiveness by His blood. He became our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7). The Israelites in Egypt had to personally appropriate the blood of the Passover lamb in order to be saved, by applying the blood to the door posts of their houses. This is very important. Christ's blood and sacrifice is only effective for us if we apply it to our lives and embrace our Savior. It is not enough to know that Jesus is the Savior of the world; we must personally know that He died for our sins and believe in Him in order to be saved.

The Israelites also had to eat the flesh of the lamb. Spiritually, this speaks of meditating upon the Word of God. Jeremiah said, "*Your words were found, and I ate them*" (Jer.15:16). After we lead someone to salvation, we must immediately instruct them to study the Word of God. They must meditate in the Word to become strong Christians.

When the Jews ate the Passover lamb, they had to eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on, and with their staff in their hand (Ex.12:11). They had to be ready for their journey out of Egypt (a type of this world). This is the vision that we must put before new converts and Christians in the Outer Court. We must emphasize that once we get saved, we are on a spiritual journey; we cannot stay where we are and continue in our old worldly ways. We are destined for the Promised Land!

I must stress, however, that many who were saved by the blood and started out on the journey did not make it into the Promised Land—they died in the wilderness because of disobedience. Therefore, the blood of Christ only covers us as we continue to walk in obedience and in the light. 1 John 1:7 says, "*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*" It

is only as we walk in the light that the blood of Jesus covers us and cleanses us from all sin. We must continually repeat this solemn truth to those we minister to in the Outer Court.

Some years ago when we were in West Africa, my wife had a vision of a pastor that we knew in America. He was standing before two roads which started in light, but he was confused and did not know which one to choose. My wife asked the Lord, "But how will the pastor know which is the correct road for him?" The Lord responded, "I will show you by taking you down the roads." The road to the right soon was shown to not be illuminated by true light, but by artificial light which became flickering and unsteady. This flickering light gradually turned into a gray, then blackish, color and finally disappeared down into the black hole of hell itself. However, the path of light on the left became brighter and brighter as it went on, going up to the top of Mount Zion in heaven. We warned this pastor that he was facing a crossroads in his life where both directions would at first appear to be walking in the light, but that he must cry out for discernment to know which was God's true path for his life. Although he was warned, the pastor regretfully took the wrong path. He soon changed his doctrines, left his sanctification, divorced his faithful wife, and has since remarried more than several times. How important it is that we learn to consistently walk in the light, so that the blood of Christ continues to cleanse us and we can move on with God.

The Brazen Laver

The brazen laver is the next piece of furniture in the Tabernacle (Ex. 30:17-21; 38:8; 40:7). It was between the altar of burnt offering and the Holy Place. There were no measurements given for it. The purpose of this brazen laver, made from the bronze mirrors of the Jewish women (Ex. 38:8), was for the washing and cleansing of the priests.

This laver has a two-fold spiritual application for our lives. First of all, it speaks of being washed by the water of the Word of God. Paul said in Ephesians 5:26, "*That He might sanctify and cleanse her [the Church His bride] with the washing of water by the word.*" Just as the priests could not enter within the Holy Place unless they were cleansed by the water in this laver, so we spiritually cannot enter into the Holy Place and approach closer unto God unless we are washed and cleansed by His Word. It is just that serious.

When Christ was washing the disciples' feet after the Last Supper and Peter told Him that He would never wash his feet, the Lord gave a clear-cut response: "*If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me*" (Jn. 13:8). Unless we are washed daily washed by the Word, we have no part with Christ.

In a church service while the congregation was lifting their hands in praise, my wife saw in a vision that almost all of their hands were black. There were only a few in this vision who were wearing white gloves, indicating that their hearts were pure. The Lord said, "I am only receiving the praise of those few who have clean hands." How important it is that we are continually washed by the Word.

Because this brazen laver was made from the mirrors of the Hebrew women, it speaks to us of the fact that the Word is like a mirror (Ja.1:23)—it reveals our needs to us, shows us who we really are, and exposes our motives.

The laver also speaks of water baptism, which is one of the foundational doctrines of Christianity (Heb. 6:1-2). Water baptism is an essential experience in our Christian walk and an act of obedience. Jesus Himself was baptized by John, saying, "*It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness*" (Mt.3:15).

The Apostle Paul said in Romans 6:3-4: "*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" When a person is water baptized, he is identifying with the death and resurrection of Christ. As Christ died, so he is dying to the world

when he goes into the waters, and as Christ rose from the dead, he rises out of those waters to walk in newness of life with Him.

In many countries, people are not persecuted for professing Christ. But when they are water baptized, then many times they are rejected by their families and communities and terribly persecuted. This is because water baptism is an open declaration that a person is rejecting all other false gods and choosing to serve the only true God, Jesus Christ. It is a very powerful act of obedience.

Water baptism has the power to break denominational ties, and can set a person free to move on with God. Without being water baptized, many people soon return to the world. We must always seek to lead the people we minister to into water baptism. This is an essential part of the ministry in the Outer Court.

When I was once at a seminar in India, I was speaking about how the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel is a type of water baptism. I remarked that those who do not pass through the waters of baptism, are like those who remained in Egypt under Pharaoh's control, and that they are still under the control of Satan. Hundreds of the delegates at this seminar were Roman Catholics, who then asked their priests for water baptism. When their priests refused to baptize them, they went down into a river and baptized themselves! This experience released them from the unprofitable traditions of the Catholic Church, and helped them to move on to other truths and experiences that had not been available to them before.

The Horns of the Altar

There were four horns on the brazen altar, one on each corner (Ex.27:2). The animal sacrifices were tied to these four horns. As we have said before, four means universal. Horns are symbolic of power. For example, horns are the strength of a bull. Habakkuk 3:4 says of Christ, *“He had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power”* (KJV). Therefore, the horns of the brazen altar speak of universal power.

Spiritually, this speaks of the tremendous power that comes with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Just before He ascended unto His Father, Christ instructed His disciples in Luke 24:49, *“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”* Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high and until they received the promise of the Father. What was this promise? It was the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Christ said in Acts 1:4-5: *“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which ... you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* This took place about ten days later on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 when the disciples began to speak in other tongues.

He went on to say in Acts 1:8: *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me.”* The prime feature of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is power. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a foundational doctrine that every believer should experience. It is for every believer—TODAY!

Speaking of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Peter said in Acts 2:39, *“For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”* The promise was to those in Peter's generation, the following generation, and to all generations who are to come, which includes our generation.

When the Apostle Paul encountered new believers, one of his first questions was always: *“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”* (see Acts 19:2). This gives us a pattern for our lives. We should always seek to lead people into the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A certain group of believers at Ephesus to which Paul asked this question responded by saying that they had never even heard of it (Acts 19:2).

Therefore, since these believers were saved but not Spirit-filled, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is obviously an experience after salvation, and not the same as our new birth experience. Not every believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Speaking in other tongues is the initial evidence, but that is not the only facet of this wonderful experience in God.

Once we are filled with the Spirit, our spiritual senses are awakened in a new way. We become candidates, if I could say that, to receive the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 after we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. The nine spiritual gifts, which are for the edification of the Church (1 Cor.12:7; 14:12), are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the gift of faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, the gift of other tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

Paul said, *“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts”* (1 Cor.14:1). We want to personally have a release in the spiritual gifts, and also lead others into the gifts. They are so necessary for the Church to accomplish all that God has intended her to do in these last days.

As Christian leaders, we can only lead others into what we have experienced ourselves. It is a true fact that a leader teaches more by his example than by his words. If we seek God for a release in the area of the spiritual gifts, then we can be used to bring others into this liberty as well. To the degree and purity that we manifest the spiritual gifts, to that same degree and purity will we see them manifested in our churches.

Years ago I was the guest speaker at a service which the pastor asked me to start without him, as he would have to arrive late. During the time of praise, I felt the wooden floor moving up and down. Surprised, I opened my eyes to see a dear saint jumping up and down, speaking in tongues. After this she calmed down, and then the floor began to shake again as another member of the church jumped up and down, giving the interpretation. There followed more floor shakings as several prophecies were then given. I was about to mention that when water flows through a pipe, the pipe does not have to shake and jump, and that we do not have to do these things when the Spirit flows through us. Mercifully, I did not have time to give this much needed instruction before the floor began to shake again as the pastor, who had just come in, began to prophesy. I reserved my comments to share with him privately after the service. But this illustrates the truth that a church will usually only enter into the depth and purity of the move of the Spirit as what their pastor leads them into. We will only take the people as far as we go. Our ultimate goal is to go within the veil into the Holy of Holies, but first of all, we must ensure that people receive a good foundation in the Outer Court.

On the day of Pentecost when several thousand were convicted by Peter’s fiery sermon, they said to the apostles, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37). Peter responded by saying, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38).

Peter summarized in capsule form the ministry in the Outer Court. It is to lead people to repentance, water baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gifts, while giving the people a good solid foundation in the Word of God through teaching.

CONCLUSION

As we have briefly looked at the Outer Court of the Tabernacle of Moses, I hope your heart has been challenged afresh concerning the ministry in the Outer Court. We want to perfect our ministry in the Outer Court to those who are young in the Lord so that we can see them come to a greater knowledge of the Lord Jesus and His Word. As they mature, they will become prepared to then enter into the spiritual experiences that are shown to us through the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. (To Be Continued)

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