

## THE ARK, TABLE, LAMPSTAND AND THE ALTAR

- I. THE ARK – (See notes September 11<sup>th</sup>, “The Accoutrements of Worship”). - Summary:
  1. The Ark of the Covenant was clearly the most Sacred of all the pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle and the only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies. Kaiser noted; “The Ark is mentioned 180 times, thereby stressing its importance.”
  2. It was a wooden box of acacia wood overlaid with gold, and the two acacia wood poles to carry it were overlaid with gold. Once installed they were (unlike all the other pieces of furniture), never removed.
  3. Place on top of the Ark was the Mercy Seat of pure gold guarded by two Cherubims (one of each side). facing each other and looking down at the Mercy Seat.
  4. The Mercy Seat was God’s Throne, the place of His dwelling on Earth.
  5. Only on the Day of Atonement could the High Priest enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the blood of the Sacrifice on the Mercy Seat and thus “cover” the sins of the nation for one year.
  6. The Hebrew word for “cover” contains the idea of “Atonement” (“at onement”).

7. In Romans 3:25 Jesus Himself is referred to as the Mercy Seat.

II. THE TABLE OF SHEW BREAD (HEB. *Shūlhān iěhěnim pānilm* - "Table of the Face")  
i.e., JEHOVAH) Exodus 37: 10-16.

1. The table was also made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold and decorated with gold. The table had high brim ("a hand breadth" 25:25) that was another work of beautiful craftsmanship. The table was supplied with rings and poles to facilitate transporting it and appropriate "tableware" (pans, jars, bowls) to be used for the various offerings there.
2. The main use of the table was as a display for the *bread of the Presence* (25:30). This bread which was to be placed on the table each week on the Sabbath (a new batch of twelve loaves each week, see Lev. 24:5-8), was not "a meal for God" ) as such offerings were often meant in pagan shrines), It was not to be eaten by anyone other than the priests (who were permitted to use it for their own food, Lev. 24:9). The twelve loaves were symbolic of the participation of the twelve tribes in the table fellowship with the Lord; the tabernacle made this fellowship possible, the bread of His *Presence* and the tribes were there by proxy in the persons of the priests.

Note: The Priests represented the people to God  
The Prophets represented God to the people

To each stack of loaves incense was added, probably placed in bowls beside the bread for a memorial even an offering, made by fire unto the Lord (Lev 24: 5-9).

The Table of Shew Bread is a type of Christ as The Bread of Life and the Sustainer of each believer-priest (1 Pet 2:9; Rev. 1: 6). Christ is the Bread which came down from heaven (1 John 6:33-58).

The Manna portrays the *Life Giving Christ*  
The Shew Bread *the Life Sustaining Christ*

### III. THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND (Hab. M•nōrāh).

The Golden Lampstand stood on the South or left side of the Holy Place opposite the Table of Shew Bread (Exod. 40:24). Its construction, except for its size, is minutely described (25:31-40; 37: 17-24). It was made of pure gold, of which an entire talent was used for the lampstand and its vessels. It was crafted from one piece of gold. It consisted of a central shaft with six branches (3 on each side).

Jewish tradition assigns it a height of about five feet and a breadth of about three and one-half feet.

The lamps were supplied with pure olive oil (i.e., "prepared from olives which had been cleansed from

leaves, twigs, dust, etc, before they were crushed”), beaten i.e., “obtained not by crushing in oil presses, but by beating, then the oil which flows out by itself it is of the finest quality and a white color” (Exod. 27:20). The lamps were lighted at the time of the evening sacrifice (Exod. 30: 7; 1 Sam 3:3).

The utensils belonging to the lampstand were the “tongs” and the “snuff dishes”. The tongs were used to pull up the wick and hold the coal while blowing on it to light the lamp. The “snuff dishes” were *coal pans* (Exod. 27:3; Lev. 16:12) used for bringing live coals from the great Altar. The Lampstand had the practical purpose of providing light in the windowless darkened inner tabernacle.

The lampstand is usually seen as typifying the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the true light which came into the world (John 1: 6-9; 8: 12). Some others prefer to picture it as picturing the Holy Spirit, whose mission is to glorify Christ, since it illuminates all that speaks of Christ in the Holy Place. Still, some others see it as typifying Christ in union with believers. The middle shaft is unique because the other six branches come out of it, three branches on each side; yet they are all made of one piece of gold.

### III. THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING – THE BRAZEN ALTAR

The brazen altar was a hollow box of acacia wood overlain with sheets of copper (A.V. “brass”) and on each of the four corners a slight extension or “horn”. The altar had a grate placed half-way between the top and the bottom of the altar. The altar was placed in the court of the tabernacle between the entrance and the tabernacle. It was carried by copper covered poles. The altar was about five feet high and the priests were not allowed to go up to the altar on steps. Some have speculated that the land was raised around it to give easier access to the altar. As the Lord gave such specific instructions about everything the speculation offers ample room for doubt.

The four horns were used to tie up and suspend the sacrifice over the fire (27: 2; cf. Psa. 118: 27). The horns themselves would be smeared with the blood of the sacrifice (Exod. 29: 12; Lev 8: 15; 9:9; 16:18) to sanctify it to receive the sacrifice.

The Altar was the first object a worshipper would see on entering the court; it was a powerful reminder that Sin separates one from God and that Sin means death. It spoke of the absolute necessity for Atonement if one were to approach the Lord. “The slaughter of animals on this altar was a very vivid reminder to Israel that sin indeed requires a high price. It was not a pleasant thing to see an

innocent animal slaughtered and burned, but then Sin is an ugly thing and the sacrifice here, as well as at Calvary, should be a vivid reminder to everyone of the hideousness of sin and its price” Davis, Moses and the Gods. 272).

Five different Offerings on the Altar and Five Acceptable creatures for sacrifice:

1. THE BURNT OFFERING – Typifies Christ offering Himself without spot to God in delight to do His Father’s will even to death. It is *atonement* because the believer has *not* had this delight in the will of God. It is *substitutionary* because Christ died in the sinner’s stead. The thought of *penalty* is not prominent (Heb. 9:11-14; 10: 5-7. Psa 40: 6-8; Phil 2: 8). The emphatic words are “*burnt-sacrifice*,” “*voluntary*,” “It shall be accepted for him,” and “*atonement*”.

Five creatures that were acceptable for sacrifice:

- (1) The bullock, or ox typifies Christ as the patient and enduring servant of God (1 Cor 9:9,10; Heb. 12: 2,3), “*obedient unto death*” (Isa. 52: 13-15; Phil. 2: 5-8). His offering is substitutionary.
- (2) The sheep or lamb typifies Christ in unresisting self-surrender to the death of the Cross (Isa. 53:7; Acts 8: 32-35).

- (3) The Goat typifies the sinner (Mt. 25: 33) and when used sacrificially, Christ as “numbered with the transgressors” (Isa. 53: 12; Luke 23:33) and “made sin,” and a “curse” (Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5: 21), as the sinners substitute.
- (4) The turtle dove or pigeon. Naturally a symbol of ‘mourning innocence (Isa. 38: 14; 59: 11; Mt. 23:37; Heb. 7:26), is associated with poverty in Lev. 5: 7, and speak of Him who for our sakes became poor (Lk. 9: 58), and whose pathway of poverty began; with laying aside “the form of God,” ended in the sacrifice through which we became rich ((2 Cor. 8: 9; Phil 2: 6-8). The sacrifice of the poor thus becomes the poor man’s sacrifice (Lk. 2: 24).

These grades of typical sacrifice test the measure of our apprehension of the varied aspects of Christ’s one sacrifice on the Cross. The mature believer should see Christ crucified in all these aspects. (Scofield)

2. THE MEAL OFFERING – THE *fine flour* speaks of the evenness and balance of the character of Christ; of that perfection in which no quality was in excess and none lacking; the *fire* of His testing by suffering unto death; *frankincense, the fragrance of His life Godward (Exod. 30:34); absence of leaven*, His character as “The Truth” (see Exod. 12:8). Absence of honey – His was not
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mere natural sweetness which may exist quite apart from grace; *oil mingled* Christ as born of the Spirit (Mt. 1: 18-23); *oil upon* Christ as baptized with the Spirit (Jn. 1:32; 6:27); *the oven* the unseen sufferings of Christ – His inner agonies (Heb. 2: 18; Mt. 27: 45,46); *the pan* His more evident sufferings (e.g. Mt. 27: 27-31); *Salt* the pungency of the truth of God – that which arrests the action of leaven.

3. THE PEACE OFFERING – The whole work of Christ in relation to the believer's *peace* is here in type.

He *made* peace Col. 1:20

He *proclaimed* peace Eph. 2: 17

He is *our* peace Eph. 2:14

In Christ God and the sinner meet in peace; God is propitiated, the sinner reconciled – both alike satisfied with what Christ has done. But all this at the cost of blood and fire. The details speak of fellowship. This brings prominently the thought of *fellowship* with God through Christ. Hence the peace-offering is set forth as affording food for the priests (Lev. 7:31-34). They were given the breast (affections) and shoulders (strength) upon which we as N.T. priests (1 Pet. 2:9) feed in fellowship with the Father. This is what makes the peace-offering especially a *thank-offering* (Lev.7:11,12).

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4. *THE SIN OFFERING* – Christ is seen laden with sin, and absolutely not, as in the sweet savior offerings, in His own perfections. It is Christ's death as 'viewed in Isa. 53; Psa. 22; Mt. 26: 28; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18. Note in (Lev. 6:24-30) how the essential Holiness of Him who was "made sin for us" 2 Cor.5:21 is guarded. The Sin-offerings have in view the vindication of the Law through substitutionary sacrifice.
5. *THE TRESPASS-OFFERINGS* – Have in view rather the injury which Sin does that its *guilt* – which is the Sin-offering aspect. What is due to God's rights in every human being is here meant. Psalm 51:4 is a perfect expression of this. (Scofield).
- IV. *THE FINISHED WORK* - "all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the meeting was completed (39:32 cf., Gen. 2:1,2). This again emphasizes that the Tabernacle was "*a finished project*". No parts were missing. And again, it emphasized that the work was done just as the LORD had commanded Moses (39:32, 42,43). The tabernacle was completed and erected **in the first month of the second year on the first day of the month** (40:17). This was about one year from the time the nation arrived at Mt. Sinai. Moses had finished the tabernacle to show
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the value of having “atonement”. By contrast Jesus actually provided atonement (Jn. 19:30).

The ‘grand culmination of the work is reached when the cloud of the Glory of the Lord **covered** then **settled** on the tent and finally **filled the “tabernacle**. This would have ‘been an awesome spectacle and thrilling climax for the leaders, the skilled workers, and all the people who had made contributions. The work was not only complete but by this manifestation it was clear that God was pleased with the final product.

May He be pleased with us when we appear before Him.

Blessings!