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## LESSONS FROM THE TABERNACLE

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In reading the book of Exodus, you will find several long sections addressing the Tabernacle. Chapters 24-27 reveal the plan for the Tabernacle. Chapters 28-29 reveal the attire for the priests who serve in the Tabernacle. Chapters 30-31 then give the instructions for the use of the Tabernacle. In chapters 35-40 we see the actual building of the Tabernacle. In all, about 13 chapters of very detailed information. Why is this here? What can we learn from it? Please consider the following.

1. **Sanctification & Glory** - In reading all these details, we see that the Tabernacle and everything connected with it was to be sanctified or "set apart" for God's glory (Ex. 29:43; 28:2, 40). It was not for common use, for recreation, for entertainment or for everyday business that the Tabernacle was constructed. It was built to honor God and to help man serve God.

When Jesus came to Herod's Temple in Matt. 21:13, Jesus said: "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." They had taken what was dedicated to God, and used it for buying & selling animals, the changing of money, and a place ultimately for their own selfish desires (greed) rather than a place to worship God. They made common use of that which had a special purpose.

Today, people do the same thing with the spiritual temple of God, the church (Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21). The church, its funds, the activities it engages in are "sanctified" or "separated" unto God. It is not to be used for worldly or common pursuits anymore than the Temple was under the Old Law. Thus, when the church owns a building for study & worship, what should we use that building for? Basketball, picnics, banquets, breakfasts, work training classes, etc.? No, we are not saying the building is holy as the Old Law's altar was. We are not saying that incidental use is condemned. But we are looking at Jesus' condemnation of those who changed the purpose of the Temple into something other than God's purpose. Many have done that today, there is no doubt.

Let us just ask ourselves, did Jesus die on the cross so that He could start a recreational society or a meal hall? No, Jesus died to save souls. As Paul said,

"If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment." (1 Cor. 11:34) We have places for eating & drinking, and recreation, and all the things that have their place in life. So why should we link this to and make it part of the activities of the church? When we "come together" in this fashion then we face "judgment" from God. God is to be glorified in the church which Jesus built (Eph. 3:21). This is only accomplished when we follow God's way, as is seen in the next point.

2. **Follow The Pattern** - God told Moses to make the tabernacle "according to the fashion that he had seen." (Acts 7:44) The Hebrew writer says, "...Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." (Heb. 8:5) Between these statements and the extensive details in Exodus, we understand that there was indeed a pattern to follow. Observing the details was important. But why were they important? What lesson is there in the Old Tabernacle?

Hebrews 8:5 also says that the priests "serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things". The Old Tabernacle was a shadow a copy of that which was to come. It is a lesson concerning the promised temple of Christ, which is the church of Christ (Eph. 2:19, 21; 1 Tim. 3:15). Now, if the Old Tabernacle (the shadow) followed a pattern, should we be surprised that the New Tabernacle (the real) follows a pattern? As it is written: "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 1:13)

Many today think that since we are under Grace that this means we do not need to worry about obedience, patterns or carefulness with keeping the law of God. But this is grievously mistaken. Yes, Christ's way is gracious, but it is not intended to be an excuse for sin & disobedience. Grace is not available so that everyman may do what he pleases, much rather it is so that we can be pleasing to God. As it is written: "Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them **a people for his name**. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After these things I will return, And I will build again **the tabernacle of David**, which is fallen; And I will build again the ruins thereof, And I will set it up: **That the residue of men may seek after the Lord**, And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old." (Acts 15:14-18).

God revealed that the people are **for** His name. And "the tabernacle of David" here is a figure for the church of Christ. Under the Old Law it was manifested as a "shadow" a "type" or "figure"; but now it is manifested in its real form, the assembly of Christ's people who are for His name, honor & glory. The church is arranged such that all mankind can **seek after the Lord**. Take special note of this. It is not so that

man may "seek after his own name". Nor is it that man may "seek things that please himself", but that man may seek the Lord. So, when people do not follow the pattern that is in Christ, are they truly seeking the Lord (Luke 6:46)? Many claim they are, but the proof is in the doing. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." (Prov. 20:11). It is not God who created the motto, "Choose the church of your choice".

3. **Temporal versus Eternal** - Consider Heb 8:2, "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." The Old Tabernacle, though revealed by God, was built by the hands of men, its physical price was paid by men, its parts and pieces constructed by men. Yet, the church of the Lord was not built by man. It is the true tabernacle, which the Lord bought with His blood (Acts 20:28; Rev. 5:9-10).

The Old Tabernacle has decayed. Its gold, jewels, its wood and dyed cloth have long ago disappeared. But the church of the Lord will not, cannot be conquered even by death (Mt. 16:18). For even in death, those who are sanctified in Christ, a holy temple unto God - are victorious (Rev. 2:10; 20:4). This emphasizes for us the superiority of the New Temple over the Old Tabernacle. The Old temporal or temporary. The New leads into eternity. The Old decayed. The New endures. Those who built the Old died. He who built the New conquered death & ever lives.

I believe there are more lessons to learn from the Old Tabernacle. If nothing else, we can learn patience as we read & think about all the details listed in Exodus. Yes, patience. From time to time I have heard it expressed that such sections are skipped when reading personally or should be skipped when we have a class study on Exodus. But let us not be so minded. These sections are important too. Every word from God is precious and profitable for

edification. If we at first do not see the point, be patient. As with the labors of a farmer, the fruit of our studies will come in its appointed season (James 5:7-8).

**PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR**

**Othena Kinnard** (Cookeville 404), **Jo Miller** (Life Care 220), **Wesley Geer** (Life Care 316), **Mag Bumbalough** (Life Care 519), **Ethan Rece**, **Nathan Hill**, **Thelma Cunningham**, **Mary Cox**, **Monie Petty**, **Dave Poteet**, **Joshua & Misty Poteet**, **Rose Taylor**, **Dorris Williams**, **Robert & Betty England**, **Johanna Fletcher**, **Ed Williams**, **Joe Smith**, **Lydia Poe**, **Mike Tenpenny**, **Thelma Klein**, **DeLeesa Price** (expecting) and **Alisa Fletcher** (expecting), **Kenley Streeval**. Also, **Reba Jones** (Dorris Williams' niece), **Jackie Tindle** (cancer, relative of the Sims), **John Ross Key** (Mary Cox's son), **Marci Miller** (Alisa Fletcher's mother), **Ocia Bell Jones** (Doris William's mother), **Ruth Williams** (Betty England's niece), **Pauline Hickey**, **Nanny Witaker**, **Dylan Roberts** (grandson of Marilyn's friend); **Kitty Mahan** (Kathy Tenpenny's mother), **Dwayne Williams** (Dorris William's son), **Jeff England** (Robert & Betty's son), **Paul Grissom**, **Carl Williams** (Ed's brother), **Danny & Michelle Cunningham** (Lydia Poe's brother & his wife).

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

- **Home Bible Study** - Sat., March 31
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. March 25.
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month.
- **GM** - R. McPherson, Oct.14-19, 2007.
- **GM** - Brian Yeager, April 13-18, 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

***North Sparta church of Christ***

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