

Monday, March 6, 2023

The Tabernacle: Function of the Furnishings

With each reading consider the function of the furnishings.

1. READ: Exodus 25: 23 – 30; Leviticus 24: 5 – 9

FYI: The table of the consecrated bread of the presence held twelve loaves of bread (representing the twelve tribes) that were not touched until Sabbath, when the priests ate them.

2. READ: Exodus 25: 31 – 40; Leviticus 24: 1 – 4; Numbers 8: 4

FYI: The lampstand, for which no size is specified, was fashioned from a single block of gold, not overlaid like other furnishings. Scholars have noted Egyptian influence in its description such as its shaft that appears to be like a “reed” that was common along the Nile (**Exodus 2: 1 – 3**). The word translated “cups” (**Exodus 25: 33**) has Egyptian roots. These connections support the tradition that the lampstand had a unique role in helping the Hebrews to understand their God and distinguish Him from the idols of Egypt.

3. READ: Exodus 30: 1 – 6; 32: 25 – 29; Leviticus 16: 1, 2, 12 & 13

FYI: The incense offered in the tabernacle is a reminder of God’s constant presence as symbolized by the pillar of fire and cloud (**Exodus 13: 21 & 22**). Later texts (**Psalms 141: 1 & 2; Revelation 8: 3 – 5**) reveals that the prayers of God’s people are like incense...a sweet fragrance to God.

4. READ: Exodus 25: 10 – 22; Leviticus 16: 15 – 17

FYI: The Ark of the Covenant, the most sacred object in the most sacred place, contained the tablets of the Ten Commandments. It was the first item God described when issuing instructions for the building of the tabernacle. On the ark rested a slab of gold called “The Mercy Seat” or an “Atoning Cover.” Rising out of this cover as part of it, one from each end, were two cherubim that faced the center, their wings extended over the covering. This covered space, thought of as God’s throne, was where God’s presence lived.

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

The Tabernacle: A Dwelling Place

Have the people of Israel build me a holy sanctuary so I can live among them.

Exodus 25: 8 (NLT)

Think about all the effort the Israelites put into “*making space for God*”. It took nearly a year to complete the construction of the tabernacle.

1. Once the tabernacle was completed as God has instructed, how did He respond? **READ: Exodus 39: 42 – 40: 35**
2. God’s move into the tabernacle had significant implications for His relationship with the Israelites and for His people today.
 - a. Consider, for example, the many times Moses met with God at Mount Sinai: **READ: Exodus 3: 1 – 4; 19: 3, 4, 16 – 20**
 - b. Where did God speak to Moses after the tabernacle was completed? **READ: Exodus 25: 22; Leviticus 1: 1; Numbers 1: 1; 7: 89; Deuteronomy 31: 14 – 16**
 - c. What does the fact that Moses never climbed Mount Sinai again to speak with God once the tabernacle was completed communicate to you about the importance of the tabernacle in God’s relationship with His people?
 - d. In what sense do you think the way in which God chose to be present among His people in the tabernacle was a significant step toward what God’s people can experience today?
 - e. To what extent are you experiencing a personal relationship with God?

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

The Scapegoat: A Foreshadowing of the Messiah

Regular offerings on the altar of the tabernacle played a significant role in the Hebrew's spiritual lives. Guilt offerings, burnt offerings, and sin offerings all involved the sacrifice of animals. But the annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement stood out as a picture of God's forgiveness of His people's sins.

READ: Leviticus 16: 2 – 31

1. What steps did the high priest (Aaron) have to do before entering the tabernacle to conduct the sacrificial ritual on the Day of Atonement (vv.3 – 13)
2. What protected the high priest from death when he entered the Holy of Holies? (vv. 12 & 13)
3. What did the high priest do in the holy of holies, and why? (vv. 14 - 17)
4. What did the Israelites know had occurred when the high priest came out of the tabernacle? (vv. 17 – 19)
5. Specifically, what did the scapegoat carry away? (vv. 20 – 22, 34)
6. What parallel exists between the animals sacrificed on the Day of Atonement and the sacrifice of Jesus' life for the sins of all humanity?
READ: Leviticus 16: 20 – 22, 27 & 28; Matthew 27: 31 – 33; John 19: 17; Hebrews 13: 11 – 13
7. When the high priest returned from the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement, the Israelites knew that God had accepted their sacrifice
READ: LEVITICUS 16: 17 What happened after Jesus' death on the cross that demonstrated God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice as the sinless Lamb of God? **READ: Matthew 28: 1 – 10; Mark 16: 1 – 7**
8. What did the sacrifice of Jesus accomplish that the atonement sacrifices could not? **READ: John 1: 29; 3: 16 & 17; Hebrews 9: 22 – 28; Hebrews 10: 11 -14; 1 John 1: 7; 3: 5**

Thursday, March 9, 2023

The Tabernacle: A Renewal of Relationship with God

*In the beginning, God created...and it was very good. **Genesis 1: 1. 31.***

Ever since that moment, the chaos of sin has been at work to destroy God's perfect creation. As wickedness multiplied throughout the earth, God implemented a plan to work in and through his people to renew / restore His creation...*order, purpose, and harmony* of His original creation.

God used the flood to "cleanse" His creation from evil and chose Noah as His partner in renewing a world that was not in bondage to evil. When He delivered the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt, God renewed a people who would live in intimate relationship with Him and participate in His plan to restore His creation. However, living in a kingdom ruled by chaos for four hundred years had left its mark on God's people. They needed help to learn how to become the kingdom of priests God wanted them to be. So God provided the Torah and the tabernacle to teach them how to live in intimate relationship with Him and display His character to the world.

1. **READ: Genesis 1: 25 – 27, 31.** After speaking to the chaos and bringing about order, how pleased was God with His original creation?

2. **READ: Genesis 6; 5 – 7.** Why did God send the great flood to destroy the earth during the days of Noah?

3. After the flood, God made promises and gave commands to the surviving people, almost as if starting over and renewing the world He created.
 - a. **READ: Genesis 1: 26 – 30 and Genesis 9: 1 - 3, 7 – 11** Compare God's blessings.

 - b. God gave the Torah to the Israelites, in part, to provide the with the background and knowledge they would need to become His partners in renewing His relationship with humanity. In light of the creation and flood narratives, what sense of God's purpose do you think the Israelites would have recognized from God's instructions in **Exodus 25: 8, 29: 42 – 46** and **Leviticus 26; 2 – 5, 9: 13?**

Friday, March 10, 2023

Being God's Presence Today (Part 1)

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.^[b] ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. **Deuteronomy 6; 4 – 9 (ESV)**

God has long desired for His people to become partners with Him in renewing his relationship with humanity. The Hebrews were part of that plan, but they needed to be trained and shaped into a people who would love (obey) Him with all their heart, soul, and strength. The tabernacle was part of the shaping process. As God lived among His people, and as they worshiped him through the tabernacle ritual, the tabernacle became God's lesson in how to create space for Him in every part of their lives.

Today, followers of Jesus no longer worship God at a tabernacle where there is a dedicated space for Him. However, it is no less important for us to make space for Him in our lives if we are to be a *chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.* **1 Peter 2: 9**

1. **READ: Exodus 32: 7 – 10.** God gave Moses instructions for building the tabernacle and creating a space where he could live among His people. What could prevent God from filling this space?
2. **READ: Exodus 32: 35 and 33: 1 – 6.** After God punished the Israelites because they sinned against Him by creating and worshiping the golden calf, what did He say He would do because He was displeased with them?
 - a. **READ: Exodus 33: 12 – 17.** What did God promise Moses that he would do for His people?
 - b. **READ: Exodus 40: 34 & 35; Leviticus 9: 23 & 24.** After the Israelites completed the space in the tabernacle for him to dwell, what did God do?
 - c. What do these examples reveal to you about God's commitment to His promises and His willingness to forgive His people?

Saturday, March 11, 2023

Being God's Presence Today (Part 2)

And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people... Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.

2 Corinthians 6: 16, 7: 1 (NLT)

1. **READ: Exodus 25: 8.** Where did God say he would live when His people built a sanctuary for Him?
 - a. Why is it significant that God promise to live **among** his people, not just live in the tabernacle?
 - b. **READ: 1 Corinthians 6: 19 and Ephesians 2: 19 – 22.** Where is God's tabernacle today?
 - c. In what ways has our understanding of what it means for a follower of Jesus to be God's temple grown because of what you have learned about the tabernacle?
2. What parallels do y see between what God commanded the Israelites to e in their world and what He commands those who follow Jesus today?
 - a. **READ: Exodus 19: 3 – 7** What was the role of the Israelites in their world?
 - b. **READ: Romans 12: 1 7 2; 1 Corinthians 1: 2; Ephesians 1: 4; 1 Peter 2: 9 & 10.** What is the role of Christ followers today?
3. Holiness is an essential component of "*making space*" for God in our lives. When we sin we are, in effect, not providing the "*space*" in which to have an intimate relationship with our holy God. The Israelites brought sacrifices to the tabernacle to atone for their sins and to reestablish intimacy with God. What must God's people do today in order to maintain intimate relationship with Him? **READ: 1 John 1: 9**