I WILL DWELL AMONG THEM

Exodus 25:1-27:21

Key Verse: 25:8 “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.”

1 Corinthians 3:16: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?”

Last week Michael asked me gently and politely why we have to study this old passage again which is seemingly irrelevant. I agreed with him that reading unfamiliar terms and studying the size and design of a tabernacle are unpleasant and somewhat boring. But I answered that we as the people of God need to study these chapters once a life time because those are also words of God. More than this, we need to discover treasures, the image of Jesus, hidden behind all of those designs, furnishings, tools, and so on in the tabernacle. Martin Luther said, “The whole Scripture is about Christ alone everywhere, if we look to its inner meaning, though superficially it may sound different.” In 2 Corinthians 1:20 Paul says, “*For no matter how many promises of God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ.*” Therefore, it is necessary for us to study these chapters with the attitude of an explorer and archaeologist, seeking the image of Jesus from the tabernacles and all of its furnishings. Amen.

In 25:1-7 God told Moses to prepare materials for making a sanctuary, materials such as gold, silver, bronze, blue, purple and scarlet yarn, fine linen, goat hair, acacia wood, olive oil, spices, onyx stones, and so on. All of these materials were necessary for making a tabernacle and its furnishings. In verse 2 God told Moses to receive all of these materials from those whose heart prompted them to give as freewill offerings. This means that God did not force them to make a tabernacle, but encouraged them to make it willingly. God wanted Moses and his people to offer materials with joyful hearts and willing spirits. God loves a cheerful giver. God wants us to give our offerings with thankful heart and joyful spirit, even a couple of coins.

What is a tabernacle? Look at verses 8-9. “***Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.***” A tabernacle is a sanctuary where God dwells and where his people worship. The Israelites worshiped God at the tabernacle for forty years during their lives in the desert. Later Moses called the tabernacle a ‘tent of meeting’ where his people met God and worshiped him. The word “tabernacle’ (*miskan*) came from the word ‘dwell’ (*sakan*) in Hebrew. Look at the diagram.

Tabernacle 🡪 Temple 🡪 Jesus Christ 🡪 New Jerusalem

1. **Tabernacle** (*miskan*): “**dwell**” : Ex 25:8 “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will **dwell** among them.”

(150’x75’)

It was called by Moses in Ex 33:7:…calling it the “tent of meeting.”

**The Tent of Meeting:** (Ex 33:7, 40:2) **“meet”:** Ex 25:22: “…I will meet with you…”

Ex 29:42-46**: “42**“For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to **the tent of meeting**, before the Lord. **There I will meet you** and speak to you; **43there also I will meet with the Israelites**, and the place will be consecrated by my glory. **44**“So I will consecrate **the tent of meeting** and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. **45**Then **I will dwell among the Israelites** and be their God. **46**They will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that **I might dwell among them. I am the Lord their God**.

This tabernacle was mainly comprised of three parts such as the Most Holy Place, the Holy Place, and the courtyard.

The Most Holy Place: **Ark of the Covenant**: The Two Stone tablets (15’x15’x15’) **Atonement Cover** (Mercy Seat)

The Holy Place: **Table**: (North)

(30’x15’x15’) the Bread of Presence (12 loaves represents 12 tribes of the Israelites)

**Lampstand**: (South)

**Altar of Incense**: (middle)

The courtyard: **Altar of Burnt Offering**:

**Laver (water basin)**

In the sanctuary all wooden materials were made of acacia wood and all furnishings were overlaid with gold. The altar of burnt offerings and laver in the courtyard were to be overlaid and made with bronze. There are two very important things in the Most Holy Place: the Ark of the Covenant and the Atonement Cover. The Ark of the Covenant contained two tablets of the Ten Commandments which Moses had received from God at Mt Sinai. The ark was the symbol of God’s presence and his throne. The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the most important spot in the tabernacle. The Atonement Cover is also called, ‘mercy seat,’ in other versions. (He 9:4) This cover is the symbol of God’s mercy for atonement of sins for his people. Sinners cannot solve their own sin problems. They had to pay the penalty of their sins through death. But God showed his mercy by covering up their sins when the high priests sprinkled the blood of sacrifice. Peter said that love covers over a multitude of sins. (1Pe 4:8) Our sins are covered up by God’s mercy and his love. We all need the mercy of God. Atonement means making one. How can we become one with God? It’s impossible, but God made what is impossible with men possible with him. He made us one with him through Jesus Christ who reconciled us through his sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus opened the way for us to come to the throne of God (He 10:22). ***“****Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”* Praise Jesus who became the atoning sacrifice for us so that we may have peace with God! (1Jn 2:2, Ro 5:1) Amen.

The table was located at north side in the Holy Place (26:35). 12 loaves of bread, called the Bread of Presence, were placed on the table. These 12 loaves represented the 12 tribes of Israel and symbolized their fellowship with God. The lampstand was located at the south side in the Holy Place (26:35). Six branches of the lampstand with seven lights symbolized the presence of God and the watchfulness of God for his people. The altar of incense was set up at the entrance of the Most Holy Place (30:6). The high priests burned incense at the altar as their offering and symbol of devotion to God.

In chapter 26-27 God showed Moses the dimensions and patterns of the curtains and the court of the tabernacle. The tabernacle was covered by the four layers of curtains from inside to outside: the finely twisted linen curtain, the goat-haired curtain, red-dyed ram skin curtain, and the other durable leather covering. All acacia wooden frames were to be based with silver. In the courtyard there should be an altar of burnt offering, which was to be made with bronze and acacia wood. At this altar high priests sacrificed a burnt offering twice a day in the morning and evening for his priestly duty. The size of the courtyard was 150 feet long and 75 feet wide according to modern measurements. Moses should make the tabernacle according to the plan shown to him on the mountain. (30)

Before we think about the relationship between the tabernacle and Jesus, we must spend time to study about the history of the temple in Jerusalem.

**2.Temple** (*Hekhal*): a big house or a large building. The temple was built in Jerusalem, the Holy City, in the place of the tabernacle. The main pattern was the same as the tabernacle with the MHP, the HP, and the courtyard. But the size became almost twice as big as the tabernacle. The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the temple after King Solomon finished building the temple. The temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt by Zerubbabel and renovated later by King Herod. Let’s see the history of the temple.

1. Solomon’s Temple: (960-586 BC) built by Solomon

MHP: 30’x30’ 2 times bigger than the tabernacle

HP: 60’x30’

Destroyed at 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar

1. Zerubbabel’s Temple (516 BC- 70 AD) built by Zerubbabel

Not exactly the same size from the first temple. (Ez 6:3)

1. Herod’s Temple (20 BC- 70 AD) refurbished by Herod

MHP: 30’x30’

HP: 60’x30’ The front : 150’ (w) x 150’ (h)

Destroyed at 70 AD by the Romans

* The place of worship: 2 Chr 5:2-6: King Solomon and the whole assembly gathered before the ark and sacrificed offerings.
* The place for sacrifice: (2 Chr 7:12): …as a temple for sacrifices
* The place of God’s presence: (2 Chr 7:15-16): “My eyes and my heart will always be there.”
* The house of prayer: (Mt 21:13, Mk 11:17, Lk 19:46)

Now, let us think how the tabernacle foreshadows Jesus Christ and what each furnishing reveals about the image and role of Jesus Christ.

**3. Jesus Christ:** God tabernacles in a human form: Incarnation

Jn 1:14: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

Jn 2:21: “But the temple he had spoken of was his body.”

* Jesus in the Ark of the Covenant: the Word was God (Jn 1:1)
* Jesus in the Atonement Cover:: He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins (1Jn 2:2, Ro 3:25)
* Jesus in the Shielding Curtain: the curtain, that is, his body. (He 10:20, Mt 27:51)
* Jesus in the Bread of Presence (Table): I am the bread of life. (Jn 6:35)
* Jesus in the Lampstamd: I am the light of the world (Jn 1:4, 8:12, 9:5, Rev 21:23)
* Jesus in the Altar of Incense: (intercessory prayer): (Lk 23:34, Jn 17) “Father, forgive them…”
* Jesus in the Altar of Burnt Offering: (Once for all ): (He 7:27)

**4. New Jerusalem:** There is no temple of God in New Jerusalem. This is because the Lord God and the Lamb, Jesus Christ, are its temple. Rev 21:22 says, “*I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*” In New Jerusalem the Lord will be our eternal God and we will be his permanent people. Rev 21:3 says: “*Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.”* The covenant with his people the Israelites is still valid in New Jerusalem.

The reason why I put New Jerusalem next to Jesus Christ is the throne of God. There is the Throne of God in New Jerusalem where his people worship and praise (Rev 4, 21:3, 22). There is the Throne of God from where the river of the water of life is flowing down. Let us read Revelation 22:1-3. ***“****Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from* ***the throne of God and of the Lamb******2****down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.****3****No longer will there be any curse.****The throne of God and of the Lamb*** *will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.”* Amen!

We need now the leaves of the tree for healing the nations. We need a vaccine for the coronavirus. It’s urgent. But what is more urgent than the vaccine are the leaves for healing all nations. We need the restoration of the throne of God in our hearts. We need the throne of God in order to be free from the curse. We need the throne of God in the center of our lives so that we may worship him and praise him forever. We need the throne of God as the covenant people. We need the throne of God which gives us direction, where our sins are forgiven, where our prayers heard, where spiritual order restored, and where God’s eyes and ears present. We need the throne of God which should be replaced from the desires of this world.

As Apostle Paul said in his letter to Christians in the Corinth Church, we are the temple of God where the Holy Spirit dwells. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:16, “*Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst*?” He repeats in 6:19 which says, “*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God*?” We must remember that God wanted to dwell among his people in the OT through the tabernacles and the temple. God appeared in human form and dwelt with his people for 33 years. Now God wants to dwell in us and among us through the Holy Spirit. God promised to pour out his Holy Spirit on his people. Jesus baptized his disciples with the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit. We must remember that we are now temple of God where the Holy Spirit dwells. I pray that we all may be filled with the Holy Spirit, live by the Holy Spirit, and walk by the Holy Spirit. God dwells among us and in us through the Holy Spirit. Let us pray that we may restore the throne of God, the Ark of the Covenant, in the center of our hearts. Let us pray that America may restore the throne of God, the Ark of the Covenant, Exodus 19:5,6, so that she may become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. May God be with you and dwell in you and among you through the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.