



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Gaining Access to God

SELECTED OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES / HEBREWS 4:15-16; 10:19-25

FEBRUARY 9, 2012

Tim Pauley / PO Box 58403, Charleston, WV 25358 / 304.767.8430 / tim.pauley@capitolcom.org

When you work around the statehouse, you quickly learn that you have limited access to people in high positions of power and authority. The higher the office, the more limited the access. Few can simply walk into the governor's, senate president's, or the speaker of the house's offices without an appointment. In order to gain access you quite likely need a go-between or a "mediator" such as a chief of staff or executive secretary to arrange the meeting. However, the higher your own position or the closer your relationship with a person in authority, the more open your access to them. The spouse, children, or close friends of an elected official will have free access to see them anytime.

We also know that in the world of politics, if you have alienated or angered a person in a position of power and authority, you will have a limited chance of arranging a meeting with them to gain a hearing. You lose access to that person.

This aspect of life in the capitol gives us just a small illustration of what it means to gain access with God. God is absolutely and infinitely holy and righteous. Every one of us is sinful and guilty of breaking God's law and we are separated from Him. Once again, the question is, how can sinful people gain access to a holy God?

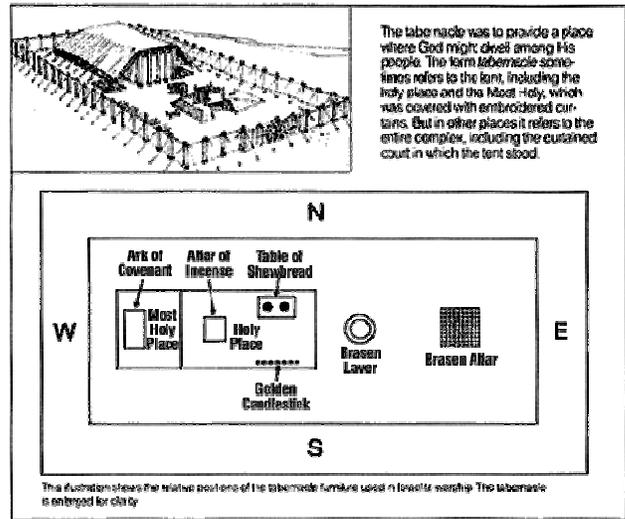
We are learning that the overall story or theme of whole Bible, including the Old Testament, is that of God redeeming sinful people through the work of Jesus Christ. We saw how Jesus taught His disciples: *...beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures* (Luke 24:27). As we consider the writings of Moses (the first five books of the Bible), we find no more vivid description of who Jesus is and what He has done for us than in the structure God had the people of Israel build in the wilderness known as the tabernacle.

THE TABERNACLE: MORE THAN JUST A TENT IN THE WILDERNESS

The Tabernacle, literally a "tent" or "dwelling place", was a tent-like structure God commanded the people of Israel to build. In Exodus 25-31 God gave Moses detailed instructions for building this structure, which was to be the very symbol of God dwelling among His people. In 25:8-9 God tells Moses:

8Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. 9According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.

The Plan of the Tabernacle



As you can see in the illustration, The Tabernacle was made up of an open courtyard and an inner, enclosed tent structure. The inner structure was divided in two: the 'Holy Place' and the 'Most Holy Place' or 'Holy Of Holies'. The outer courtyard contained a brazen (bronze) alter and a brazen laver (wash basin). The Holy Place contained a table for bread, a golden candlestick, and an alter for incense. The Holy of Holies contained only the Ark of the Covenant. The entire structure would be taken down and set up as the people of Israel wandered through the wilderness.

However The Tabernacle was much more than a tent. It represented the very presence of God among His people. More than that, its very design and furnishings were a vivid visual object lesson showing how sinful people could gain access to a Holy God. One pastor described The Tabernacle this way:

The tabernacle was the most important building in the history of the world. It is the only building ever constructed for the explicit purpose of communicating how sinful people can have a relationship with a holy God. It was not the biggest, grandest, or most beautiful structure ever built, but every detail points to the saving truth of the person and work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.¹

BIBLE STUDIES

LOBBYIST / STAFF STUDY: **TUESDAYS, 12:00 NOON**, TREASURER'S CONFERENCE ROOM (EB 54)

LEGISLATOR / ELECTED OFFICIAL STUDIES: **THURSDAYS 8:00 A.M. & NOON** TREASURER'S CONFERENCE ROOM (EB 54)

West Virginia

Gaining Access to God

THE TABERNACLE: SHOWING HOW SINFUL PEOPLE GAIN ACCESS TO A HOLY GOD

The design of the tabernacle, from its layout as a whole to each of its furnishings, all point to and describe some aspect of Christ's ministry on our behalf to allow us access to God's presence. The "Holy of Holies" represented God's holiness and sinful people's separation from Him. It was only approached by the high priest through careful observance of the sacrifice and ceremonies spelled out by God. It is pointed out in the New Testament book of Hebrews that all this was merely "...a copy and shadow of the heavenly things..." (Hebrews 8:5) and that it all pointed to and was fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

The Tabernacle represented God dwelling among His people. This is true of Jesus Christ as we read in John 1:14, "**And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.**" 'The Word' refers to Jesus and 'dwelt' most certainly is a reference to the Old Testament word for Tabernacle. It could literally be translated "the Word tabernacled among us". The 'glory' reminds us of the glory of the Lord which filled the tabernacle and the cloud and fire that settled over it (Exodus 40:34-38).

All the furnishings of The Tabernacle point to Christ's work on our behalf. We do not have time to discuss these thoroughly, but let us quickly reference each and a New Testament passage showing how they point to Christ. **1.) The Bronze Alter** – We have already studied how Christ was offered up as a sacrifice on our behalf (Hebrews 9:26, 28). **2.) The Bronze Laver** – This was a place for ceremonial washing where the priest prepared themselves to enter the Holy Place. (See Ephesians 5:26) **3.) The Table of Bread** – (See John 6:48, 51). **4.) The Golden Candlestick** – (See John 8:12, 12:46). **5.) The Alter of Incense** – (see Ephesians 5:2). **6.) The Holy of Holies** – (See Hebrews 9:11-12).

The intricate design of the tabernacle and its furnishings, the special clothing of the priests, all the sacrifices and ceremonies laid out in Exodus and Leviticus, were all necessary for the priest once a year to enter into God's presence in the Holy of Holies to make sacrifice for the people. All of this points to what Christ would do for us once for all as He was offered as a sacrifice for our sin:

¹¹But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; ¹²and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. Hebrews 9:11-12

CONCLUSION

We might think it a big deal if we have access to a leader in a high position here in the capitol. How much greater is it that we sinful people have access to a holy God, the creator of the universe, through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Christ is our "mediator", the one who arranges and makes such access possible. Those who have trusted Christ are God's children and have free access to Him. For the believer this has tremendously encouraging implications:

¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16

¹⁹Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:19-25

¹ Ryken, Phil. *Preaching Christ from the Tabernacle*. Lecture at College Church, Wheaton, IL. May 2007. www.simeon.org. <http://bit.ly/zgctiC>