

EXODUS: The Person, Promise, and Power of God

Exodus 25 – The God Who Dwells with Us, Part 1

“... let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.” (Ex. 25:8)

The great visual aid of the Old Testament: **The Tabernacle!** (v. 1-9)

The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

Westminster Confession of Faith, 7.1

The Tabernacle was the extension of the _____ God established with Israel at Mount Sinai.

Remember: God is a holy, _____ God:

“... let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. ⁹ Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.” (Exodus 25:8-9)

“The reason God was so attentive to detail was that this building was designed to teach something about his character and about what it means to have a relationship with him. Furthermore, the tabernacle was used for his holy worship, and God always has the right to determine exactly how he wants to be worshiped.”

- Philip Graham Ryken

From the **ESV Study Bible**:

First, the tabernacle is seen as a tented _____ for Israel's _____.

He is enthroned on the ark of the covenant in the innermost Holy of Holies (the Most Holy Place). His royalty is symbolized by the purple of the curtains and his divinity by the blue. The closer items are to the Holy of Holies, the more valuable are the metals (bronze→silver→gold) of which they are made.

The other symbolic dimension is _____.

The tabernacle, like the garden of Eden, is where God dwells, and various details of the tabernacle suggest it is a **mini-Eden**. These parallels include the east-facing entrance guarded by cherubim, the gold, the tree of life (lampstand), and the tree of knowledge (the law). Thus, God's dwelling in the tabernacle was a step toward the restoration of paradise, which is to be completed in the new heaven and earth (Revelation 21-22).

Two **key words**: (v. 1-9)

“dwell” ...

The consummation of _____ is God dwelling with us!

This why God delivered Egypt!

This why God sent _____.

This why Jesus _____ us!

“sanctuary” ...

Though God _____ to us, and though God _____ us, he is comprehensively _____ us.

In English a “sanctuary” is a place to run to for _____. This is not what the word means in the OT. Rooted in the verb *qādēš* (‘to be holy’), ‘sanctuary’ means ‘a place where _____ is’.

The activities of sacrifice and worship will be constant lessons to the Israelites of God’s _____ and his _____.

Of course, the Tabernacle (and later the Temple) _____ Jesus Christ and how he dwells with us and we with him.

1 Cor. 3:10–17 teaches that Christians, gathered and built on the sole foundation of Jesus Christ, are made together ‘God’s temple’ and that ‘God’s Spirit lives’ in them (v. 17).

Ephesians 2:11–22 says that the universal company who in Christ have peace with each other and with God are being built on the foundation of apostles and prophets to become ‘a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit’ (v. 22).

A few thoughts on **giving**:

- 1) God expects His people to give _____ and _____.

Where would recently freed slaves acquire the kind of wealth God asked of them for His tabernacle?

What are some implicit principles for giving here?

Each one must give as he has decided in his HEART, not reluctantly or under _____, for God loves a _____ giver.

- 2) God honors our _____ when we give. He _____ nothing from us. We are the _____ of giving, not God.

- 3) We should not try to _____ Old Covenant commands and examples of giving in the New Covenant era. (We can discover _____, just not exact _____).

Our church is not the Tabernacle or the Temple.

The Old Testament system of tithing was not simply “10%”. (It was probably closer to 20%!)

The Ark of the Covenant: (v. 10-22)

Why did the Ark come first?

The construction of the ark, the table and the lampstand (10–40) preceded the construction of the tent to house them. ‘The Tabernacle serves ... them. They do not serve the Tabernacle.’

The Ark was the exact place where God descended to dwell with his people. His very presence would inhabit this space.

The innermost tent of the Tabernacle housed the Ark. This area was _____.

By starting with the ark, God was working from the inside out. He was also putting first things first, beginning with the holy place for his dwelling. (Ryken)

God not only told them _____ to build. He told them _____ to build it. (v. 10-15)

¹⁰ "They shall make an ark of acacia wood. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. ¹¹ You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside shall you overlay it, and you shall make on it a molding of gold around it. ¹² You shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. ¹³ You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. ¹⁴ And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark by them. ¹⁵ The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. ¹⁶ And you shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give you.

The lesson for all people in all times and places? _____ determines how He is to be worshipped!

Also notice the lesson of the _____: God is _____ and must be worshipped in _____.

Why were the poles permanent?

One commentator notes:

"The ark has the same proportions as the footstool of an ancient king (25:10-13). When a king sat in judgment, he sat on his throne and put his feet on a footstool. But Israel is not ruled by a human king. God is her King. And God reigns from heaven. So he is, as it were, seated on his throne in heaven with the ark as his footstool on earth.

*In Isaiah 6, God's throne room is in the temple, but all that can be seen of God is the train of his robe, because God reigns from heaven with his feet touching the earth in the temple. In Isaiah 66:1, the Lord says, "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?" Moreover, a number of passages speak of God being enthroned between the cherubim (1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; Psalms 80:1; 99:1). ... **This is the point where God's throne in heaven touches the earth.***

- Tim Chester

God instructed Moses about what should go **inside** the Ark: (v. 16)

¹⁶ And you shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give you.

Inside the ark Moses deposited "the Testimony" – the two tablets containing the words of the Ten Commandments (see Exod. 31:18). The Ark contained the terms of God's relationship with Israel: two complete copies of his law for their lives.

Now consider the **exterior** of the ark:

¹⁷ "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. ¹⁸ And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹ Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. ²⁰ The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. ²¹ And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. ²² There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel. (Exodus 25:17-22)

Cherubim are special angels mentioned almost 100 times in the Old Testament.

They first appear in Scripture in Genesis 3, where they were charged with guarding the way to the _____. This seems to show their _____.

Unlike some of the other angels, the cherubim are not _____, but remain in God's presence to act as _____ to deny access to anything/anyone _____.

Consider how Ezekiel describes them:

⁵ And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, ⁶ but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze. ⁸ Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: ⁹ their wings touched one another. Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went. ¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle. ¹¹ Such were their faces. And their wings were spread out above. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. ¹² And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. ¹³ As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. ¹⁴ And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning. (Ezekiel 1:5-14)

²⁰ These were the living creatures that I saw underneath the God of Israel by the Chebar canal; and I knew that they were cherubim. (Ezekiel 10:20)

99 The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! (Psalm 99:1)

¹⁹ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. (Revelation 11:19)

This demonstrates that the Ark of the Covenant was an _____ symbol of a _____ reality. Its cover was a three-dimensional picture of a scene from Heaven, where God is surrounded by his holy angels. The cherubim on the ark represented the burning angels beneath God's throne.

Above these cherubim – whom Hebrews calls “the cherubim of the Glory” (Heb. 9:5a) – was the holy presence of God. The space above the cherubim was _____. God did not tell Moses to make any representation of his divine being. Any such representation would have been a _____, an idol of a false god.

This is also where Moses met with God and received his commands.

Another name for the tabernacle was “the _____” (see Exod. 29:42; 30:36). The specific place where Moses went to meet with God was the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies. There, between the cherubim, was the glorious presence of God.

The Bible says, “When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony. And he spoke with him” (Num. 7:89).

This is what the tabernacle was all about: _____, who sits enthroned above the cherubim.¹

But how?

¹ Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, 818–819.

The Ark and Atonement: The “Mercy Seat”

Generally translated “atonement cover” or “mercy seat,” *kappōret* almost exclusively occurs in Exodus 25 and 37 (in the building of the ark of the covenant) and in Leviticus 16.

The word describes the golden cover placed on the ark of the covenant.

The mercy seat was used only once a year, on the _____. This is reflected in its name, which in Hebrew is *kapporet*, a term derived from the word that means “to make atonement.”

The ark’s cover was used in making atonement for sin. First the high priest offered a sacrifice for his own sins. The law said,

“Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering.... He is to take some of the bull’s blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover” (Lev. 16:11, 14).

After he made atonement for his own sins, the priest offered a sacrifice for the nation of Israel:

“He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull’s blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been.... [H]e comes out having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel” (Lev. 16:15, 16a, 17b).

When the high priest sprinkled blood on the mercy seat, this showed that sin was _____, that atonement had been made. The sacrificial blood protected them from the _____.

The *location* of the blood was significant.

Above it was _____, in all his holiness.

Underneath was the _____ that exposed Israel’s sin.

In between came the blood of the atoning _____ that covered transgression and turned away wrath, reconciling the people to God.

The blood on the ark thus provided safety from judgment. When God came down to dwell with his people, he would not see the law that they had broken, first of all, but the saving blood of an atoning sacrifice.

A quick lesson in New Testament Greek from Bill Mounce:

New Testament noun: ἱλασμός (*hilasmos*).

Hilasmos refers to “an atoning sacrifice” or “propitiation.” This word occurs in 1 John 2:2 and 4:10.

² *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*

¹⁰ *In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Jesus is himself the sacrifice that atones for sin. Our sins have destroyed our relationship with God, but Christ’s shed blood purifies us from all sin and restores us to fellowship with God (1 John 1:6–7).

⁶ *If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

New Testament noun: ἱλαστήριον (*hilastērion*).

Hilastērion means “atonement cover” or “sacrifice of atonement” or “that which propitiates or expiates.” In the Septuagint, it’s used almost exclusively for the atonement cover (*kappōret*) placed on top of the ark of the covenant.

1. In Hebrews 9:5, *hilastērion* corresponds to the Old Testament use – the atonement cover on top of the ark. That’s where God dwelt in all his glory.

⁵ *Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat.*

2. The other use of *hilastērion* is in Romans 3:25, where Paul writes that God has presented Jesus as a “place of atonement.”

²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* ²⁴ *and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,* ²⁵ *whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. (3:23-25a)*

This word must relate first to its Old Testament usage, so that Jesus is the person/place where God passes over our sins without punishing them because of his sacrifice. Christ now occupies the very place the atonement cover inhabited in the Most Holy Place for the removal of sins on the Day of Atonement. He’s also the One in whom God lives in the flesh, and the One through whom God’s wrath against sin (Rom. 1:18) is placated, resulting in a renewed relationship between God and rebels.

¹⁸ *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ...*

When we put these two Greek nouns together along with the verb *hilaskomai*, we see that Jesus is represented in the New Testament as **the priest who performs the atonement sacrifice** (*hilaskomai*), as **the One who is himself the atonement sacrifice** (*hilasmos*), and as **the place where the atonement sacrifice occurs** (*hilastērion*).

Everything we need for God’s forgiveness, for the removal of God’s anger, and for reconciliation with God himself can be found in Jesus!

Isn’t God great?