

The Tabernacle: A Picture of Jesus

Exodus 25 - 30

PPT Title

The Tabernacle: A Picture of Jesus

Main Point: God provided a way to be with His people.

Key Verse: *Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.* - Exodus 40:34 ESV

Materials: Two small identical clear glasses, clear oil, water, food coloring, thin card

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: God gave the 10 Commandments to show the people that they desperately needed Him. He set a boundary around the mountain to show the people that their sin separated them from God. He also had the people wash their clothes so that they could see the difference between what is filthy and what is clean.

THE PLAN

Say: God is perfectly holy; there is nothing impure about Him at all. Mankind is sinful; every person has sinned. The Bible says this about God: "Your eyes are too pure to look at what is evil. You can't put up with the wrong things people do." (Habakkuk 1:13)

It's sort of like this. **Have two small glasses. Fill one to the brim with water. Say:** Man is sinful. Our sins make us **not pure. Drop food coloring into the water and stir gently. Take an identical glass and pour oil into it, to the brim. Say:** God is completely pure without one drop of sin. Because He is sinless, and we are sinful, the two can not mix. Place a playing card or credit card over the WATER, turn it upside down and place it on top of the oil cup. Align the two. Pull the card just slightly so a few bubbles of oil can move past it. The oil will rise to the top and displace every bit of the impure water.

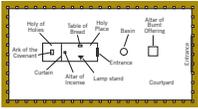
Say: But God wanted to be with His people, so He made a way to be with them. His plan was to send Jesus to take away our sin and make us holy. God would send Jesus when the time was just right (Galatians 4:4-5).

In the meantime, God really wanted His people, the Israelites, to understand His holiness *and* His desire to be with them. God told them to build a special place called a Tabernacle as a way for them to see these two things. Although the Israelites didn't know it at the time, every part of the Tabernacle was actually a symbol for Jesus (Hebrews 8:5, 9:11).

The word Tabernacle means "tent", "place of dwelling", or "sanctuary". The Tabernacle would be set up in the middle of the camp with each of the 12 tribes of Israel surrounding it. As the people were traveled through the dessert, they would pack up the Tabernacle, carry it with them, and then set it up when God told them to stop traveling. Of course, God did not need a house for Himself. The Tabernacle would be a sign for the Israelites that God was with them.

God asked the people to give an offering of gold, silver, bronze; blue, purple, and red yard; fine linen; goat hair; ram skins; cowhides; acacia wood; olive oil; stone and gems. This sounds like a very interesting offering, doesn't it? God said they could give these

things only if they wanted to. *God loves a cheerful giver!* - 2 Corinthians 9:7



God told Moses the exact plans, down to the inch, for how He wanted the Tabernacle to be built. This is because God is a perfect and holy God who had a perfect plan for His dwelling place. So Moses and the people brought their offerings and used them to begin building the Tabernacle. God continued to appear as a pillar of clouds by day and a pillar of fire by night (Numbers 14:14, Nehemiah 9:19). This was a very big way for God to say that **He was ALWAYS with His people!**

THE TABERNACLE

Say: When the Tabernacle was finished, it had several distinct parts.



When you first came to the Tabernacle, you'd be in the **Courtyard** that went around the Tabernacle. The courtyard was very large, with a wall going all the way around it. All the Israelites were allowed in the courtyard.



At the front of the courtyard was the **Bronze Altar**. This is where animal sacrifices were offered. Our sin leads to **death** (Romans 3:23) and separation from God (Habakkuk 1:13). But God loves us and He provided a way to pay for our sins. What is the opposite of death? *Life!* Listen to this verse:

*The **life** of each creature is in its blood. So I have given you the blood of animals to pay for your sin on the altar. Blood is life. That is why blood pays for your sin.* - Leviticus 17:11

God told the people that their sin would be covered when they killed a perfect male animal from the herd, a male without any flaws (Leviticus 1:3). The animal, often a lamb, would be the substitute for the person and would cover his sin.

The man must place his hand on the head of the burnt offering. Then the Lord will accept it in place of him. It will pay for his sin. - Leviticus 1:4

The bronze altar was a symbol of the cross because when Jesus, the perfect Lamb, died for our sin, our sins were paid for in full. No more sacrifices were needed ever again. When Jesus died, He **TOOK AWAY** our sin. Our sin was not merely "covered" but rather it was taken away. (See Hebrews 10:1-10.)



Near the Bronze Altar was the **Basin**. The Basin was filled with water and was used for ceremonial washing. Before a priest could do anything important, he would first have to wash in the basin. Washing was a symbol that man had to be pure before he could approach a holy God. It is important to remember that being physically clean is not important; it is only a *symbol* that our lives are not clean without God. Sins cannot be washed away with water. With Jesus, there is complete regeneration – **NEW LIFE**. It is not merely a washing away of the old, but rather a completely new creation.

If you kept on walking, you'd see towards the back of the courtyard was a large building covered in animal skins. This was the heart of the Tabernacle. When you enter this building, you'd be in the Holy Place. Not everyone was allowed to enter the Holy Place!



The **Holy Place** was a room where the priests burned incense and did other ceremonies. It was a great privilege to be able to work in the Holy Place. Inside were a couple items of furniture:



The Lamp stand – Made of pure gold, the lamp gave light inside a dark room. The lamp stand was a symbol of Jesus being the Light of the World.



The Table with the Bread – Twelve loaves of bread, which represented the twelve tribes of Israel, were placed on this table. Later, Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life. (John 6:48)



The Altar of Incense – The smell of the incense burning is a symbol of prayer. Just as a smell fills the room, so our prayers go up to God as a sweet fragrance.

At the far end of the Holy Place was a very thick curtain that divided this special room. On the other side of the curtain was **The Holy of Holies** (also called the Most Holy Place). A very **thick curtain** was put in front of it to separate it from the Holy Place. This curtain shielded sinful man from a holy God. The thick curtain was a symbol of a barrier in the relationship of God to man.

Nobody but the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and he could only come in once a year. Before the high priest could enter, he had to wash himself, put on special clothing, bring burning incense to let the smoke cover his eyes from a direct view of God, and he had to bring blood to make atonement for sins.

Ask: What separates people from God? *Sin.*

Say: Many years later, when Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom, indicating that through Jesus' sacrifice, all people had direct access to God.



Inside the Holy of Holies was the **Ark of the Covenant**. This held the 10 Commandments and a sample of the Manna that God provided for the Israelites in the desert.

The Atonement Cover – This was on top of the Ark of the Covenant.

Say: "Once the Tabernacle was completed, the cloud that led the Israelites moved into position about the Holy of Holies. It signified God's presence in the midst of His people." (*Stranger on the Road to Emmaus* by John Cross).

God has always wanted to be with His people. Because God is perfectly holy and people are sinful, we were separated from Him. The Tabernacle was a picture of God's plan to take away the sins of the world. The Tabernacle was a temporary solution; Jesus would be the permanent solution to bring people back to God.

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