

## “THE TYPOLOGY OF THE BIBLE” SERIES

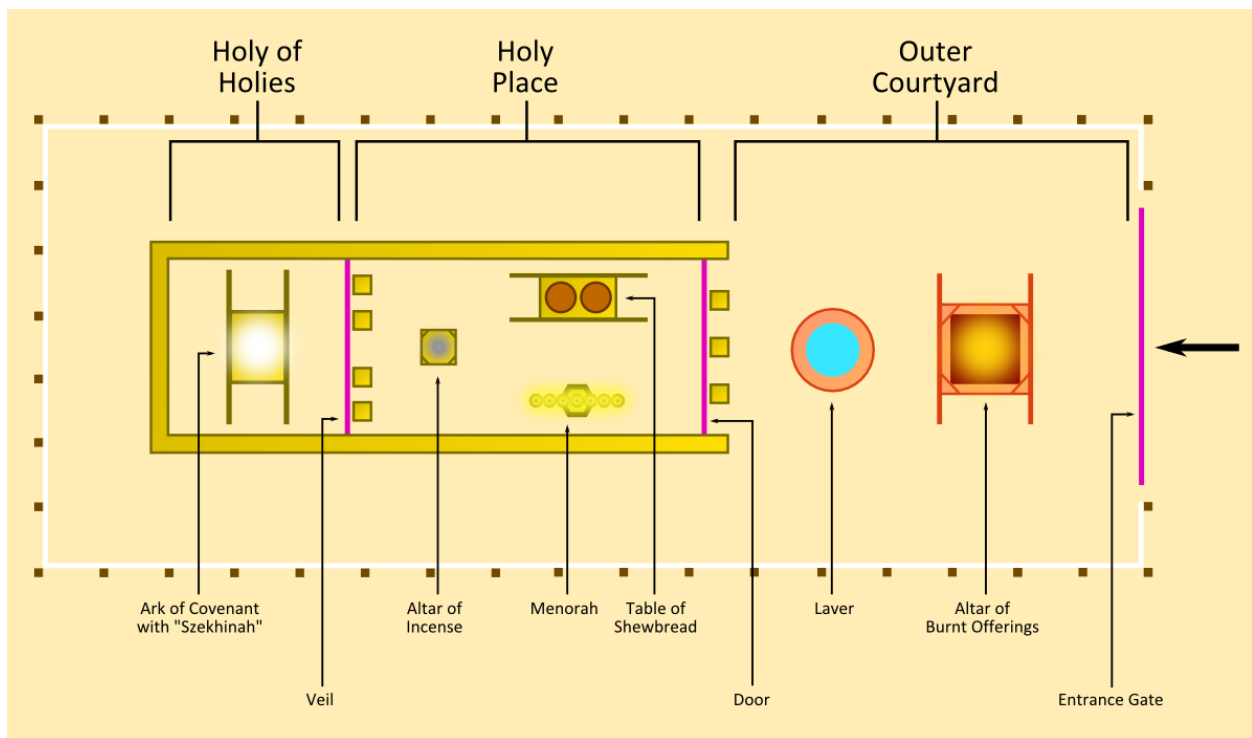
### #6: “The Tabernacle and Christianity”

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 25-28; Hebrews 9-10

#### INTRO:

In Exodus, chapters 25 through 28, God gave Moses detailed instructions for a “sacred tent,” or “tabernacle,” that would, eventually, be replaced by the Temple in Jerusalem, which Solomon would build.

On the screen, you can see the layout of the Tabernacle and the things in the outer court.



Around the “sacred tent” was an *outer courtyard*. Only Jews were permitted; Gentiles were forbidden. As a Levitical priest would enter that courtyard, the first thing he would come to was the *alter of burnt offerings*. The second thing he would come to was a *laver of water*.

On beyond the laver of water was the entrance to a large room called the *Holy Place*. Inside this large room were three things: a *Menorah*, or *Golden Candlestick*; a *Table of Shewbread*, or unleavened bread; and an *Alter of Incense*.

Beyond the Alter of Incense was a curtain or veil that separated this large room from a smaller room. The smaller room was called the *Most Holy Place* or the *Holy of Holies*. In that smaller room was a large chest called the *Ark of the Covenant*. In it were the stone tablets on which were inscribed the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, and some of the manna which God had provided when the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness.

The Holy of Holies was also the place of God's presence.

Only priests could enter the Holy Place, but only after they had offered an animal in sacrifice on the alter, washed in the laver of water, and put on clean robes.

Once they entered the Holy Place, where the Menorah was the only light, they would perform their duties, igniting the alter of incense from coals from the alter of sacrifice, and eating the bread from the table, which had to be replaced every seven days.

Only the high priest could go into the Holy of Holies. He did this once a year, on the day that was referred to as "*the day of atonement.*" He would offer sacrifice on the alter (a bull for himself and a kid goat for the people), wash in the laver, put on a clean robe, go into the Holy Place, then lay aside his robe, put on special garments, and go into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle blood on the lid of the Ark amid smoke from burning incense. After exiting the Tabernacle, a second goat, called "the escape goat," or "scapegoat," would symbolically carry the sins of the people off into the wilderness.

Now, this whole system, including the physical Tabernacle and its furnishings, is a "type" of Christianity that was to come through Christ.

Listen carefully. Understanding this is a vital key to understanding Christianity and our relationship with God through Christ.

In the New Testament, in the book of Hebrews, chapters 9 and 10, the writer explains how all this stuff concerning the Law, the Tabernacle and the Levitical priesthood are only temporary "types" of what was to come when the Messiah came. Hebrews 9:23 says: "*These things are only copies of what is in heaven...*"

Let me explain...

#### ***THE PRIESTS WERE COPIES OR SHADOWS OR TYPES OF US.***

John wrote in Revelation 1:6, speaking of Jesus, "*He lets us rule as kings and serve God his Father as priests.*" Peter, in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:9, wrote: "*But you are God's chosen and special people. You are a group of royal priests and a holy nation.*"

In the Old Testament "type," only Jews of the tribe of Levi could be priests. In the New Testament "anti-type," anyone – Jew or Gentile – can be a priest of God.

**THE OUTER COURT WAS A "TYPE" OF THE WORLD.**

The partition that kept Gentiles out has been broken down, so all sinners, both Jew and Gentile, may gain entrance to the Temple outer court. John 3:16 tells us, *"God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die."*

**THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE WAS A "TYPE" OF CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS.**

Just as before a priest could enter the Tabernacle itself he had to offer sacrifice on the altar, when we come from the world and our sinfulness, we must accept the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as an atonement for our sins.

**THE LAVER OF WATER WAS A "TYPE" OF THE CLEANSING AND FORGIVENESS WE RECEIVE WHEN WE REPENT AND SUBMIT TO BAPTISM.**

Just as the priest was to wash in the laver of water and put on a clean robe, we must be "washed" in the baptismal water and "put on" Christ. Paul wrote in Galatians 3:26-27: *"All of you are God's children because of your faith in Christ Jesus. And when you were baptized, it was as though you had put on Christ in the same way you put on new clothes."* God said Exodus 30:20, *"Make a large bronze bowl and a bronze stand for it. Then put them between the altar for sacrifice and the sacred tent, so the priests can wash their hands and feet before entering the tent... Each priest in every generation must wash himself in this way, or else he will die right there."*

Jesus said, in John 3:5, *"I tell you for certain that before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the spirit."* The word translated "water" here is the Greek word for H<sub>2</sub>O, not amniotic fluid, so Jesus was referring to "baptism" here.

Hebrews 10:19-25 explains: *"...the blood of Jesus gives us courage to enter the most holy place (where, in the Tabernacle, only the high priest could go) by a new way that leads to life! And this way takes us through the curtain that is Christ himself.*

*"We have a great high priest who is in charge of God's house. So let's come near God with pure hearts and a confidence that comes from having faith. Let's keep our hearts pure, our consciences free from evil, and our bodies washed with clean water. We must hold tightly to the hope that we say is ours. After all, we can trust the one who made the agreement with us. We should keep on encouraging each other to be thoughtful and to do helpful things. So some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting for worship, but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting close."*

Paul wrote in Titus 3:5, *“He (God) saved us because of his mercy, and not because of any good things that we have done. God washed us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He gave us new birth and a fresh beginning.”*

***THE HOLY PLACE IN WHICH THE LEVITICAL PRIESTS FUNCTIONED WAS A “TYPE” OF THE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM OF GOD.***

Just as the Holy Place was where the priests served, you and I, as born-again believers, are priests, serving God in the church. We are a part of the church by virtue of our acceptance of Jesus, our repentance from sin, and our baptism into Christ.

***THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD WAS A “TYPE” OF OUR TABLE OF COMMUNION.***

While the shewbread was replenished with twelve freshly baked cakes of bread every Sabbath Day, and was for the high priest and the other priests, Communion was observed every week, on the first day of the week, by the apostle-led early church. It was for all baptized believers and was considered so important that a portion of it was delivered by deacons to the homes of those who couldn't get out to the assembly.

***THE MENORAH, OR CANDLESTICK, WAS A “TYPE” OF CHRIST, WHO IS THE ENLIGHTENING WORD OF GOD.***

It was the only source of light in the Holy Place. Christ, the living word, is the only source of the light of truth for the church.

The fuel for the Menorah was olive oil, which is a type of the Holy Spirit.

***THE ALTAR OF INCENSE WAS A “TYPE” OF PRAYER.***

The priests were required to replenish and burn incense upon this altar every morning and evening (Exodus 30:7-8). This was done after the lamps of the Menorah had been trimmed and replenished.

Only incense prepared according to a prescribed recipe was to be used on this altar. Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, used the wrong kind of incense and died for it, so God was very particular about this altar of incense.

The hot coals for it came from the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard. On the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur, the high priest would carry coals and incense from it into the Most Holy Place.

It was actually considered a part of the Most Holy Place, but it was located in the Holy Place so that the priests could tend to it.

Sweet-smelling smoke from incense represented the people's prayers ascending to God. Burning this incense was a continuous act, just as we are to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Today, Christians are assured their prayers are pleasing to God the Father because they are offered by our great high priest, Jesus Christ. Just as the incense carried a perfumed odor, our prayers are scented with the righteousness of the Savior. In Revelation 8:3-4, John tells us the prayers of the saints ascend to the altar in heaven before the throne of God.

As the incense in the tabernacle was unique, so is Christ's righteousness. We cannot bring prayers to God based on our own false claims of righteousness, but must offer them sincerely in the name of Jesus, our sinless mediator.

***THE VEIL, OR CURTAIN, THAT SEPARATED THE HOLY PLACE FROM THE MOST HOLY PLACE WAS A "TYPE" OF THE BODY OF JESUS.***

This was a curtain woven from blue, purple and scarlet yarn that was embroidered with the image of a seraphim. It kept hidden the Holy of Holies area that contained the Ark of the Covenant. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would enter through the curtain with coals and incense from the Altar of Incense and with blood from the sacrificial lamb to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat, which was the top, or lid, of the Ark.

The New Testament, in Hebrews 10:19-20, tells us that *"the blood of Jesus gives us courage to enter the most holy place by a new way that leads to life! And this way takes us through the curtain that is Christ himself."*

In Matthew 27:51, we are told that at the very moment Jesus died, *"the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."*

***THE MOST HOLY PLACE, OR HOLY OF HOLIES, WAS A "TYPE" OF HEAVEN.***

The presence of God was in the Most Holy Place. The only way into it was through the curtain from the Holy Place, and only the high priest was allowed to enter it, and then, only after he had offered sacrifice and cleansed himself in the Laver of Water.

So, we know from this "type" that we who die as believers in Christ who have been born again, of the water and the Spirit, will find ourselves in the very presence of God. We know that since Christ is the "once and for all" sacrifice, that since we have been "buried with Him" in baptism, and that since He is the curtain we must go through to enter the presence of God, we'll enjoy heaven some day!

**CONCLUSION:**

**The Tabernacle is no more. The Temple that replaced it is no more. Some misunderstand Bible prophecy and believe that the Temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt. A lot of Jews want to rebuild it in preparation for the arrival of the Messiah. But it will never be rebuilt – not the actual Temple in Jerusalem. The Messiah has already come. The temple sacrifices are no longer needed – no longer valid. Christ’s sacrifice was “once for all” – the sacrifice to end all sacrifices.**

**But the New Jerusalem is coming to the “new earth.” We are presently serving God as “priests” in the “holy place,” which is the church, as we await Jesus, our high priest, to take us through the curtain into the presence of God and into the eternal city after He purges it with fire and restores it to the way it was in the beginning.**