

That The World May Know: With All Your Heart – Session 2: Making Space for God

A Closer Look at the Tabernacle

We cannot fully comprehend that the all-powerful, transcendent Creator God instructed the Israelites to build the place for his presence to dwell among them. We can gain a deeper understanding of our awesome, faithful, and loving God! The tabernacle, its furnishings, and its ritual are also a metaphor for God's relationship with his people!

1. Which prominent items were located in the courtyard? What was their function in the relationship between God and his people?
Exodus 20:22 – 26
Exodus 27:1 – 8
Exodus 30:17 – 21
2. What furnishings were built for the holy place? What was their function in the relationship between God and his people?
Exodus 25:23 – 30
Leviticus 24:5 – 9

Exodus 25:31 – 40
Leviticus 24:1 – 4

Exodus 37:25 – 29
Leviticus 16:1 – 14

Exodus 25:10 – 22
3. After all parts of the tabernacle were completed as God had commanded, who set up the tabernacle? What happened as soon as the work was complete?
Exodus 39:42 – 40:38

The Tabernacle as a Wedding Chamber

The Bible reveals the amazing truth that God the Creator desires to establish a loving, intimate relationship with his people. It portrays God as a faithful husband who desired a personal and deep relationship with his bride. The tabernacle was essential to that picture. It provided the holy, pure place where God could live in intimate relationship with his people.

1. What word picture concerning his people did God use to describe the weeks of travel through the desert between his rescue of the Hebrews from Egypt and their arrival at Mount Sinai?
Jeremiah 2:1 – 3
2. What had God done to express his love for his people? What did he desire them to be?
Exodus 19:1 – 6
Deuteronomy 7:6 – 16
3. What powerful metaphors describe the moment when Jesus—the sinless Lamb of God—returns to the faithful community of Christ followers?
Revelation 19:1 – 10

The Scapegoat Foreshadowing the Messiah

Regular sacrifices on the altar of the tabernacle played a significant role in the Hebrew's spiritual lives. Guilt offerings, burnt offerings, and sin offerings all involved the sacrifice of animals. The annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement stood out as a picture of God's forgiveness of his people's sins. As strange as this ritual may seem to us, it foreshadowed the sacrificial death of Jesus, who took the sins of the whole world upon himself.

1. Instructions for the Day of Atonement, the Israelites' annual atonement and cleansing are found in Leviticus. What steps did the high priest (Aaron, Moses' brother) have to do before entering the tabernacle to conduct the sacrificial ritual on the Day of Atonement?
Leviticus 16:3 – 13

What protected the high priest from death when he entered the most holy place?
Leviticus 16:12 – 13

What did the high priest do in the holy of holies? Why?
Leviticus 16:14 – 17

What did the Israelites know had occurred when the high priest came out of the tabernacle?
Leviticus 16:17 – 19

What did the scapegoat carry away?
Leviticus 16:20 – 34
2. What did the sacrifice of Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God, accomplish that the atonement sacrifices offered by the priests could not?
John 1:29 – 34
John 3:16 – 21

God “Re-Creates” His World

“In the beginning, God created . . . and it was very good” (Genesis 1:1 and 31). Ever since that moment, the chaos of sin has been at work to destroy God’s perfect creation. God provided the Torah and the tabernacle to teach them how to live in intimate relationship with him and display his character to the world.

1. After speaking to the chaos and bringing about order, how pleased was God with his original creation?
Genesis 1:25 – 31
2. Why did God send the great flood to destroy the earth during the time of Noah?
Genesis 6:1 – 8
3. Jewish thought has recognized a connection between the construction of the tabernacle and the creation of the universe (Psalm 78:69). In what ways might the idea that God is “re-creating” his world through the tabernacle metaphor be supported by the day of the year that the tabernacle was erected for the first time?
Exodus 40:17 – 19

What is the metaphor of the day of the year that Noah “uncovered” the ark and the human race began making a fresh start?
Genesis 8:13 - 14

Being God’s Presence Today

God has long desired for the people he created to become his partners in restoring *shalom* to all things. The ancient Hebrews were part of that plan, but they needed to be trained and shaped into a people who would love and obey the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and strength and thereby fulfill his purpose. The tabernacle was part of that shaping process. Today, followers of Jesus no longer worship God at a tabernacle where there is a dedicated space for God.

1. God gave Moses instructions for building the tabernacle and creating a space where the God of Israel could live among his people. What could prevent God from filling this space?
Exodus 32:7 – 10
2. After God punished the Israelites because they sinned against God by creating and worshiping the golden calf, what did he say he would do because he was displeased with them?
Exodus 32:35
Exodus 33:12 – 17

What did God promise Moses that he would do for his people?
Exodus 33:12 – 23

After the Israelites completed the space in the tabernacle for him to live, what did God do?
Exodus 40:34 – 38

What does all this reveal about God’s commitment to his promises and his willingness to forgive his people?

References

Genesis 1
Genesis 8
Exodus 19
Exodus 20
Exodus 25
Exodus 27
Exodus 30
Exodus 32
Exodus 33
Exodus 37
Exodus 39
Exodus 40
Deuteronomy 7
Leviticus 16
Leviticus 24
Psalm 78
Jeremiah 2
John 1
John 3
Revelation 19