

**'PORTRAITS OF CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE'**  
***('The Tent of Meeting' / God's Biblical Plan for Worship)***  
**Exodus 35-36**

**'The Space Tabernacle'**

*"The heavens declare the glory of God... in them He has set a tabernacle for the sun..." Psalm 19*

**Psalm 19** is a beautiful piece of music by David used in the tabernacle and later in temple worship. The musical masterpiece teaches worshipers the two primary ways God reveals Himself:

- 1) through '**Natural Revelation**' (*what He has made*) and
- 2) through '**Special Revelation**' (*what He has spoken*).

What can't be learned about God through keen understanding of nature is clearly supplemented by the Old and New Testament Scriptures. In special cases, God makes Himself known through both of these means at the same time. This is the case with *the Tabernacle* place of worship throughout the Old Testament and in the New Testament book of **Hebrews, chapters 8-10**. An awesome picture of this is **Psalm 19**'s declaration that our *heliocentric* (*sun-centered*) solar-system pictures spiritual truth about worship of God. As our sun is central to all things around it, planets, moons, meteors, etc. even so God, the Son, is centrally influential to everything, including earth and human history.

As the great gravity of the sun keeps all planets in our solar system revolving in orbit around it, so the will of God, through His Son, keeps history and humanity under His sovereign control. However, the further from the sun the planets and their moons are, the less influence it has upon them. And the greater the distance, the less influence the sun has; the darker and colder they become, their orbits become less and less stable than those closer.

So it is with people in their lives – the further from the Son of God they stray, God's influence upon them lessens in their lifetime orbits and their eventual, eternal destiny. As we know, earth alone is just the right distance, just the right slant of axis, just the right size and just the right distance from the sun to sustain intelligent life and beauty, in its circuits around the sun. So it is only with truly *born-again* believers who have trusted Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as Lord and Savior for their lives now and all eternity.

The tabernacle in the wilderness was God's picture of how to draw near to Him through worship in this lifetime, and intimately in the everlasting life to come. God's awesome glory and presence resided in the Most Holy Place where no one but the High Priest could come, and for him it was only annually. The Holy Place was where all of the priests were expected to enter regularly and experience the great privilege of serving God during their lives of ministry. Previously, in the tabernacle courtyard, was the one and only way of access to the tabernacle (*the altar of sacrifice and laver of cleansing*). If anyone didn't come this one and only way to meet the LORD, they were outside the orbit of God's grace, and destined, like a spiritually wobbly and unstable planet, to stray away into a dark abyss of spiritual alienation and an eternity totally separated from God.

For those who come God's way of forgiveness (*altar of sacrifice/ the cross*) and cleansing (*laver of washing/ baptism*), the way of abundant life and Christian service is our privilege (*a tabernacle of holy living and worship*). There we, God's NT priesthood (**1 Peter 2:9-10**), are allowed to partake of and share the holy *unleavened bread* of Scripture (*learning Christ and sharing Him with others*), to light the candelabra (*the anointing oil of the Holy Spirit burning in us and dispel this world's darkness about Christ*), and stand upon *holy ground* through intimate, holy fellowship with God at the altar of incense, whenever we pray. And since the veil of separation was torn when Jesus died on the cross, the way into the holiest of holies is open to true disciples of Christ! When this life, sometimes referred to as a *veil of tears*, is over our soul goes *beyond the veil* into His presence forevermore.

Worship then is a frequent progression of our *heart, mind, soul and strength* (**Mark 12:30**) away from the mundane things of daily living into spiritual, mental, and physical occupation with God in His way, on His terms – a total surrender to Him. It's not a building or structure anymore – it's a true worshipers' spiritual focus and frame of mind. It's not just posture (*anybody can kneel outwardly and physically to the wrong thing or for the wrong reason*). It's not just mental (*all kinds of false religions use meditation and trances*). But as **1 Thessalonians 5:23** affirms: **"...may the God of peace Himself, sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."** That's what will happen when *Christ-o-centric* worship takes place. And when it does, wherever you are becomes a ***tabernacle of the Son***.

**PtL**

## Spiritual 'Specs' of Worship

*(Lessons in worship from the Tabernacle building materials)*

Exodus 35-36

*“Take from among you an offering to the LORD. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the LORD: gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet, fine linen and goats hair ram’s skins dyed red, badger (or dolphin) skins and acacia wood...”* 35:4-9

### Gold, Silver, Bronze

*(Heaven’s very best most valuable materials)*

*(Gold/ God’s glory/ Revelation 21; Silver/ God’s word/ Psalm 12; Bronze/ God’s judgment/ Rev. 1)*

- Discuss how God deserves our very best when we worship. What does that entail for Christians as we bring Him our very best worship? *(in our singing, praying, listening to or teaching, fellowship and giving sacrificially?) (1 Corinthians 3:11-13)*
- What are some things done in religious services, that seem to bring God less than the best? *(style, format, appearances)*. What do you do to be sure to give God your best?

### Blue, Purple, Scarlet

*(Heaven’s most exquisite fine linen materials)*

*(Blue – heaven in the highest; Purple – divine majesty; Scarlet – red thread, blood-line of Christ)*

This material was especially used in the huge curtain between the *Holy Place* and the *Most Holy Place*, just in front of the altar of incense place of prayer. The priest prayed and the fragrance of the incense would saturate and waft into the *Holiest of Holies* where God’s actual presence abode. Outlines of cherubim were woven into the beautiful expanse of blue (reminder of heaven) and purple (reminder of majesty) with blood-red thread (to remind of the blood-line of Christ woven into everything connected to God & worship).

- Discuss how important to remember where our worship is ascending when we do it.
- Discuss how some religious services miss keeping the focus on God, thus fail to worship.
- How do you keep your focus on God, heaven and Christ throughout a worship service?
- When you serve in ministry how can you keep these 3 essentials in view of yourself and those you are teaching or serving? *(heavenly matters, God’s majesty & Jesus’ sacrifice)*

### Goat, Ram[, Rock Badger

*(Heavenly separations – the Tabernacle roof/ceiling coverings)*

*(1<sup>st</sup> layer Goat’s hair – sinfulness; 2<sup>nd</sup> layer Ram’s skin dyed red – substitutionary atonement; 3<sup>rd</sup> layer Badger skins/ Proverbs 30:26 high & lofty dwellings / God’s heavenly abode)*

Inside the tabernacle the **ceiling above the priest** was first the *goat’s hair* just to remind the priests that their service was only acceptable because of sacrifice for sin. The **next layer** he couldn’t see was the *ram’s skin dyed red* that God saw as the coming ‘blood sacrifice’ that would cover sin when Christ would eventually die on the cross. **The third layer**, *badger skin (animal that dwells in high and lofty crags of cliffs – or dolphin (but not easy to acquire)*, symbolizing the ocean expanse and the great expanse of the heavens between God and earth. This understanding was to help priests serve under the lofty view of God and that all service was acceptable to Him because of substitutionary atonement sacrifice.

- Whenever we serve the Lord in worship, how does it help to stop and think for just a moment about Who we are doing this for, why it is acceptable to Him and briefly thank God for Christ’s sacrifice to cover our sins and make our service worthy?
- Next time you are under a roof or ceiling for ministry or worship, what should you do to set apart the place, yourself and others for a divine encounter with God? *(2 Timothy 2:20-22)*.