

THE MESSIAH AND THE MISHKAN (Sanctuary)

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Introduction

“Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people and God himself shall be with them and be their God”.

(Rev. 21:3)

At the beginning of Messiah’s ministry, He drove out the money changers from the courtyard.

When asked by the Jewish religious leaders, by what authority He did that, He replied, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Knowing that Herod’s Temple took 46 years to embellish, those that heard His reply were perplexed. John then adds an explanation: “But He spake of the temple of His body” (John 2:21).

At the time of the Messiah, the Glory of God (Shekinah) had not indwelt the Temple for over 600 years and the Temple had replaced the Tabernacle 400 years prior to that. Now, the Glory of God was returning, but not within the Tabernacle/Temple, but within the body of Messiah. The Messiah was essentially saying that He and The Tabernacle /Temple are one and the same. Both bespeak of a dwelling place of the Most High God. It is interesting to note that at the close of the ages, the book of Revelation goes back to using the term “Tabernacle” rather than “Temple”. God’s original instructions to Moses were to build a Tabernacle (not a Temple, that was David’s idea). The focus of this study will concentrate on the furniture and functions of the Tabernacle (The Mishkan) during the 40 years in the wilderness and how they relate to the person of the Messiah. Indeed, I will show that everything in the Mishkan points to The Messiah.

Need for a Mishkan

Prior to the Fall, there was no need for God to have a special dwelling place with man because His primary purpose was to relate freely and intimately with man in the garden. After the Fall, that free association was broken and God no longer could commune freely with man; there was now the barrier of sin and a need for redemption. So, in the post-Fall world, the association between God and man would be different. Now, there would have to be a special place where God could dwell close to man and where also (on a limited basis) man could approach God. Man, now had to purpose to be in God's presence, but it couldn't be fully realized (as it was in the garden), until a redemptive act would remove the sin barrier. In an attempt to move back toward that intimate relationship with man, God would have two objectives: 1) Provide a new dwelling place for Himself. 2) Set up a plan of redemption for man.

God joined together both objectives and gave us a foreshadowing of His redemptive plan (through Messiah) by carefully creating every detail of the Tabernacle. First, since His people at that time were living in tents, He chose also to live in a tent (The word "Tabernacle" means tent). Already, we see an attempt of God to relate closely to His people- not to reside far off in some remote, austere, pilgrimage-inducing location, but in a tent in the midst of His people. In the plans of the Tabernacle, we see precisely in what place God would dwell (The Holy of Holies) and how man could approach God in that dwelling place (on Yom Kippur). The Tabernacle sacrifices and all the furnishings foreshadow how the redemptive plan would be realized through the Messiah.

We will approach the Tabernacle as a spiritually hungry person seeking to commune intimately with his Creator-God. To accomplish that goal, he must progress in four steps toward God, beginning from outside the courtyard curtain and then finally terminating by proxy in the inner sanctuary of the Holy of Holies:

Step 1. The person has to enter into the Tabernacle courtyard which is conveniently placed for all in the middle of the camp but reverently about 1000 yards, in all directions, from the nearest Israelite tent. The creation of the large open space between the nearest tent and the Tabernacle was deliberate and was not to be used for any secular activities. As a person walked that space, with his sacrificial animal, his “pilgrimage” toward God could easily be observed and the seeker had 5-10 minutes to meditate before reaching the Tabernacle curtain.

Step 2. Next, the person passed through the “gates” of the curtain and into the courtyard. This was as far as the average person could progress. The next two steps of closeness to God could only be attained by proxy through the priests.

Step 3. Only Levitical priestly representatives of the seeker could enter from the courtyard into the Holy Place wherein rests three holy objects.

Step 4. Lastly, this final step could only be attained once a year, by the High Priest alone (Aaron or his descendents), as he entered the Holy of Holies, saw the Ark and stood in the very presence of God.

Three Entry Veils

Veils were entrances. The enclosure surrounding the courtyard was called “The curtain”. To enter the courtyard, one had to pass through the outer veil which was referred to as “The Gate” as in Step two above. The veil that was the entrance into the tent in step three was referred to as “The Hanging” and the veil into the Holy of Holies, step four, was referred to as “The Veil”. The Lord God chose the materials, sizes and designs for each of the three veils and planned each detail as a symbol of some facet of the character or act of the Messiah. The first veil (The Gate) was 20 x 5 cubits (or 100 sq. cubits). The two successive veils on or in the Tabernacle tent are 10X10 cubits (or 100 sq. cubits). All three veils have the same area (100 sq. cubits) which would indicate that there is one and only one way (one size portal) to God. That exclusive portal would have to be the Messiah. “I am the Way...” (John 14:6). But note that there are two shapes for the veils. The first veil, called the Gate (or sometimes Gates) is half as high (5 cu.) and twice as wide (20cu.) as the two inner veils. This speaks of how easy (wide) it is to encounter or find the Messiah, but getting more intimate with Him requires a narrower but higher/loftier (10cu.) passage. Finding Messiah is easy, especially for Westerners, but following His words requires more diligence through a narrower passageway (Matt 7:14). Interestingly, the two inner veils on the Tabernacle tent, one to the Holy Place and the other to the Holy of Holies, are of the same size and shape, alluding to our walk with Messiah after our initial acceptance. There is a narrow gate to salvation, but Messiah tells us that His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11:30). Not to minimize struggle or persecution in a believers’ life, but once we have established a relationship with God He walks with us and leads us. He does not make access to Himself harder even if the walk is hard. This is emphasized by the size of the curtains remaining the same in the last two steps leading into the presence of God.

Moreover, there is no initial requirement for entering the Gate (only man's desire to be closer to God's presence) but entry through the second veil or "Hanging" requires sacrifice and cleansing and then only through a representative Levite. The requirement for entry through the third veil or Veil proper is more restrictive still. Only the High Priest, after more elaborate sacrifice and cleansing was allowed once a year to enter through the inner most Veil and he did so as a representative of all Israel, (and by extension, for all mankind). But, according to Heb. 10:20, Messiah is now that Veil and the Veil is His flesh. We enter into the presence of God through Messiah's flesh. Note that His flesh shields us from God's full Glory and majesty just as the original inner Veil protected the priests from being overcome by God's full Glory in the Holy of Holies. We cannot be exposed to God's full Glory until we ourselves receive our glorified bodies.

The material make-up of the three veils is also very significant. We note they are made up of woven wool (from sheep), fine linen (from cotton) and gold and silver strands (from the earth). This blend brings together the three substances of nature – animals, plants and minerals. These tripartite substances hint of the spiritual trinity but perhaps more importantly, bespeak of the Son of man as being earth formed. The same parallelism is noted in the colors used in the veils. The colors of the veils are combinations of red, yellow (gold) and blue. By mixing these primary pigments, every tint and hue seen on the Earth may be produced. God points to His redemptive plan which works within the confines of earthly possibilities by using only these colors in the Tabernacle. He sends His Son to us, becoming man that He might communicate through things of Earth that God desires a relationship with us.

The God of the Universe is immensely approachable and not distant. Notice that the three entry veils into the ultimate presence of God are not made up of locks or solid beams (akin to castle drawbridges)

but in deference to the lowliness and humility of Messiah, they are mere screens. Even though the veils are 4 inches thick, they are nonetheless a minimal separator between man and the God of the universe. That is just like Messiah who in lowliness and humility provides His own flesh (to be pierced for hanging just as the veils are pierced for hanging) as a minimal but essential gateway to God. Yet, through Messiah, we see what God is like, even though we can't experience Him fully. Likewise, the Shekinah Gloria in the Holy of Holies is visible at the top of the Veil as it sagged every 6 feet - between 4 nails. Thus, it hints that holiness is near at hand but for now we see through a glass darkly (Corinthians 13:12). It should be noted that the only difference between the two inner Veils is the number of pillars holding up the lintel to the Holy Place (5 in number) and, to the Holy of Holies (4 in number). I do not know what the significance of this difference is but I believe every detail is important and hope to discover the meaning of this differentiation.

Three Courtyard Structures

Upon entering the Tabernacle's courtyard, one encounters three large structures – the altar, the laver, and the tabernacle tent (Mishkan). The perimeter of the Tabernacle courtyard, defined by the outer linen curtain, has the shape of a rectangle. If the rectangle was divided across its width into two equal halves, at the center of the front half would be the altar of burnt-offering (at the center of the back half would be the ark of the Holy of Holies). The altar would be the first structure a worshipper would encounter as he passed through the “gates”. In life, someone sincerely seeking to worship the One True God must first encounter the sacrificed Messiah – the Lamb of God, the foundation of all worship. Likewise, the altar was the foundation of all worship. Daily ceremony existed mainly to consume sacrifices on the altar's fire. The fire “consumed” the confessed sins of the worshipper and made him acceptable before God. The Messiah atones for our sin and makes us acceptable before God. Just as the sacrifice was to be

wholly and fully immolated, we too are called to present our whole bodies and minds as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1). Burning called to mind the cloud of smoke on which the worshiper could imagine his prayers ascending to God who savored the smoke (Gen. 8:20). Similarly, after Messiah offered Himself on the altar of the cross, He too ascended upon high for He was our sacrifice. Note also that the cloud of fire (Shekinah Gloria) over the Ark was likewise ascending heavenward. Neither the fire on the Altar, nor the fiery cloud over the Ark ever went out for over 700 Years (approximately 1306-606B.C.), thus bespeaking of the faithfulness of Messiah who, I believe, was in both the fire and cloud.

The material of the altar also bespeaks of Messiah. This altar (unlike others in Genesis) is not made of semi-permanent stones or mud or mortar but of Perishable wood from the thorny Acacia tree. This is a foreshadowing of the Acacia cross upon which the “perishable” human form of Messiah with His crown of Acacia thorns was slain. In order to persevere through fire, the wooden altar was overlaid inside and out with copper. The copper is a sign of perseverance and endurance. In a similar way, the Messiah’s perishable human body becomes an eternal, enduring, heavenly body through His victory over death. The horns of the altar that pointed upward from the corners point man upward from the sacrifice toward heaven just as Messiah’s cross drew man’s eyes upward from death to resurrection. The ashes from the altar were placed between it and the entry curtain. A sign on the ashes read “It is finished” which were the first words a newcomer to the tabernacle would encounter. Those words, of course, we also recognize as the last words of Messiah on His altar. Ashes signify that a whole and ample sacrifice has been accepted (“accepted” in Hebrew is “turned to ashes”). They also imply humility (as in throwing ashes on one’s head) and bespeak of Messiah’s sorrow and humiliation upon the Cross. To keep the realities of the altar vividly in our minds, we are commanded to “measure the altar” (Rev. 11:1) to help us appreciate the value of Messiah’s death in our stead.

The second large courtyard structure is the Laver, or water basin. It was probably round, made of copper and was located between the Tabernacle tent and the altar. Its purpose was for ceremonial cleansing but for use only by the priests in attendance to their Tabernacle duties. Before a priest could enter the tabernacle, he had to be ceremonially clean, that is why the Laver was symbolically placed in front of the Tabernacle. The service of cleansing foreshadowed baptism in Christ. The necessity of the Laver's cleansing was symbolically anticipated by the flood, wherein the eight occupants of the ark were baptized (1 Peter 3:6). Centuries later, the Red Sea baptized all of Israel (1 Cor. 10:1,2). Those ancient baptisms, as well as the priests' Mikvahs, all had to be repeated because they were imperfect. However, the baptism in Messiah is once and for all (Titus 3:5). The Messiah is the "new Laver" because His baptism of us is continuous as we are eternally "washed" in Christ's blood. It is also interesting to note the connections between the Laver and Altar structures. The one held water and the other blood. (Whenever a sacrifice was placed on the Altar, there were strict regulations as to how (daubing, throwing or poring) and where (corners, horns, or lower wall etc.) the blood of the sacrifice was to be applied to the Altar. Both the water and blood remind us of the Messiah and thus to Calvary. He was the living water and the blood of the lamb.

The third large courtyard structure was the Tabernacle-tent itself. The tent is in the back half of the courtyard, wherein it dominates the triad of objects there. The Tabernacle tent has, itself, a built-in triad (three always representing the Trinity) – that is, the covering that creates the tent was to be in three layers. The innermost layer was made of wool, including finely woven linen and colored yarn. This, of course, was seen from inside the Tabernacle and therefore was ornately made in colors of blue, purple and scarlet with images of Cherubim woven into the fabric. The middle layer which was not visible from

either side was woven of goat's hair. The outside layer (which was exposed to the elements and needed to be weatherproof) was made of tanned Ram skins. God designated specifically that the floor not be covered but remain dirt which Solomon changed when he built the Temple. God's purpose was to represent an intimate connection with man who was made from the dust of the earth. This connection culminates in the Lord Jesus becoming man to redeem mankind from their sins. This was quite a contrast to the gold and ornate tapestries that were found inside the Tabernacle.

Throughout the Tabernacle, furnishings and objects are continuously grouped in sets of three. Within the courtyard: Altar, Laver and Tent; within the Holy Place: Mennorah, Showbread and Incense; Within the Holy of Holies: Ark, Seat and Shekinah Gloria; Within the Ark: Manna, Tablets and Rod. The trinity, of course, contains the Messiah; so wherever a triad/trinity is seen, the presence of the Messiah as part of the Trinity is implied. There is, however, one exception to the triad/trinity pattern. When considering the total furnishings of the tent, there are four items. The order of the four gives a clue to their significance and a possible hidden triad. The first two objects in the tent are the Menorah and the Table of Showbread. Since both are equidistant from the entrance or "hanging", they seem to be of equal value. The Menorah symbolizes the "light of the World" and the Table, the "Bread of Life". Together, they bespeak of Messiah partly because they are the first objects and man can only attain God if he first goes through Jesus. So, taken together as a unit, they could be considered, one object in two parts. That leaves the Altar of Incense (next in line from the entrance), and the Ark of the Covenant. Incense bespeaks of the prayers of the people, born upwards by the Holy Spirit. The Ark is the very dwelling place of God, the Father. So, now, we have a final triad/trinity connection: Mennorah and Showbread = Messiah; Incense = Holy Spirit; and the Ark = God the Father. "Thy way, O God is in the

Sanctuary” (Ps. 77:13) has new meaning, as we see how God reveals the trinity and His salvation plan in the very positioning of the furnishings in the Tabernacle.

Three Furnishings in the Holy Place

The front half of the Tabernacle is the room called the Holy Place and within it are three furnishings – the Menorah, the Table of Showbread, and the Altar of Incense. The Menorah (candlestick) is placed on the left side of the room and is the most universally recognized. It is Israel’s national symbol, found on its coins and official seals. It is made of about 100 pounds of gold (**One** talent to represent that the Menorah is the **One** and only) and is to be beaten work from **one** solid gold sheet. Being beaten bespeaks of the sacrificial death of Messiah. The numbers represented in the design also underscores the person of the Messiah. The seven branches of the candlestick allude to the Holy perfection of Messiah’s life. The seven branches are spoken of (in Hebrew) in the singular. Therefore, although there are seven flames on the Menorah, they are considered **one** light. Messiah is the **One** and only light of the world. On each of the outside branches of the Menorah, there are three triads of almond buds, blossoms and nuts; a total of triple “threes” represent the divine perfection of Messiah. The almond was perhaps selected by God because it’s the first tree to blossom in Palestine in the spring and its blossom is pure white after flinging off the dead outer protective shell. Jesus is the “First fruits of the dead” and is often depicted as being “pure white”. The fuel for illuminating the Menorah was to be the purest of olive oil, requiring several days to prepare. The olive berry had to be crushed and strained multiple times before it was deemed to be pure and holy. Likewise, Messiah had to be beaten, crushed and proven to be without blemish before He could redeem us with His eternal life. The Menorah was ignited daily only from the fire of the Brazen Altar, which itself had been ignited by an eternal fire sent from God on the day of dedication of the Tabernacle. Similarly, Messiah, the light of the world was sent by the eternal God who described Himself as a “consuming fire”.

Directly across from the candlestick was the Table of Showbread which held loaves of unleavened bread. The table was made of Shittim wood (Acacia) overlaid with gold. The amalgamation of perishable wood with eternal gold reminds us again of the humanity and Deity of Messiah. The top rim was to be crowned with gold, just as Messiah will eventually exchange His crown of thorns (probably made from the Acacia tree which has large thorns) for a crown of gold (when He rules the world in the Millennium).

It is significant that The Table held lowly bread rather than some exotic delicacy. As the bread was beaten (threshed) and ground (crushed), akin to bruising, reminds us that “He was bruised for our iniquities”. The bread was without leaven and was sifted eleven times into a fine flour so it was faultless, having no impurities and no leaven, like Messiah. Moreover, oil was added to the dough alluding to Messiah being the “Anointed One”. Twelve loaves of Bread, freshly baked each Friday afternoon would be placed on the table before Sabbath began each week. The week old bread was to be eaten by the priests and tradition holds that it was still warm and fresh when they ate it. Furthermore, however much each priest ate, he was fully satisfied and there was always bread left over. Does this not foreshadow the two times Messiah fed the multitudes, first with seven loaves and then five, for a total of twelve! Note in each instance, the multitudes were fully satisfied with bread leftover.

Still in the Holy Place but in front of the inner veil, was placed the Altar of Incense (or Golden Altar). Like the Table of Showbread, it too reflected Messiah because it was made of gold overlaid on Shittim Wood. It was the piece of furniture closest to the Holy of Holies and was the most desired ministrations station for the priests because it was the closest place they could be to the very presence of God.

Likewise, being one with the Messiah is the closest position we can attain to being in the presence of God. God carefully prescribed the five ingredients of the incense to be used. Its weight and amount of each substance was not to be changed upon threat of execution (Exodus 30:38). The spices in the incense were considered especially holy, reflecting Christ's holiness and the particular formula was forbidden to be used for any other purpose. Moreover, as the burning incense is before the Holy of Holies (the exact dwelling place of God) it represents the prayers of God's people before Him. David confirms this connection when he says in Psalm 141:2, "Let my prayer be directed before Thee as incense". Likewise, Messiah "also maketh intercession for us" (Rom 8:34), and will continue to do so until the time of judgment. It will be one of the last ministerial acts He will do before becoming King. Interestingly, the Altar of Incense is the last article to be put away when the Tabernacle is dismantled. It is significant that the Altar of Incense is connected to the courtyard or Brazen altar in three ways: They both share the designation of "altar"; the fire from the courtyard altar is the only fire that can also ignite the altar of incense and both are similarly square in shape, with four horns on the corners. Here, we see God is drawing us to connect the sacrifices done at the outer altar with the intercession represented by the inner altar. Messiah, in like manner, is both the ultimate sacrifice for our sins and our constant intercessor before God.

Articles in the Holy of Holies

The Holy of Holies is in the exact center of the back half of the Courtyard and the Ark is in the center of the Holy of Holies, giving it a priority position within both. There are three entities occupying that room – the Shekinah Gloria, the Mercy Seat and the Ark of the Covenant. It is worthy of note that the Shekinah is the only light source in the room. There are no windows, Mennorahs or other sources of light. The sages say that Torah is its own light (R'Bachya) and the Torah symbolically resided in the

Ark, in the form of the Commandment tablets. We also read in Revelation 21:23 that the only light source in Heaven is God and Jesus.

Of all the articles in the Tabernacle area, the Ark is the most mentioned in the Old Testament just as Messiah is the person most mentioned in the New Testament. An ark is simply a container for keeping valuables safe (as in Noah's ark). However, the Ark of the Covenant was very special for more than its contents. First and foremost, it was where the very presence of God rested. We also see the triune God reflected in the three layered construction of the box (excluding the lid). The outer and inner layers were gold representing the deity and permanence of the Father and Holy Spirit. But the middle layer was perishable wood (Acacia) which bespeaks of the humanity and mortality of the Messiah in His earthly body. Remember, that this construction, with its symbolism of three layers was also seen in the Outer Altar. The golden rods with which the Ark was to be carried were never to be removed from their rings which attached it to the Ark. This shows us that God was always ready to lead His people and was not static as were the idols made by man. However, when the stationary Temple replaced the portable Tabernacle, the rods were removed from their rings, perhaps suggesting that, like Messiah taking His seat on high after His ascension (Hebrew 1:3), the Pre-incarnate Messiah, "sat" and rested in the Holy of Holies. When the children of Israel marched in the wilderness, the Ark always went first, along with and just behind, the Shekinah Gloria. Similarly, Messiah always goes ahead of us, as believers, leading us into the heavenly Promised Land. The Ark, like God's face, was never to be seen (except by the High Priest on Yom Kippur) and was totally covered when it was moved outside the Tabernacle. But, just as Christ made God known to men, God made Himself known on Yom Kippur to the High Priest who was the people's representative.

The Ark as a single unit was technically only a five sided box. The lid forming the sixth side, with separate symbolism from the box, was called the Mercy Seat. The Mercy Seat, also called “the Throne of **Grace**”, directly points to the atoning **grace** of the Messiah. Significantly, on Yom Kippur, it alone, in the Holy of Holies, is sprinkled with the blood of the sacrificial bull. The people were assured by that act that the bull’s blood reached the throne of God (the Mercy Seat) just as we believe that the blood of Christ reaches the throne of God on our behalf. The High Priest delivered it in person just as Christ, the ultimate sacrifice, ascended into Heaven after His death, in part to offer His own blood directly to God in atonement for the sins of all mankind. The requirement that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin” (Hebrews 9:22) has been fulfilled in both cases.

The Mercy Seat was made of solid gold which does not decay so it is a suitable representation of the eternal God. The gold was to be one solid ingot of gold, (much like the golden candlestick). On the top were two cherubim. They were not affixed, but were to be **one piece** with the Mercy Seat (lid). The cherubim and lid were to be beaten and hammered into shape, and NOT CAST which reminds us of the beating and suffering of Christ. The fact that the two cherubim and the lid make an entity of three alludes to the trinity of the Godhead, three in one. The significance of having two (and not just one) cherubim hints also of the many **dualities** that point to the Messiah: He was called the “**second Adam**”. He will have had **two** “comings” to earth by the end of the age and was also called “the **beginning and the end**”. Jesus was referred to as a “faithful” witness, which usually required **two** people in Torah Law. (This either includes the Son and the Holy Spirit as the “two” required or is perhaps akin to the royal “we” of royalty. The cherubim stood with their faces toward each other but looking down, in a posture of humility and worship. This is in stark contrast to the two cherubim guards outside the Garden of Eden after the fall. Their posture was defensive - with swords outstretched and whirling about, thus

preventing entry to the garden (representing eternal life with God), since mankind was then under the eternal condemnation of sin without a deliverer. The Mercy Seat cherubim, on the other hand, reflect God's holy invitation for us to enter His eternal presence through the atoning blood of His son, Jesus. Directly above the Mercy Seat is the Shekinah Gloria. This is the most fascinating and unique entity in the Tabernacle because it is not a solid physical object but a type of cloud. The Shekinah rests on the Mercy Seat but does not penetrate into the Ark-box. While Jesus was in His human body, He laid aside His full Godly Glory. Therefore, The Shekinah does not penetrate into Jesus' earthly lifespan represented by the Ark.

In essence, the Tabernacle was created expressly for God the Father's residence – "They shall make me a sanctuary so that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). Prior to the Tabernacle, the Shekinah Gloria was seen at the entrance to the Garden of Eden after the fall, then in Moses' burning bush. Later, it led the Israelites out of Egypt and held back the Egyptian army. Days later, it augmented the announcement of the quail-provision miracle, and a few weeks hence, it rested on top of Mt. Sinai where it remained a year while the Torah was being written and the Tabernacle was being completed. When the Tabernacle (and later, the Temple) was ready, the Shekinah rested directly over the Holy of Holies and above the Tabernacle/Temple so as to be visible from some distance, thus showing the presence of God was with the people. This lasted for approximately seven hundred years, until the Captivity.

Next, it appears several times in conjunction with the Messiah's incarnation: First, at the annunciation of His birth to the shepherds, then at the Mt. of Transfiguration and lastly at His ascension. Its ultimate appearance will be with the Messiah at His second coming "on the clouds of Heaven with tremendous power and glory" (Matthew 24:30). This final and glorious appearance of the Shekinah hints to its

ultimate purpose – to be a harbinger of the presence of Messiah. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians makes this connection directly by referencing “the baptism unto Moses in the **Cloud**”, and the entity of the “rock that followed them” (in the wilderness) and then saying, “that rock was Messiah”. In other words, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire (the rock) that led the Israel in the wilderness was the Messiah, Jesus. We may assume that the cloud, prior to the captivity, was a manifestation of the pre-incarnate Messiah. Six hundred years later, it aligned with His incarnation, and ultimately, in the end times, it will usher in His enthronement as the King in the second coming. The cloud was Messiah’s glory. When Jesus became man, He gave up His glory temporarily for a human body. At the Mt. of Transfiguration, His humanity was blurred and He was transfigured back to His glory. The disciples saw the Shekinah Gloria– Christ’s glory overshadowing His humanity. The departing of the Shekinah from the Temple, just prior to the Babylonian sacking of Jerusalem, can be seen as a further connection between the Shekinah and the Messiah. As the Shekinah left the Temple, it lingered: first, at the door, and then the courtyard. It stopped again at the East Gate and ultimately it departed Jerusalem from the Mt. of Olives. Likewise, the risen Messiah, when He finally left Jerusalem at His ascension, He did so behind a cloud of Glory (Acts 1:9). When the Lord Jesus returns at His second coming, His route will be in the same sequence as His departure from the Temple only in reverse. He will initially set down on the Mt. of Olives (which will split in two). Then He will enter the Temple, by proceeding through the East gate and eventually take up His throne at or near the Temple. “Arise, shine (Jerusalem) for your light has come, the glory of Adoni has risen over you” (Isaiah 60:1 CJB).

Contents of the Ark

Our last set of threes in the Tabernacle is found inside the Ark itself, wherein lies the Decalogue, Aaron’s rod and a pot of manna. Remember that the significance of threes in the Bible is to point to the Triune God. The Decalogue was actually delivered by God three times, yet another triad. The first time

it was spoken directly from the mouth of God to the ears of all the Israelites (Exodus 20:22). This was to establish its authenticity when Moses would bring it in physical form. The second time, it was presented in perfect form on two tablets supplied and written upon by God. Those tablets were broken by man (Moses) just as Messiah was presented perfect in human form by God, but who was then broken by man. The third time, they were engraved by God on tablets hewn and carried by man (Moses). The third set was placed in the Ark. It is interesting to note that the Decalogue was written on two tablets, not one – two alludes to being an authenticated witness. God is leaving no doubt that the instructions are indeed from Him and not Moses' invention. The Decalogue is the foundational portion of Torah Law and for that reason it was included in the Ark. Messiah's connection to the Decalogue (and Torah) is that He is the fulfillment of the Torah (Matthew 5:17) and "the goal at which the Torah aims" (Romans 10:4).

The second object in the Ark was Aaron's rod. This rod was made famous in the aftermath of the Korah insurrection and judgment, occurring during the early years in the wilderness. To establish the priestly authority of Aaron, each tribe placed a rod of one of their leaders in the Tabernacle overnight. In the morning, only Aaron's rod showed buds, blossoms and almonds, thus authenticating the Levites and the Aaronic priesthood. At that point Moses kept the rod as a token, placing it inside the Ark (Numbers 17:10). The coming to life of the rod can be thought of as a resurrection – it was a dead branch and then revived to give fruit. In the same vein, Messiah was dead, came to life and bears fruit by giving eternal life to mankind. Aaron's priesthood was confirmed by resurrection – life out of death. Likewise, the priesthood of New Covenant believers rests upon His resurrection- bringing life out of the spiritually dead. The two events are intimately connected.

There is still another connection. Aaron's rod brought forth almond buds, blossoms and fruit. These are the same embellishments use to decorate the Menorrah (Exodus 25:31ff). No other embellishments in the Tabernacle use the almond buds, blossoms and fruit. We know the almond tree is the first to bud in the spring in the Promised Land, so both objects seem to point to the Lord Jesus as the First Fruits of God. Both reflect Jesus in another way. The gold of the Menorrah represents deity/eternity and the wood of the rod represents humanity/mortality, bringing together the two aspects of the Lord Jesus in human form. This was seen also in the combination of metal/wood in the Ark and Outer Altar. We also see here, the two in one confirmation or witness we have noted before. The Rod is the first, only life to sprout from the other dead rods in confirming Aaron's priestly leadership and it is the kind of tree that is the first to bloom (first fruit) in the spring. As Isaiah says, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him..." (Isaiah 11:1, 2).

The third object in the Ark was the Golden Pot of Manna. This was a complete food provided miraculously by God to sustain the Israelites nutritionally in the wilderness. Because it met all the Israelites needs and sustained life, it represented the life – giving power of Messiah. It was unknown prior to the exodus and ceased existing the day the Israelites entered the Promised Land. That is why

there was to be kept a commemorative sample of Manna in the Ark. When the Israelites first received Manna, they asked, "What is it?" (Hence the name "Man Hu" meaning "What is it?") It's interesting to note that when Messiah came, the disciples asked, "What manner of man is this... (Matthew 8:27)?

There are other similarities between the Lord Jesus and Manna. Manna could have stuck to the branches of the trees or bushes but God purposed for it to fall to the ground and lie in the dust of the Earth just as

the Messiah descended upon the earth and walked in the dust of the Earth. It came with the dew of the morning, bringing new life for the day; so, too, the Messiah baptized with water and new life came to the human spirit. The receipt of the manna required bending the knee to pick it off of the ground. In so doing, and without knowing, the recipient was paying homage to the “bread of life” (the Hebrew word for blessing means to kneel). Further, Manna eaten daily, provided just enough for that day (“Give us our daily bread”). Whatever amount the individual picked up, was enough for his needs for the day. There was always Manna left over. Likewise, Messiah gives us just what we need on a daily basis (“Full measure, shaken, pressed down, and running over”). Note also that the Manna was exclusively provided for Israelite life in the wilderness. It fell nowhere else on earth! So, too, Messiah is exclusively provided first for the Jew and then the Gentile (if grafted into the chosen people). Since Manna lasted for two days on Fridays, (providing for the Sabbath needs as well) it automatically taught about Sabbath keeping and God’s rest. The Lord Jesus was also called the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). As the Israelites rested on the Sabbath, they were paying homage to the pre-incarnate, Messiah.

Earlier in the beginning, we approached the need for a Mishkan through the four steps a pilgrim would make to commune intimately with his Creator-God. Physically, he was only allowed to take the first two steps because for entrance into the Tabernacle Tent’s two compartments was reserved only for priests. Was the pilgrim then robbed of being closer to his God? NO, because it was the Messiah, the Son of God, who made God the Father known; “He who hath seen me hath seen the Father.” At the moment of Messiah’s atoning death on the cross, the Curtain that separated the Holy of Holies (God’s presence) from the Holy Place was ripped from top to bottom – not from bottom to top lest anyone think that man did the ripping. The rent curtain represented that through Christ’s atonement for mankind, all believers had full access to God. But God wanted man to see His plan and understand the role of His Son on earth

so He foreshadowed Messiah in the symbolism of every part of the Mishkan: The entry gate was narrow and the only way into God's presence; the bronze altar was where the sacrificial animal was slain; the bronze laver where the priests purified themselves before entering God's presence; the hanging veil that separated the pilgrim from the inside of the Tabernacle; the three coverings of the Tabernacle tent representing the trinity; and finally the Shekinah hovering over the Holy of Holies. Yes, the pilgrim was closer to God than he might have realized, for every aspect of the Tabernacle was an image of Messiah Yeshua, Himself.