

Timeline of Truth – The Tabernacle Walk-Through

Based upon a Sermon by Stephen Wright Aughton Park Baptist Church – [HTTP://WWW.SERMONCENTRAL.COM/PRINT_FRIENDLY.ASP?SERMONID=99862](http://www.sermoncentral.com/print_friendly.asp?sermonid=99862)

1. The Outer _____ (Ex 27:9-18)

The first thing that you see as you approach the tabernacle is a fence that is about 7 feet high (2.15m) made of linen hangings hung on pillars. It was a barrier God's presence, as illustrated by the pillar of cloud or fire and the people. It reminds me that there is a barrier between each man, woman and Child and God. Like this fence, it is a man made barrier and is the result of our sin.

We were created to have fellowship with God, but stubbornly chose to go our own independent way, and our fellowship with God was broken. This sin can take the form of active rebellion against God and His standards or simply indifference. The Bible reminds us that All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23) and that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). As a consequence of our sin we die spiritually – we are separated from God – and eventually we die physically too.

2. The _____ (Ex 27:16)

There was only one entrance to the inner area. You had to go through this gate to get inside. It was covered by a curtain or screen made of fine linen embroidered in blue, purple and scarlet. It didn't matter who you were, if you wanted to get into God's presence you had to go in through this gate. The rich and poor went in the same way, so did Aaron, the high priest, and the worst sinner; Moses the leader and the least important Israelite.

This reminds me of Jesus Christ who said I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6) and I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. (John 10:9) He is the only way through which we can come to God and worship Him. Even the colours woven into the material of the gate remind me of Jesus:

- *The blue reminds me of the sky and that Jesus came from heaven – beyond the sky and returned there too. He was and is the eternal God.*
- *The purple reminds me of His royalty. It was a very expensive colour and later became associated with the Roman Emperor. Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.*
- *The scarlet reminds me of the blood that He shed when He died on Calvary in my place.*

These colours turn up time and time again in the construction of the tabernacle so they must be important.

3. The Bronze _____ (Ex 27:1-8)

When you went in through the gate the first thing that you saw was a big altar (7'6" or 2.3m square). It was made of acacia wood which was overlaid with bronze. There was always a fire burning there. This was where they burned the sacrifices. For a trespass offering (Lev 6) a person had to compensate the person they had wronged and bring a flawless ram to the priest – a scrawny old one, or one with a broken leg wouldn't do. The priest then killed it, sprinkled some of its blood on the alter and poured the rest of it at the bottom of the altar.

This reminds me of my sinfulness and the need for a sacrifice to deal with my sin and restore my relationship with God. The sacrifice had to be perfect. This reminds me of Jesus, the Lamb of God who bore away my sin when He died on Calvary as the perfect, willing sacrifice. 1Pe1:18 you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

You could not avoid the altar of sacrifice if you wanted to go further into the tabernacle. So to you cannot come to God apart from the sacrifice of His Son. It is no use saying that you come through Jesus – meaning His wonderful example or teaching. It must be through Jesus and His sacrifice.

His example and teaching could never save me. They only show how far short I fall. It is only through His sacrifice that I can be saved. Leviticus 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. As Heb 9:22 says without shedding of blood there is no remission. He died in my place and paid the penalty that I owed because of my sin. Accepting this truth and putting my trust in the one who gave His all for me is what saves me.

4. The _____ (Ex 30:18-21)

The next thing that you saw would have been the laver. This was a big bowl made of polished brass which held water for the priests to wash in. If they didn't wash then they risked death – v20. Ex 40:32 Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses. Apart from this we know very little is about it, there are no specific measurements or design details except that it was made from polished brass mirrors given by the Hebrew women, Ex 38:8. ...

What does the Laver mean for us today? Jesus illustrated it well in Jn 13. Do you remember how He poured water into a basin, washed the disciples' feet and dried them with a towel that was wrapped round his waist? He came to Peter who objected: "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus told him plainly, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Peter then went overboard the other way "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" Jesus patiently explained that this wasn't necessary for His true disciples, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean.

You see, my sin was dealt with at Calvary. As Jesus explained to Peter, it is as though I had a bath there. But as I walk along life's road day by day, my feet get dirty – I still fail Him and that sin needs to be dealt with every day. I don't need to be saved again (have another bath) but the dirt does need to be washed off my feet regularly.

1 John 1:8-2:1 - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. We cannot serve God if we have unconfessed sin in our hearts. When did you last ask His forgiveness?

5. The Holy Place and Holy of Holies (Ex 26)

The next thing that you would see is a drab looking tent. It was split into two parts called the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Only the priests were allowed in and then only after they had washed their hands and feet outside with the water from the laver. The Holy Place was about 30 feet long, 15 feet wide and 15 feet high.

From the inside, though, it was a very different story! The structure was made from wooden boards overlaid with gold. Above the boards you would have seen a lining of a four-colored (blue, purple, red and white) material, like that which made up the outer gate, but this time it was also embroidered with elaborate pictures of cherubim – special angels that protect God's holiness. Inside were a golden lampstand, a golden table with bread on and a golden altar of incense in front of the entrance to the Most Holy Place.

This reminds me of Christ. He may not appear attractive to the people of the world. As Isaiah put it "He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him." (Isaiah 53:3, NIV). But from the inside (the church) we are captivated by His beauty and glory. 1Pe 2:7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious. Is Jesus precious to us? Does it show, like it did when you fell in love for the first time, hook, line and sinker? Do you delight to read the Bible – His love letter to you and to talk about how wonderful He is?

6. The Golden _____ (Ex 25:31-40)

Inside the Holy Place was a lampstand. It was made of solid gold. In A.D. 70, the Romans carried the booty from the Temple in Jerusalem to Rome. A stone relief of that lampstand can be seen in the Triumphal Arch of Titus in Rome. This is the best idea of what it was like, though it wasn't the original one from the tabernacle – that was apparently lost in the time of Judas Maccabeus. The 7 lamps were oil lights and they were to burn continually (Lev 24:14).

They lit the Holy Place so that the priests could see what they were doing as they served God. Every morning and evening the priests would trim the wicks, take away the ashes and top up the oil to keep the lamps burning.

It reminds me of Christ. He said "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12 His glory lights up our lives and enables us to follow the road ahead and avoid the pitfalls around. Without Him there is only darkness. Never has the world been so dark, or needed Christ's light more! And of course we are meant to carry His light to the dark world around us, which is why Jesus said You are the light of the world Mt 5:14 and in Revelation 1 the 7 lampstands represent the whole church. Of course we can only do this as the oil of the Holy Spirit flows through us and we keep our wick trimmed.

7. Table of _____ (Ex 25:23-30)

There was also a wooden table, overlaid and decorated with gold. On it were placed twelve loaves of bread – one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Every Sabbath new loaves were placed on the table and the week-old loaves were taken off the table, and eaten by the priests in the Holy Place, or Sanctuary. According to Jewish tradition the loaves were still as warm and fresh as when they were put on the table a week earlier.

Again this reminds me of Jesus who said "I am the bread of life" John 6:35. He desires fellowship with all of His people and He is sufficient for all of our needs. It also reminds me of the Lord 's Supper where we are commanded to eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Him

8. Altar of _____ (Ex 30:1-10)

The golden altar of incense was placed in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. This altar was smaller than the brazen altar. It was a square with each side measuring 18" and was 3 feet high. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold.

God commanded the priests to burn incense on the golden altar every morning and evening, the same time that the daily sacrifices were made. The incense was to be left burning continually throughout the day and night as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. This reminds me of the prayers and intercession of God's people which are like a sweet fragrance to God. (Psalm 141:2, Rev 5:8)

The corners of the golden altar had horns which were sprinkled with blood from the sacrifices to cleanse and purify it (Leviticus 4:7, 16:18). When we pray we enter God's presence on the basis of Jesus precious blood, shed for us on Calvary's cross. Without it we have no right of audience before God's throne. This also reminds me that we must confess our sin when we come to pray, or we should not expect our prayers to be answered. Ps 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

The golden altar also reminds me of Christ. We have already seen in Hebrews that Jesus intercedes for us before God the Father. Today, Jesus still is our high priest at the Father's side, and He is still praying for us.

9. _____ of _____ (Ex 26, Lev 16:2)

Next to the Holy Place there was an inner area called the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place. It was God's special dwelling place among His people. While the Israelites camped God appeared from here as a pillar of cloud or fire in and above the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies was a perfect cube — its length, width and height were all 15 feet. A thick curtain separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. This curtain, known as the "veil," was made of fine linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn. Again there were figures of cherubim embroidered on it.

The word "veil," in Hebrew means a screen, divider or separator that hides. It separated the priests from a holy God. Whoever entered into the Holy of Holies was entering the presence of God and only the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement after meticulous preparations. Anyone else or the high priest on any other day would die.

The presence of God remained shielded from man behind the veil throughout the history of Israel, first in the tabernacle and then in the various temples. However, when Jesus died on the cross the veil in the Jerusalem temple was torn in two, from the top to the bottom. As the veil was torn, the Holy of Holies was exposed showing that through Jesus and His sacrifice God's presence was accessible to all. 19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh (Hebrews 10).

10. The _____ of the Covenant (Ex 25:10-22)

Within the Holy of Holies, was the Ark of the Covenant with the atonement cover (or "mercy seat") on top of it. The ark was a chest made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold inside and out. It was 3 feet 9 inches long and 2 feet 3 inches wide and high. The atonement cover was the lid for the ark.

On it were two cherubim; one at each ends, facing each other, but looking down toward the ark. Their outstretched wings covered the atonement cover. God said to Moses: there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony Ex 25:22

In the ark were three unlikely items: a pot of manna, a staff and two pieces of stone. What were these curious things and why did God want them in His ark?

The three articles represented some of the most tragic events in the history of the Israelites in Moses time. The pot of manna reminded them not only of God's miraculous provision of food for them in the wilderness, but also of their moaning and complaining when they got tired of eating the same food all the time.

Aaron's staff was the symbol of God's power. It was used to initiate the plagues in Egypt and to part the Red Sea. But the emphasis here is that it is the staff that had budded. When there was a dispute about who should be the high priest. God commanded the people to take 12 staffs with the names of the leader of each tribe written on them and to place them before the ark overnight. The next day, Aaron's staff had grown, produced flowers and almonds! So it pictured both God's power and man's waywardness.

Finally, there were the two stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments. As soon as God wrote them and gave them to Moses, the people disobeyed by making an idol of a golden calf. And this wasn't an isolated occurrence. Over and over again, they broke God's holy Law. The stone tablets in the ark were a reminder of both God's perfect law and the Israelites perpetual failure to obey it.

These three articles were preserved in the ark as an unpleasant symbol of man's sins and shortcomings. It is strange to think that these three articles, associated with man's sinfulness, were in the holy of holies, but they were covered by the atonement cover or mercy seat

11. The _____ Seat

Every year, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. He burned incense and sprinkled blood from a bull onto the atonement cover for his and his household's sins, then he sprinkled blood from a goat for all the sins of Israel and God promised that when He saw the blood, it would cover over man's sin. (To atone means to cover over.) God did not see the sin anymore, but the sacrifice.

Now Jesus Christ has become our perfect sacrifice and atonement. Through Jesus' blood, our sins have been covered over. When God looks at us, He doesn't see our sin, but the perfection of His own Son.

Conclusion

So where are you today?

- Are you outside the tabernacle, a stranger to God, separated from Him by your sin?*
- Have you come to God through Jesus the one and only door and sacrifice, knowing that the penalty for your sins was paid on Calvary?*
- Do you keep short accounts with God, confessing your sins daily and seeking His power to enable you to live life to His glory?*
- Have you entered into the Holy place, a place of illumination, fellowship, prayer, and service?*
- Have you entered into the Holy of Holies – God's very presence? No that's not reserved for heaven, we can no much of it now, down here on the earth, but do we? I suspect that we know little or nothing of this, but may God, through His Holy Spirit lead us on to know much more of His presence and power day by day.*

Tabernacle means tent, dwelling place or sanctuary. It was a sacred place where God chose to meet His people, the Israelites, during the 40 years they wandered in the desert under Moses' leadership. It was the place where the leaders and people came together to worship and offer sacrifices. Moses would also have recalled how God's glory settled on it once it was completed and set apart for His use and that this was shown in the pillars of fire and cloud that you had seen.

Six times we read that Moses had to make it exactly according to specification that God had given him. Ex 25:9 & 40, 26:30; Nu 8:4; Ac 7:44. The fourth is in our passage in Hebrews 8 where the tabernacle is described as a shadow of the heavenly things, and Moses was divinely instructed "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." Heb 8:5

Why was it so important that it was built exactly as God specified? It is because it is, in every detail, a picture of heavenly things. It was a gigantic visual aid to teach the Israelites about God and their relationship to Him. I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. They will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. (Ex 29:45-46.)