

FEED MY SHEEP

PUBLISHED BY JAMES W. BRUGGEMAN
STONE KINGDOM MINISTRIES
P. O. Box 6388
ASHEVILLE, NC 28816 U.S.A.

Issue #14

December 1999

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness — Multi-layered Pictures

Everyone has heard of the marvelous structure in Egypt known as the Great Pyramid at Giza. It is unique in its construction with many secrets of geometry and astronomy secretly encoded in its dimensions. No other pyramid contains such revelations. Many deeper students of the Bible and the Great Pyramid see multitudinous correlations between the two.¹

Yet there is in the Bible itself very much written about another unique structure: the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. Oddly, most Bible-believing Christians know very little about this most amazing edifice. Most believers have this picture of a simple, somewhat primitive, tent-like structure which housed the Presence of God during Israel's trek through the wilderness. Indeed, that it was; but it was also so much more, which only those who were given eyes to see could understand.

The Tabernacle has many levels of meaning. Those of which we are aware include the following. It portrays:

1. the history of the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land
2. the law of jubilee
3. the feasts of Israel
4. God's Plan for the Ages
5. Christ's body, the church (Remember how Paul said the church was a mystery, hidden until the proper time for its "unveiling?")
6. your body
7. the Plan of Salvation for (a) national Israel (b) the church (c) you, on an individual level

We will only have time to touch on some of these as we direct our focus on how it pictures the Plan of Salvation, and that, primarily on a personal, individual level.

Salvation is a three-part process. This makes sense because man is a trichotomous being. We are composed of body, soul and spirit.² In the salvation process, first is

the salvation of your spirit, then the salvation of your soul. Finally—at the resurrection—you receive the salvation of your body. God in His great wisdom portrayed these three phases of salvation for us in type form in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness.³

Last month we completed a brief examination of phase one: justification. Before commencing a study of sanctification, we will step back and look at the whole salvation process in outline view as portrayed in the types and shadows of the tabernacle. To assist your understanding, we have reproduced on page 3, a chart which we drew for use in our taped studies in the tabernacle series.

Without intending any disrespect for our Father, but only to help clarify, consider the chart as a board game. "Start" is at the area labeled "Outer Darkness" and the goal is to enter into the Most Holy Place. You, as a creation of God, are automatically entered in the "game." P. S: You had no "freewill" choice about whether or not you wanted to play. You are a "pilgrim on the path." Some people will never leave "start." They will remain in the spiritual "outer darkness" their entire lives. Most Christians believe these poor souls will end up in an eternal barbecue pit. We disagree.⁴

Phase one of salvation is known in theological terms as your *justification*. It is the salvation of your spirit. Phase two is your *sanctification*—the salvation of your soul. Phase three is your *glorification*—the salvation of your body. Justification, itself comprises at least three sub-parts. These correspond to three parts of the wilderness tabernacle: (1) the gate (door, veil) in the fence of the Outer Court, (2) the Altar of Burnt Offering and (3) the Laver.

When an individual pilgrim on the path is first being drawn to Jesus Christ, he leaves the "outer darkness" outside the fence and comes to and through the gate into

the Outer Court. This is likened to a person who knows very little about the Savior or the Bible and its teachings, but something in his heart tells him that Jesus is the way, and so he claims to believe in Jesus (and he does, as far as he understands). He recognizes he is a sinner and he wants to do right. Later he learns that his salvation by faith includes more. It means that he accepts the sacrifice of Jesus' shed blood on the cross as atonement for his sins. This is likened to the next step along the path: the Altar of Burnt Offering. The altar pictures (among other things) the shedding of the blood of Jesus and his death.

Perhaps then or later, the pilgrim also learns that water baptism is also part of his justification by faith. This is signified in the Tabernacle types by the Laver. His sins are washed away, he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the sign or seal of the New Covenant, which corresponds to the sign/seal of physical circumcision under the Old Covenant. All of these steps are part of justification — phase one of salvation.

On the national level, Israel spent many years enslaved in Egypt. Egypt represents the world, carnality and outer darkness. As individuals, we were all at one time enslaved to the world and carnality and dwelt in that spiritual outer darkness. In the process of time, God sent Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. The Feast of Passover was instituted on the night they departed. They slew a lamb and smeared its blood on the doorposts and lintels of their houses. Thus their houses (families) were delivered/saved from the death of their firstborn sons.

Note that although the Israelites were "saved" in that sense, their salvation was not yet complete. They were still in Egypt. So they journeyed out and were then delivered/saved after crossing through the Red Sea. Paul says this was their baptism (1 Cor. 10:1, 2).

KJV 1 Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

The Laver was a container of water located between the Altar of Burnt Offering and the Holy Place. Historically, it pictures Israel being baptized as they crossed through the Red Sea. On a personal level, it pictures your water baptism as an essential step on the path to complete salvation. In the days of the physical tabernacle

structure, no priest could enter the Holy Place without first cleansing at the Laver. Likewise, no Christian believer may legitimately enter the spiritual Holy Place without first being baptized with water.⁵

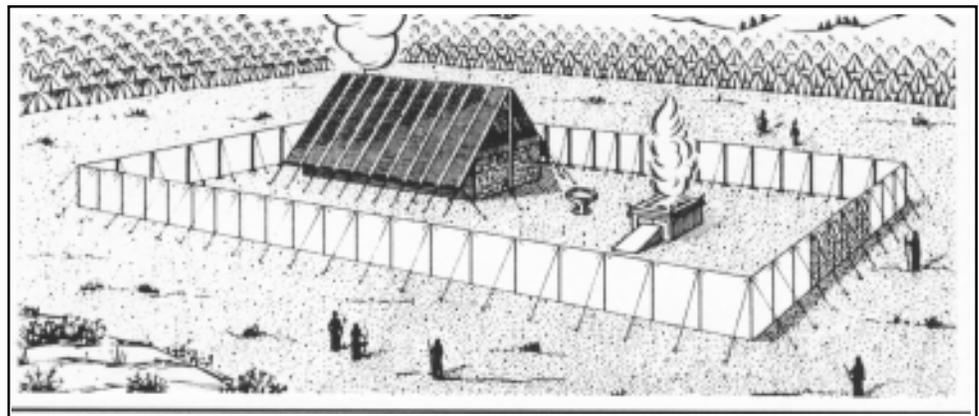
Many Christian denominations (e.g., some mainline and some evangelicals) teach that all one need do is "let Jesus into your heart" or "come down the aisle and receive Jesus" and one is saved. This is comparable to an Israelite in Egypt deciding to follow Moses. It is only the beginning of the process of salvation.

As pictured in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, it would be like the person who merely comes through the gate/door into the Outer Court. If he really is following Moses, then he will kill a lamb and apply the blood to his house. In other words, he will take the next step by proceeding to the Altar of Burnt Offering. In church terms, he will not merely "receive Christ into his heart," he will believe in the validity of Jesus' shed blood as atonement for his sins.

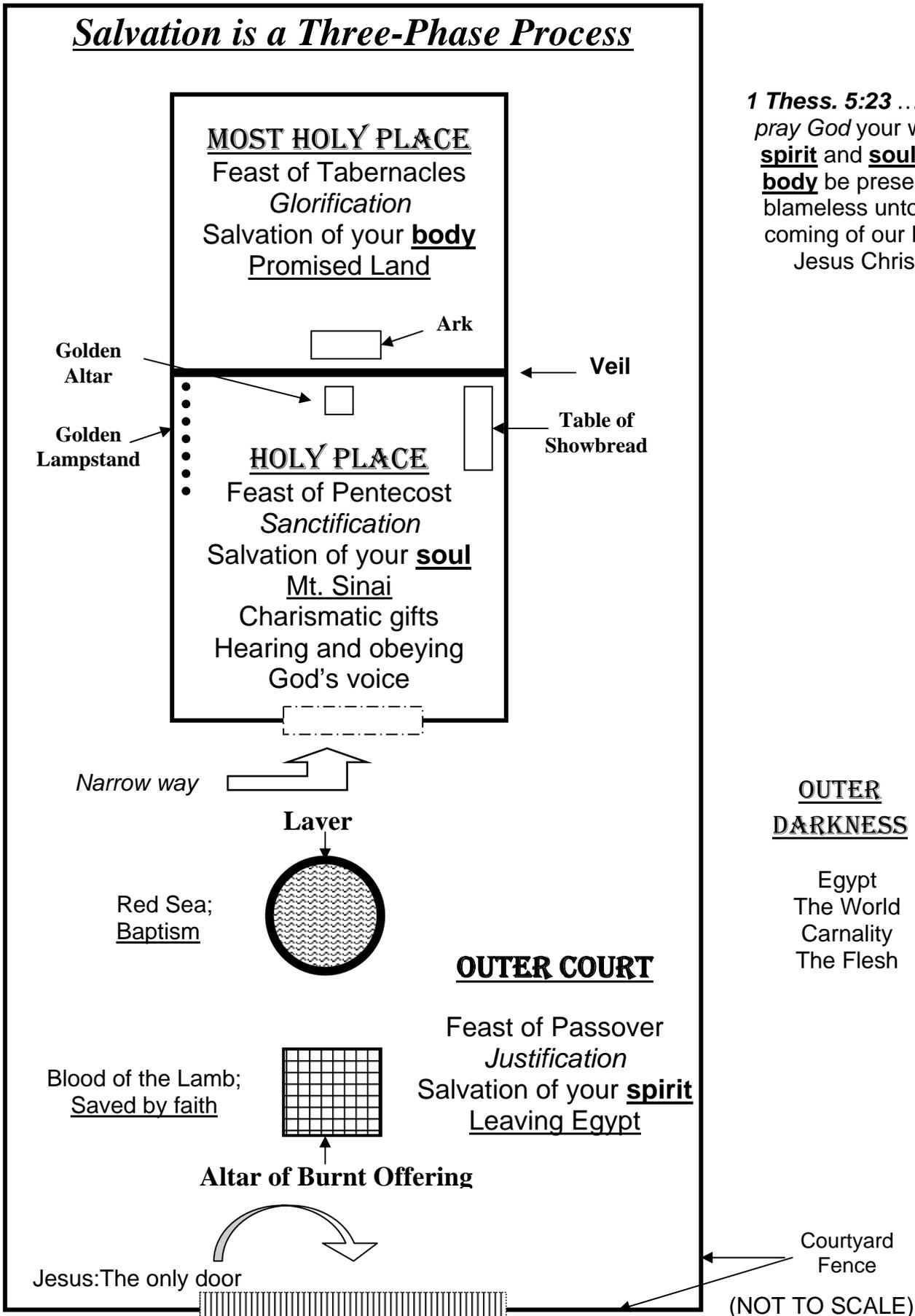
And thus there are many denominations who teach that one must acknowledge the blood of Jesus before one is really saved. But is one completely saved by camping around the Brazen Altar of Burnt Offering? Other denominations go a step further by teaching that water baptism is essential for salvation, and that once one is baptized, then one is truly saved. That would be like the Israelites standing on the far side of the Red Sea in the Wilderness and thinking they are in the Promised Land. Being water baptized is a step along the way, but in type form it merely means that one has finally left Egypt.

The path to complete salvation is a narrow way. One may not skip any of the steps. There is no point in coming to the Laver if one has bypassed the Brazen Altar. That is, there is no point in being baptized with water if one does not believe in Jesus' blood atonement.

After Israel's baptism in the Red Sea, they found themselves in a waste, howling wilderness. In the third month, they came to Mount Sinai, which is in Arabia, not in the so-called Sinai Peninsula.⁶ Here God gave Israel



Salvation is a Three-Phase Process



1 Thess. 5:23 ... and I pray God your whole **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

the Ten Commandments. He also gave Moses the exact details on how to construct the Tabernacle and all its accoutrements. It took them about a year to do the job and when they were finished, those who understood recognized that this magnificent edifice was in fact a physical representation of what had just happened to Israel (Passover and the Red Sea deliverance) and a prophecy of what would happen to them in the years ahead.

The trek to Mt. Sinai, the events there, and the years of wilderness wandering following it are all representative of the second phase of salvation: our sanctification. The events at Mt. Sinai were later commemorated by the Feast of Pentecost; hence, Pentecost is associated with the Holy Place in the Tabernacle. While the justification phase consisted of events — coming to faith, being baptized — the sanctification phase consists of a process. The process lasts the rest of our lives.

In the justification - Outer Court phase, we come to faith in Jesus as our Savior. In the sanctification - Holy Place phase, we come to know Him as our Lord. A lord is a master. The duty of a servant to his lord is to be obedient in all things. Hence, at Mt. Sinai the Master, Yahweh, gave his commandments, statutes and judgments to His servant people, Israel. They then spent another 38+ years in the Wilderness learning obedience.

On a personal, Christian believer level, we *may* enter the Holy Place after water baptism. Not all Christians do. Similar to those at the Brazen Altar, many Christians set up camp (denominations) around the Laver, thinking they are now “saved,” and that they have reached the goal.⁷ They believe the only thing left for Christians to do is to sell fire insurance; i.e., to try to get other people “saved from hell” like they are. Of course, most of these believers try to lead good lives to the extent they understand the Ten Commandments.

But they are like our forefathers at Mt. Sinai. All the congregation of Israel heard the booming voice of God as he uttered the Ten Commandments. But after that, they became fearful and ran away from the mountain. God had a lot more to say (namely, the statutes and judgments), but they preferred to have Moses go up alone and hear God’s voice and then come back down and tell them what God said. (Cf. Exo. 20:18-21) This is like the huge number of Christians today who prefer to have a middleman, a priest or a minister, tell them what God said, instead of hearing God’s voice directly for themselves.

Moreover, it is also an exact parallel with most of modern Christianity which accepts the validity of the Ten Commandments, but rejects the rest of God’s Law, saying that He has “nailed it to the cross,” and that “we are no longer under the Law.” (Colossians 2:14; Galatians

5:18, *et al.*) They totally misunderstand and misapply these passages and negate God’s Law. That is, they refuse to hear God’s voice regarding the statutes and judgments portions of the Law just as the children of Israel did at Mt. Sinai. And they want God’s voice filtered through middlemen. This is not to say that there is no place for ministers; the Scriptures clearly speak of various ministerial roles:

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

However, the minister is never to “lord it over the flock,” and arrogate to himself the sole right to determine what the Word of God says (means). Each Christian who wants to progress on the path of complete salvation must learn to hear God’s voice for himself. This is the essence of Pentecost, our sanctification. It is the phase where we are not afraid to hear God’s voice for ourselves. (*To be continued.*)

Endnotes

1. E.g., see *The Great Pyramid Decoded* and *Study in Pyramidology* by Bible Archeologist E. Raymond Capt and numerous other works.

2. Soul and spirit are not the same thing and should never be confused. Similarly, salvation and redemption are separate concepts and likewise should not be confused.

3. These are things we are exploring in vast detail in our now 24 tapes-long study of *The Tabernacle in the Wilderness*. And we still have some portions yet to do.

4. We have expounded extensively on this topic in a ten-tape album, A-103, *It’s Hell...or Nothing!* (\$33 ppd.)

5. The ten tapes on *The Laver, Baptism and Circumcision* are available as a separate album, A-106. \$33 ppd.

6. Cf. Gal. 4:25. Also see *The Mount Sinai Myth* by Larry Williams and Bob Cornuke and *The Gold of Exodus* by Howard Blum.

7. Many may now be wondering what happens to those who die somewhere along the way, never knowing there is more, and never progressing beyond the gate, or the Brazen Altar or the Laver, etc. Are they eternally “lost” and to be punished forever? The answer is no. This is another reason why only the understanding of universal reconciliation provides the awe-inspiring, equitable and wholly-satisfying answer to this dilemma. We have several albums of taped studies dealing with these matters.

Feed My Sheep is a part of the teaching ministry of James Bruggeman and is sent out freely upon request. The tithes and gifts of those who are fed by it make it possible for us to continue in ministry. Gifts may be sent to P.O. Box 6388, Asheville, NC 28816.