

THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES "The Courtyard"

Proclamation-

Ps 92:12-15 [A Sabbath Psalm]

12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they [WE] will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
13 planted in the house of the LORD, they [WE] will flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They [WE] will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh [*full of sap- ASV*]and green,
15 proclaiming, "The LORD is upright; he is my [OUR] Rock, and there is no wickedness in him." (NIV)

While the Jews were in captivity in Persia, an evil man named Haman desired to kill them all because of his hatred for a particular Jew named Mordecai. When Mordecai heard of the plan and the king's law regarding it, he put on sackcloth and ashes and fasted with mourning and weeping. When word came to the cousin whom he had raised, she was distressed and sent to find out what was wrong. Mordecai sent word back to her about Haman's plans and the king's law and asked that she petition the king for the sake of the Jews. Esther, for that was her name, was frightened by his request.

Esth 4:11-17

11 "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

12 When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai,

13 he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape.

14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai:

16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

17 So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

Esther knew that to approach the king without being asked was a death sentence save for the king's mercy. Even the queen, the king's bride, couldn't just barge into the throne room.

Esth 5:1-3

1 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance.

2 When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

3 Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the

kingdom, it will be given you." (NIV)

Queen Esther stood the court attired in royal robes and waited for the invitation of the king to proceed forward to his throne. The Tabernacle that Moses built was God's habitation and palace. The holy of holies was his throne room, the holy place the reception room where official business was transacted, and the courtyard where those who were to approach the king prepared themselves by sacrifice at the brazen altar and cleansing at the brazen laver.

Exod 27:9-19

- 9 "Make a courtyard for the tabernacle. The south side shall be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains of finely twisted linen,
- 10 with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts.
- 11 The north side shall also be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains, with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts.
- 12 "The west end of the courtyard shall be fifty cubits wide and have curtains, with ten posts and ten bases.
- 13 On the east end, toward the sunrise, the courtyard shall also be fifty cubits wide.
- 14 Curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on one side of the entrance, with three posts and three bases,
- 15 and curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on the other side, with three posts and three bases.
- 16 "For the entrance to the courtyard, provide a curtain twenty cubits long, of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen-- the work of an embroiderer-- with four posts and four bases.
- 17 All the posts around the courtyard are to have silver bands and hooks, and bronze bases.
- 18 The courtyard shall be a hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide, with curtains of finely twisted linen five cubits high, and with bronze bases.
- 19 All the other articles used in the service of the tabernacle, whatever their function, including all the tent pegs for it and those for the courtyard, are to be of bronze. (NIV)

Exod 40:33-34 (NIV)

- 33 Then Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. And so Moses finished the work.
- 34 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

The front portion of the courtyard containing the brazen altar was about as close as any Israelite could get to the Lord if he wasn't a priest. The court (and courts) of the Lord for the people of Israel was the place of consecration, communion, and praise of God. A cursory look at the Psalms gives us some indication of the importance of this place for the people of God.

Ps 96:7-9

- 7 Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- 8 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.
- 9 Worship the LORD in the splendor [*beauty- KJV*]of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. (NIV)

Ps 65:4

Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.

Ps 84:1-4; 10

- 1 How lovely is Your tabernacle [*are your tabernacles- Heb.*], O LORD of hosts!
- 2 My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
- 3 Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young-- even Your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.
- 4 Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; they will still be praising You. Selah

10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. (NKJ)

Vine's note on faints-

An altogether different emphasis appears when one's heart comes "to an end" or "stops within": "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord" <Ps. 84:2>; the psalmist probably meant that his desire for God's presence was so intense that nothing else had any meaning for him-- he "died" to be there. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) (Copyright (C) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

The courts of the Lord were such a special place that the psalmist says he was "dying" to be there [my soul faints]. What would be the visual impact of this Tabernacle from the outside? Standing on the ground, one would see a wall of white cloth with a silver railing above and a bronze base below. Depending on what conversion you used for the cubit measure, this wall of white would have been anywhere from 7' 6" to a little over 8' 6" high. Gazing upward, one would see the top half of tabernacle structure, looking plain, large, rectangular and perhaps foreboding.

If you happened to be a stranger to the nation of Israel, the whole affair might seem rather strange. Here in the center of the camp stood this fabric fence, keeping people from the large, plain tent inside. You might be tempted to dismiss the whole thing, were it not for the marvelous column of cloud that sat atop that plain looking tent of which you could only see the top. Then there was the other cloud of smoke, the one that brought the smell of cooking meat. What was going on in there? You step up to the wall, but you cannot peer in. The cloth is stretched tight, fifty cubits in either direction. Your investigation is hindered by a wall of cloth 7' 6" high and 150' long. You turn West and walk along the wall. At the end of its southern wall, you head north. You find no help here to satisfy your curiosity. The wall continues down for 75' and you turn east. Another 150' of white cloth. What does it mean? What is it all about? At the end of the northern wall, you turn south and after walking by another 22' of white cloth, you come to a beautiful curtain of blue, purple, scarlet and fine twisted linen.

At last, a gate to enter in and see what that cloud and the rectangular tent are all about. As the Israelites lift the curtain up to enter, you catch a glimpse of the altar and its burnt sacrifices. You approach to enter in, but a Levite doorkeeper bars your path. You are a stranger, a foreigner. You are not allowed to enter.

Eph 2:11-12 (NIV)

- 11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)--
- 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

This is the first message of the courtyard, "Keep Out!" It acted as a separation between the outside world and God's habitation. The courtyard, by its very structure, directed the worshipers to its only entrance, the Gate. But even if you were redeemed Israel, there was a prescribed approach to the king.

Ps 100:1-5

- 1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
- 2 Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.
- 3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
- 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.
- 5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. (NIV)

The Lord has ordained that we enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. The courts of the Lord are where we praise Him for what He has done. His holy of holies is where we worship Him for who He is.

But once inside the courtyard, we need to recognize something.

Lev 6:14-16

- 14 "These are the regulations for the grain offering: Aaron's sons are to bring it before the LORD, in front of the altar.
- 15 The priest is to take a handful of fine flour and oil, together with all the incense on the grain offering, and burn the memorial portion on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD.
- 16 Aaron and his sons shall eat the rest of it, but it is to be eaten without yeast in a holy place; they are to eat it in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. (NIV)

Because the Tabernacle proper contained the holy place and the holy of holies, we might be tempted to think of the courtyard as a common place. It was not. It was a holy place, a consecrated ground. It was in the courtyard that the sacrifices were made. It was in the courtyard that the people drew near to God and worshipped him with burnt offerings and peace offerings.

Once inside, the courtyard walls spoke a different message. No longer were we outside, restricted from approaching the Living God. Now we were inside, protected by the curtains. Their message now was, "Stay In!"

Eph 2:13-15

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, (NIV)

Though these verses have primary reference to the Temple, their application to the reality of the tabernacle remains. We were at one time shut out from the presence of God. Now, by Jesus' sacrifice, we are brought near to God.

Most of the lessons with regard to the symbology of the white linen curtains and the variegated gate we have gone through already. White speaks of righteousness biblically. Man's sin made the righteousness of God (the curtains of the courtyard) a separation from his creator. The Gate, with its blue (man from heaven), purple (king from heaven), scarlet (sacrifice), and white linen (righteousness), tells us of the Lord Jesus, who is the door. Their combined square cubits (300 x 5) speak to us of the 1500 years from Moses to Jesus when the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

Gal 3:24

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. (NIV)

But what holds up these curtains and the gate? A total of 60 bronze covered pillars capped in silver on bronze basis. I want to take a closer look at what the pillars teach us. Pillars speak of uprightness, stability and support. In that they were bronze covered and in bronze bases, they speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as judge.

Rev 1:14-15

14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.

15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. (NIV)

Dan 10:5-6

5 I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist.

6 His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. (NIV)

Rev 10:1

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. (NIV)

Not only is the church herself called a pillar, individuals in the church are called (or called to be) pillars.

1 Tim 3:14-16

- 14 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that,
15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.
16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. (NIV)

Rev 3:11-13

- 11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.
12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.
13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (NIV)

Jer 1:18-19

- 18 Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land-- against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land.
19 They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. (NIV)

When we overcome, God makes us pillars. When the Lord makes us a pillar, he makes it so that we cannot be overcome.

The Hebrew word translated as pillars in the description of the courtyard is also translated as pillar with regard to something else.

Exod 13:21-22

- 21 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.
22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. (NIV)

The pillar of cloud and fire is the Holy Spirit of God. Thus, the bronze pillars on bronze bases capped in silver not only speak to us of Jesus Christ, but also of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:8

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin [silver] and righteousness [the curtains] and judgment [bronze bases]: (NIV)

The result of sin's judgment and payment of the redemption price is inwrought righteousness. The Holy Spirit is the pillar upon which our righteousness hangs. Without Him, there is no outworked righteousness because without him, there would be no inwrought righteousness.

Isa 4:3-6

- 3 And it shall come to pass that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy-- everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem.
- 4 When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning,
- 5 then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering.
- 6 And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain. (NKJ)

It is by His Holy Spirit that the Lord cleanses us and makes us fit to dwell under His covering tabernacle.

These pillars were capped in silver, the redemption money. They speak to us of the helmet of salvation (Eph. 6:17). When our Lord came the first time, he was crowned with thorns (Mark 15:17) which were a result of the curse due to sin (Gen. 3:17-19). Jesus became a curse for us and in dying, eradicated the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13-14). This is the story of redemption!

For his obedience, the Father highly exalted him (Phil. 2:9) and crowned him with glory and honor. Because he has been exalted, those who serve him faithfully may be rewarded with crowns. But these rewards are not destined to adorn us for eternity. They are destined to be an offering.

Rev 4:10-11

- 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:
- 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (NIV)

The courts of God's house are important to the Lord.

John 2:13-17

- 13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
- 14 In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.
- 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.
- 16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"
- 17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." (NIV)

Ps 69:8-9

- 8 I am a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother's sons;
- 9 for zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who insult you fall on me. (NIV)

Mark 11:15-16

- 15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves,
16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. (NIV)

John 10:1-4; 16

- 1 "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.
2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.
3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.
16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. (NIV)

Isa 62:6-12

- 6 I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest,
7 and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.
8 The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: "Never again will I give your grain as food for your enemies, and never again will foreigners drink the new wine for which you have toiled;
9 but those who harvest it will eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather the grapes will drink it in the courts of my sanctuary." [Grain offering eaten by priests!]
10 Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations.
11 The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.'"
12 They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD; and you will be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted. (NIV)

Isa 54:1-3

- 1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.
2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;
3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. (KJV)