

THE TABERNACLE #1: The Outer Court



Yes, Mark, I remember it very well! You were a bit unsure then about the whole matter, so I spoke to the pastors and they agreed to do another three tracts to explain this beautiful subject in more detail.

This is Tract #1. It expands on the introduction and especially the Tabernacle's outer court. I assure you everything in these tracts is Bible-based and all facts stated here can easily be verified by reading the book of Exodus and by reference to the New Testament.

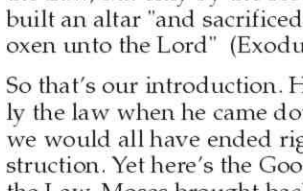
So let's start with the basics



Before an individual can be saved, he/she must learn that we cannot save ourselves. In the beginning Adam had to learn this lesson. God showed him the only way, by providing His own remedy, when He slew an animal and took the skin of the bloody victim and clothed Adam and his wife, Eve (Genesis 3:21).

A blood sacrifice has always been God's requirement for the forgiveness of sin.

This same order is followed in the giving of the Tabernacle to Israel in the wilderness.



The record of its construction is found in Exodus 35-40. However, this was preceded by the giving of the Law of God; also by a repetition of the story of the giving of the Law. Then follows the sad record of Israel's miserable failure in the worship of the golden calf. Before Moses brought down the Two

Tablets of the Law, Israel had already broken God's holy law and they were under the judgement of God.

Realising that Israel could be saved not by keeping the Law, but only by the blood of a sacrifice, Moses built an altar "and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord" (Exodus 24:5-7).

So that's our introduction. Had Moses brought only the law when he came down from the mountain, we would all have ended right there in total destruction. Yet here's the Good News: In addition to the Law, Moses brought back something else: **the instructions to build the Tabernacle.**

The Tabernacle: God's answer to the broken law, God's answer to the judgement of deserving sinners, God's wonderful plan of salvation! **And that is exactly what we're talking about in these tracts.**

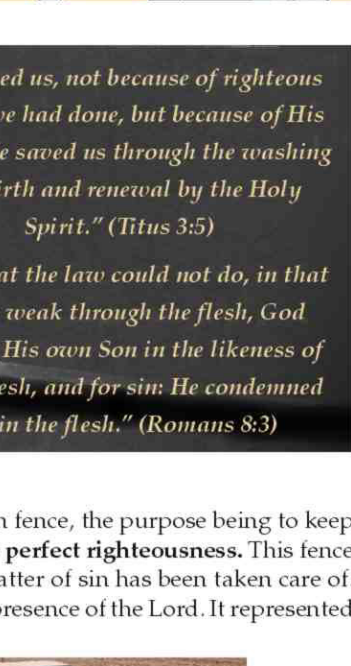


God gave to Israel through Moses in the mountain two things: The Law and the Tabernacle.

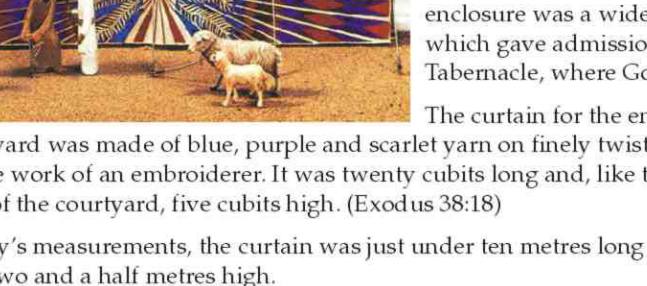
- 1 The Law to show the dreadfulness of sin.
- 2 The Tabernacle to show God's way out for the guilty who have broken God's Law.

The Law is first, to show us how far short we have come, and to convince us of our total corruption. And then, and then only, are we ready for the message of grace as clearly laid out in the Tabernacle.

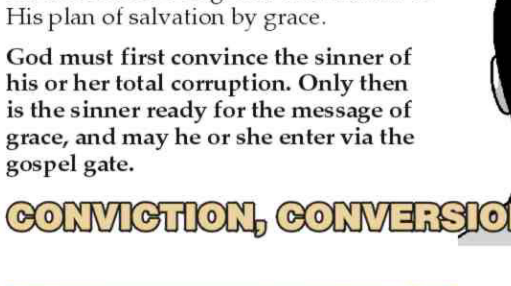
• Paul explains in his letter to Titus.



The Tabernacle was surrounded by a white linen fence, the purpose being to keep man out. **The pure white linen speaks of God's perfect righteousness.** This fence bars the sinner from coming to God until the matter of sin has been taken care of. The fence separated the camp of Israel from the presence of the Lord. It represented the law. In other words, it said:



But in His love and mercy God provided a way for the sinner, a door, whereby he could approach from the outside and enter into communion and fellowship with God. **This door is the Gospel.**



The Door

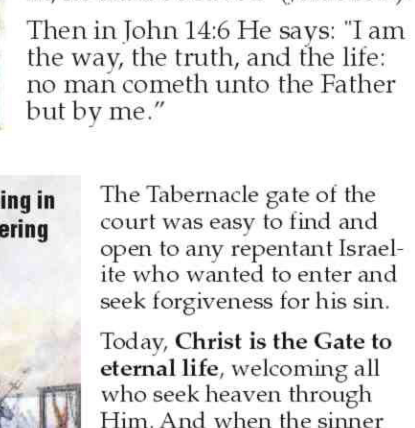
At the eastern end of this linen enclosure was a wide gate which gave admission to the Tabernacle, where God dwelt.

The curtain for the entrance to the courtyard was made of blue, purple and scarlet yarn on finely twisted white linen - the work of an embroiderer. It was twenty cubits long and, like the curtains of the courtyard, five cubits high. (Exodus 38:18)

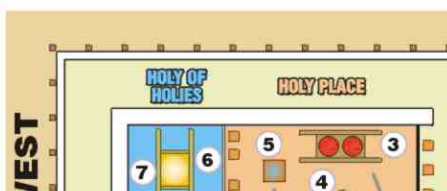
♦ In today's measurements, the curtain was just under ten metres long and about two and a half metres high.

I have gone into some detail before we enter the outer court (which is the subject of this tract). The point here is to illustrate the setting and background in which the Tabernacle was given to Israel, the Tabernacle being God's revelation of His plan of salvation by grace.

God must first convince the sinner of his or her total corruption. Only then is the sinner ready for the message of grace, and may he or she enter via the gospel gate.



CONVICTION, CONVERSION, CONSECRATION

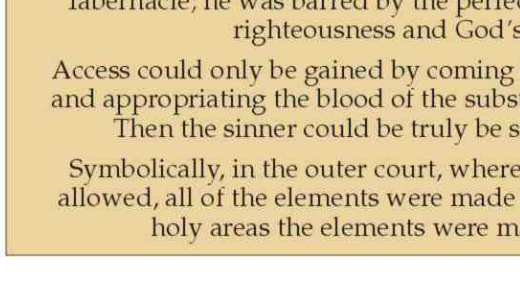


The embroidered gate to the outer court

So now we enter the gate to the outer court. This was the only opening in the linen fence, and the only way of approach to the Tabernacle.

The door points to Jesus Christ, who many years later said: "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9).

Then in John 14:6 He says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."



The first of the seven items of furnishing in the Tabernacle: the altar of burnt offering

The Tabernacle gate of the court was easy to find and open to any repentant Israelite who wanted to enter and seek forgiveness for his sin.

Today, **Christ is the Gate to eternal life**, welcoming all who seek heaven through Him. And when the sinner enters that door, he is firstly faced with the altar of burnt offering, symbol of the cross where the Lord Jesus made atonement for our sin.



Like all the other elements of the Tabernacle, this east gate of the court was rich with meaning.

God ordered that, when the Tabernacle was set up, the gate was always to be on the east end, opening to the west. **Going west symbolises moving toward God.** Going east symbolises going away from God. The gate on the Garden of Eden was also on the east side (Genesis 3:24).

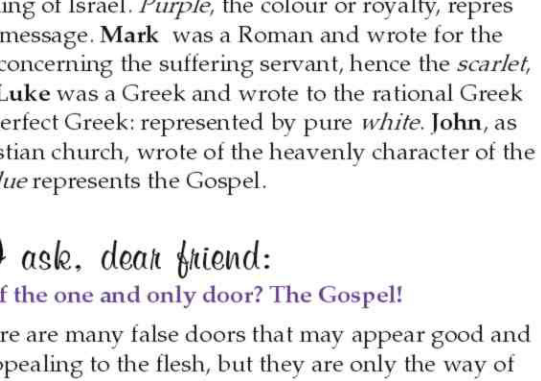
The Tabernacle excluded all those who refused to enter by the one and only door. The linen fence barred access to the sinner as long as he had one single sin upon him. As long as there was a single spot of impaction in his being, he was prohibited from approaching the Tabernacle; he was barred by the perfect demand of God's holy righteousness and God's holy law.

Access could only be gained by coming by faith through the door and appropriating the blood of the substitute slain upon the altar. Then the sinner could be truly be said to be "in Christ".

Symbolically, in the outer court, where the Jewish people were allowed, all of the elements were made of brass or bronze; in the holy areas the elements were made of pure gold.

Next, the sinner visits the brass laver of cleansing. The laver symbolises separation from sin by washing, that is cleansing through the water of the Word.

The seven items of furniture in the Tabernacle speak of God's perfect provision for believers who are *in Christ*. (Seven is the number of perfection.)



The second item of furnishing: the laver

I trust therefore that you get the picture which God seeks to provide through these symbols and passages: the **Law** to show the awfulness of sin and man's desperate failure; the **Tabernacle** to show God's way out for the guilty ones who had broken His holy law.

God first gave the Law, which speaks of God's justice, holiness, condemnation of sin and penalty of death. **"For by the law is the knowledge of sin."**

But the Lord knew in advance of Israel's failure. He foresaw their need of the blood. He knew they could not keep the holy law, and so He gave them the Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle speaks of mercy, pardon, redemption and salvation for all who admit they could not save themselves by their own efforts and only by keeping the law.

One Gospel, One Door, Four Authors



You remember earlier we spoke of the Gospel Door with needlework of purple, scarlet and blue on a background of white linen? God in His wisdom presented us with this one Gospel penned by four human authors:

Matthew, being a Jew, wrote particularly to Israel concerning the King of Israel. *Purple*, the colour or royalty, represents this message. **Mark** was a Roman and wrote for the Romans concerning the suffering servant, hence the *scarlet*, the colour of imperial Rome. **Luke** was a Greek and wrote to the rational Greek mind, in the most beautiful, perfect Greek: represented by pure *white*. **John**, as the representative of the Christian church, wrote of the heavenly character of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God. *Blue* represents the Gospel.

So I ask, dear friend:

Have you come by the way of the one and only door? The Gospel!

We remind you again that there are many false doors that may appear good and attractive, and may well be appealing to the flesh, but they are only the way of death.

In these last days of much deception, with many appealing voices, we need to come only with the **Thus saith the Lord**, and remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:4: **"Take heed that no man deceive you."**

Come to Jesus, come today, He will take your sins away; Come, o come, why do you wait?

Therefore we again point out that there is only one Door - the Door of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King, the Servant, the Man, the God of the universe.

There is no other way to God than by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus says Himself: "Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber." (John 10:1)

In ending this first of the three tracts concerning the Tabernacle, I quote from Hebrews 9:19-22: "When Moses had proclaimed every command of the Law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, 'This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.' In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the Tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies."

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

So, dear friend, have you learnt our first lesson? Have you come in through the door of the Gospel? Have you come as that poor lost sinner, claiming absolutely nothing but the grace of God and the blood of the Lord Jesus? Or are you still trusting in your own good works?

"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them, finds mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)

Contact:

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