

“The Word of the Tabernacle”

1. Prefigurative
 - a. The Tabernacle was a prophetic type to the substance who is Jesus. See Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 9:23; 10:1 cf. Exod. 25:40.
 - b. The subject of the Tabernacle takes up most of the last half of Exodus. It is a type to the antitype of God’s end game viz. dwelling with His people!
 - c. In fact, it is observed that the entire cosmos is purposed unto that end. The heavens are stretched out, as it were, as a tent. Eden was the paradise where God and man fellowshiped and when it was forfeited, the use of alters, Tabernacle, and Temple came into play. →
2. Prescriptive: Primarily, the Tabernacle/Temple is the *single* prescribed location of where God and man meet. We must come to God on His terms – not our own! There is, was, and will only be one way to God!
3. Paternity: Even in our current state, the image of God in us is not erased though it is defaced. Our bodies are a temple and we are the new meeting place with God via the Spirit of Christ and thus we become the **household of God** (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16-18; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Tim. 3:14; 1 Pet. 2:5). Such is God’s design and purpose but what of the means?
4. Precision: We must ask ourselves why the laborious chapters, details, and precise ceremonial adherence was necessary. →
5. Purity: The laborious chapters in *Exodus* and so forth (which give great detail to the Tabernacle, Temple, and other ceremonial objects and rituals) demonstrate that meeting with God is no small affair. Much must occur to mitigate and, indeed, atone for our transgressions which caused the chasm between us and God. The priesthood, rituals, alter, and Temple are all necessary for communion with God due to sin.
6. Perpetual:
 - a. The OT is adamant that man must have mediation via temple, priest, and sacrifice. Furthermore, the ordinances with regard to the Tabernacle, priests, and sacrifices are prescribed to be perpetual! In other words, *such will forever continually be indispensable to our salvation*. For example; in *Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers*; God prescribed and promised such ordinances would be: “a statute forever,” “continually,” “everlasting covenant,” “perpetual ordinance,” (see Ex. 27:21; 28:43; 29:9, 28, 42; 30:21; 31:16; Lev. 3:17; 6:18; 16:34; 23:14; Num. 18:23; 19:21). So then, why are we not sacrificing goats every Sabbath?
 - b. The NT reveals that God never intended for His people to perpetually carry out the literal reenactments of the same particular features of these detailed ceremonies. He would no more expect this than for us to achieve salvation by our works. Therefore, these everlasting ordinances prescribed by God were fulfilled in Jesus’ person and work. They are literally fulfilled by the eternal Word of God thus having everlasting significance and application. The OT promises and prescriptions for the everlasting ordinances are not *being* fulfilled by literal adherence. Rather, they *have been* fulfilled literally by the everlasting Person which has everlasting significance! Because the Word became flesh – we have a **Perpetual High Priest** who has sat down after offering Himself as a **Perfect sacrifice** in the **Personal Temple** of His own body thus fulfilling the purpose to which the OT Temple, priests, and sacrifices pointed. All this is explained in the letter of *Hebrews*.
 - c. Yes, we still need a Temple, High Priest, and perfectly pure offering for total cleansing!

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7. Personal: Jesus came to be the Temple where reconciliation and atonement occur. This is the Word incarnate – the “Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us” (Jn. 1:14). So you now see why the Tabernacle is an indispensable reality regarding the *Word* of the LORD. There is still only one prescribed and provided Way. And Jn. 14:6 is true because Jesus is the High Priest who offered Himself as the perfect Lamb in the perfect Tabernacle of His flesh.
8. People: Are you “in Christ?” It is significant that this description of being “in Christ” is the most prevalent description of Christians in the NT. If you are in Christ then you are the Temple of Christ (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16-18), the household of God (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Tim. 3:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:5), and the Body of Christ (Ro. 12:5). And those who make up the Temple of Christ are those who are the eschatological priests who reconcile man to God in the Temple which is Christ’s Body. We are a part of the fulfillment of the eschatological OT promises by virtue of being in Christ. We are the ones who are portable tabernacles of the living God (1 Pet. 2:5) and who expand the Temple of Christ’s Body (Mat. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8) via the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). **Therefore, e.g. Iain’s baptism demonstrates that Jesus’ is building the Temple with living stones (Zech. 6:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:5). Iain is a portable tabernacle where the Spirit of Christ resides!**

PC: There are some circles of Christian study groups, sermons, books, and teachings which go into great details of the Tabernacle and its furnishings. Such are very helpful in pointing to multiple aspects of the person and work of Christ. However, when we take our focus off the details and refocus on the Tabernacle from afar, we can see much more of its significance. When we consider the broader contexts of the Biblical narrative we can see how God’s redemptive plan not only employs the Tabernacle but sees the Tabernacle as the end game reality (Rev. 21:22). What is profound and too often missed is a failure to see ourselves as the partial fulfillment of the Tabernacle and ancient eschatological promises. It is right to see Jesus as the fulfillment of all the Word, but it is wrong to exclude those for whom the Word came to tabernacle (dwell) and employ in this messianic age of expanding the promised Kingdom.