

**Peace** be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In our last lesson, we saw how the Israelites turned from the Lord who had redeemed them from their slavery in Egypt. While Moses was receiving God's Word on Mount Sinai, the Israelites made a calf of gold to be worshiped as an idol. Today, however, we are going to hear a much more pleasant story. But we must listen to it very carefully because it is very profound. We are going to see how God told Moses and the Israelites to make a very special tent so that He might teach them how they might approach Him, meet with Him and worship Him. Our lesson today is called "**The Tent of Meeting**."

Reading in the Torah, the book of Exodus, chapter twenty-four, the Scripture says:

***The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.***

*The Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give. These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast-piece. Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you."*

Did you hear what God told Moses? He told him something very amazing and wonderful! God planned to dwell among the Israelites, among those who had sinned against Him so many, many times! Why would God, who is so great and holy, want to live with such sinners? Why would God, who is spirit and has need of nothing, bother to talk to the descendants of Adam who had turned away from Him? As we have already seen, God created man in the image of God because He wanted to have fellowship with man. Man's sin spoiled that fellowship, but God established a righteous way by which man could come back to Him. It was because of His eternal purposes and His great compassion for sinners that the Lord God planned to place His glorious presence in the midst of the Israelites. By means of **a very special tent** and **very special laws**, God planned to illustrate how Adam's descendants can draw near to God. As we have already learned, because God is holy, sinners cannot have fellowship with Him in just any way. For this reason, God commanded the Israelites to make a special tent for Him so that He could be in their midst-in a way worthy of His holiness and glory. Also, by means of this special tent, God planned to teach future generations many important lessons about Himself and about the Savior He planned to send into the world.

Before we examine what God commanded Moses concerning the dwelling place which the Israelites were to build for Him, we must first understand that God did not tell them to build a tent for Him because He needed a place to live! No! God, the Most High, who created the world and everything in it, does not live in houses made by men! In the Writings of the Prophets, the Lord Himself declares: *"Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?"*

Why then, did God command the Israelites to make a tent in which His Spirit and glory would dwell? As we have already said, God wanted to teach the Israelites and all the descendants of Adam how much He longs to have **fellowship** with them. God also

wanted to put before them **an illustration** of the way by which people can be forgiven of their sins and have the right to live with God in heaven forever!

Thus, God commanded Moses and the Israelites to make for Him a tent so that He could dwell in their midst. However, the Tent of Meeting was not to be like any ordinary tent. In fact, the Scriptures contain fifty chapters which describe how the work of the Tent of Meeting was to proceed! They are profound chapters and we do not have time to speak of all they contain. We can only attempt to summarize the most important things.

What you must know first about this Tent of Meeting is that God told Moses that it must have **two rooms**. The Tent of Meeting was one tent, but a beautiful and heavy **curtain** was made to divide the tent into two rooms.

The first room was called *the Holy Place*. No one could enter that room except the priests. The priests were those whom God had chosen from the descendants of Aaron to kill the animals as sacrifices which cover sin. There were three things in that room. A gold table on which they burned incense, an oil lamp, and a table on which to place special bread which was presented before God in worship.

The second room of the tent was named *the Holiest Place* (The Holy of Holies). It was called the Holiest Place because after the tent was finished God planned to come down and fill that room with His majestic glory. The Holiest Place was an illustration of heaven. Consequently, that room belonged to God alone! That is why God told Moses that anyone who tried to enter the Holiest Place would die! No one was to enter the Holiest Place except the High Priest and he could only enter once a year. Furthermore, he had to enter with the blood of a sacrifice for his own sins and for the sins of the people, as God had decreed.

Inside the Holiest Place, God commanded Moses to place a chest made of acacia wood, and overlay it with pure gold. That chest was called *the Ark of the Covenant*. Inside the ark of the covenant, they were to keep the two tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. Above the ark they placed a lid of gold which the High Priest had to sprinkle with the blood of an animal once every year so that God could forgive the Israelites their sins. That is why God called this lid *the Atonement Cover* .

After that, God showed Moses how they must make a high curtain to surround the Tent of Meeting. That wall, **the wall of the courtyard**, was to be made of a white curtain. In the curtain surrounding the tent, they were to make **one door**. Thus no one could enter the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting unless he passed through the door of the courtyard. Inside the courtyard, in front of the door of the courtyard, God commanded Moses and the Israelites to place **an altar** made of bronze. Everyone who passed through the door of the courtyard had to pass by the altar first. God wanted to teach the Israelites and all of Adam's descendants the way by which they must approach God. How were the Israelites to approach God? By the way of the blood sacrifice.

Everyone who wanted to enter the courtyard of "God's dwelling place" had to enter with an animal sacrifice as a payment for sin. God was teaching the Israelites that **no one can ever approach Him except on the basis of the blood of the sacrifice**. That is why God told Moses, saying, *"The life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the alter; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."*

Therefore, if someone wanted to worship God, he had to offer an animal sacrifice first for the forgiveness of his sin. The worshiper had to bring a bull, a sheep, or a bird into the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. In front of the altar, he was required to place his

hands on the head of the sacrifice he had brought, confess to God that he was a sinner and that he deserved to die for his sins. Next, he would slay the animal. After that, a priest would take the blood of the sacrifice, sprinkle it on the altar and on the ground around the altar, and then burn the sacrifice on the altar. In this way God could forgive or cover the guilty person's sins, because the innocent animal had died in his place.

The Israelites had to repeat these sacrifices over and over every year. **Animal sacrifices could not satisfy God's holiness forever.** They were **temporary illustrations of the Redeemer** who was to come and die in the place of sinners--so that God could **permanently** forgive the descendants of Adam their debt of sin without compromising His righteousness.

To illustrate what the Redeemer would do for sinners, God established for the Israelites one day each year when the High Priest would enter the second room, the Holiest Place, of the Tent of Meeting. That day was called *The Day of Atonement* . On that one day in the month of October, the High Priest had the authority to enter the Holiest Place, and sprinkle blood on the atonement cover of the ark of the covenant. He could never enter the Holiest Place without bringing with him the blood of a spotless animal, which he consecrated to God for his own sins and for those of the multitude. In this way, God was showing how the Redeemer would come, shed His blood so that God could forgive sinners, and welcome them into His presence forever!

Fellow listeners, our lesson today is incredibly deep and wonderful. And there is so much more that we would like to say, but our time is almost gone. However before we bid you farewell, there is something else which you should understand about the Tent of Meeting. In the last chapter of the book of Exodus, the Scripture says:

*"The Israelites had done all the work just as the Lord had commanded Moses. Moses inspected the work and saw that they had done it just as the Lord had commanded. So*

*Moses blessed them...Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."* Do you see what happened? After the Tent of Meeting was ready, the glory of God descended on the tent and filled the Holiest Place, and the light of the glory of God shone forth, even surpassing the light of the sun! What we must remember is that, in all of this, God was illustrating the greater blessings which were to come when the Redeemer of the world descended from heaven and came to dwell among the sons of Adam. **The Redeemer Himself is the true "Tent of Meeting"** which God gave so that we can have a close and wonderful relationship with Him forever! As it is written in the holy Gospel

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us! And we beheld His glory!...[He is] the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Yes, the Redeemer is the One who **fulfilled everything** symbolized by the Tent of Meeting and by the animal sacrifices, for He not only came into our world and **lived among men**, but He also **shed His blood** as the Perfect Sacrifice for sinners so that we might have a close relationship with God forever!

Is what we have studied today hard to understand? Then let us remember that sometimes there are things in the Word of God that are difficult to understand, but that does not keep them from being true! May we never forget that the Lord Himself says: *"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways!...As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts!"*

Our time is up today....

May God bless you. We bid you farewell with these verses from the Holy Scripture:

*"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been his counselor? ...for from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."*

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