



**I***N the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-14)*

The most complete portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ that we own is the Word of God itself – from the first verse of Genesis to the last of Revelations; however, there are many portraits we have of Him scattered throughout Scripture of those objects with which we are very familiar. The Lord Jesus is the ‘Rose of Sharon,’ the ‘Lily of the Valleys,’ the ‘Bright and Morning Star,’ the ‘Branch,’ the ‘Prince of Peace,’ etc. But today, I wish to limit our full portrait of Christ to His several descriptive nouns that are discerned from the Wilderness Tabernacle.

First of all, the Tabernacle itself is a portrait of Christ – its design and features all point to one of our Lord’s characteristics. The Tabernacle was the constant point of abode of the Pillar of Fire by night, and the Pillar of Cloud by day. This is a clear illustration of the Presence of God – and our Lord Jesus Christ – with us always. <sup>5</sup>*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*** <sup>6</sup>*So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* <sup>7</sup>*Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their*

conversation. <sup>8</sup> *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* Hebrews 13:5-8 (KJV) and, <sup>20</sup> *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* (Matthew 18:20) So the Tabernacle is a physical and spiritual manifestation of Christ in His constant Presence with His Elect people.

There is only one way of approach to the Father, and that is through the Son. *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* (John 14:6) To have one's prayers lifted up to the Father by the High Priest, he must come to the Gate of the Tabernacle, and what is that Gate? *Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.* (John 10:7) Many may come to Christ, as did the Pharisees, with hypocritical hearts. These will not gain entrance – there must be a sacrifice that entitles them. But He is the Door and any who come to the Fold must come by way of the Door of admittance. But what qualifies us for that admittance? We must bring our sacrifice as did the Israelites of the Wilderness. Our sacrifice is not oxen or doves, goats or lambs – our sacrifice was made at Calvary 2,000 years ago. Our sacrifice which entitles our prayers to be heard by the Father is that Lamb sacrificed from before the Foundations of the World – sacrificed once-and-for-all for our sins.

The sacrifice of our salvation is represented by the Bronze, or Brazen, Altar just inside the Gate of the Tabernacle without which no man can be received. In the Anglican faith, there is no such thing as a Roman Mass in which Christ is symbolically sacrificed anew – we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Our crosses are bare and empty since Christ is Risen! We receive the Bread and Wine as elements of His Spiritual Presence with us at His Table, not His sacrificed physical Body and Blood.

Beyond the Bronze Altar, we come to the Bronze Laver – a highly polished fountain filled with water in which the priests were to wash their hands and feet. The priests could see their own likeness and need mirrored in the Laver. Any who did not wash in the Laver before approaching the Holy Place would die! Today, the believer needs no priest to access the Holy Place for all who are Christ's are imbued with the role of priesthood in a general sense though the priest in manner of worship continues. *5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* (1 Peter 2:5-6) In the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, this Laver is represented by the 'Prayer of Humble Access' before the reception of Communion. We are not clean without the washing of the Water of Life which Christ provides.

Next, the priest enters the Holy Place of the Tabernacle – a room separated from the courtyard. On the northside (or right side facing the Most Holy Place) was a Table of shewbread representing the Presence of God. God is always represented by the North Side. Our reformed Communion Table is always against the wall. Man has no business standing in the place of God. The Bread of Presence is also Christ! *31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* (John 6:31-35) Our faith must be compelled by grace while we yet live for there is no salvation in the grave.

Directly opposite the Table of the Bread of Presence was the Lampstand of Seven Candles. These represent the Holy Ghost without which no church can be called Holy. This also represent Christ as it does the Holy Ghost. Remember, the Holy Ghost will never speak of His own, but bring to our remembrance all things written in Scripture concerning Christ! This is a reminder of the need of the Christian to diligently study the Scriptures to ascertain that all these things we hear in preaching are true. Our Lord is the Light of the World. *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* (John 8:12) The Churches may have much truth, but without Light, they cannot understand it. We are to worship God in both Spirit AND Truth!

Finally, the High Priest approaches the Most Holy Place. Only the High Priest could approach the Veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (once per year). Before the Veil stood the Altar of Incense. The burning and ascending smoke of the Incense represented our prayers being wafted up to Heaven as the High Priest interceded for our sins as well as his own. But the Veil was torn from top to bottom at the death of Christ. There is no longer a Veil of separation. And we no longer have a lowly High Priest such as the one of the Tabernacle to intercede for us in prayer. Why? Because Christ has become our High Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate before the Father. *Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.* (Hebrews 5:10)

Behind the Veil was the Ark of the covenant containing the Commandments of God. Since God can tolerate no sin whatsoever in His Heaven, these must be obeyed in order to enter. However, above the Ark of the Covenant is the Mercy Seat which also represents Christ as our Redeemer and Savior. The penalty for sin being death, our sin-debt has been paid and wiped clean by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. Mercy trumps Law!

My friends, this was merely a short summary of the ways in which the Tabernacle are a portrait of Christ, and a true one. But there is much, much more that remains to be said which exceeds the scope of a mere devotion. There is one thing, however, that I would like to stress at this point of closing: Though the Tabernacle was furnished with fine liens, plate gold, and brass on the inside – and was beautiful in its interior; it was nothing to boast about on its external appearance. In fact, it was covered in coarse goat-hair. This represents the treasures of the hidden heart compared with any superficial or external appearances of man. In fact, Christ Himself was a man of common appearance and nothing of particular attraction to endear Him to the outward values of the world. *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.* (Isaiah 53:2) Even in this feature, too, the Tabernacle was a perfect portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ.