

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature,

Lecture 13, The Cultic Torah

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Well, let's start today with Boker Tov. There was a little delayed reaction there. Good, you got it.

You can see the announcements up here for yourselves, but I'll just make a couple of comments on a few of them. Please check the exam policies. The same ones apply.

They're all posted on the announcement section of Blackboard, so same thing with that. And start reviewing the implications of this thing that we went over last time in class when we were talking about civil Torah with regard to the redemptive movement, hermeneutic. The question will have to do with that.

Obviously, it isn't just about defining it; you'll have to use it, all right? Think of ways that you might be using that particular interpretive model to perhaps deal with some of the issues that are in First Testament Torah that we might want to think about how to apply today, some of the more challenging ones. So that's the essay question. If you've looked at your syllabus, you know that there was originally scheduled an open forum for tonight.

I'm canceling that for two reasons. One of them is that I've had enough exchange with a number of you in terms of questions, and that's wonderful. Come on in and talk if you haven't done that yet, and lunch appointments.

And the class is small enough, I think we can do what I would normally do in open forum that way. If there's a hue and cry for another open forum, I'll certainly be willing to do it, but it's looking like we can probably address questions in other ways. And also, to be honest with you, it's talking about freezing rain for tonight, so I'd sort of like not to be driving any later than I really have to.

Not that I'm a wimp in driving. I am from northern Minnesota, after all. But, you know, just, Ted, you're shaking your head.

I think for those reasons, and actually, it's the former that drives it more than the latter. We're going to be talking about sacrifices today, and the priesthood and the sanctuary. And I think a really good place to start in terms of a psalm is part of Psalm 51.

Many of you probably know this psalm. Interestingly enough, I may have said this in this class already this year. At Park Street Church, which I attend, every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist, together we corporately read Psalm 51.

And so, it's kind of an appropriate psalm to introduce our study of sacrifices, I would suggest. Not only that, but we're also going to learn to sing part of it shortly, perhaps starting on Friday. So, there's a reason for all of this kind of coming together right now.

But let me read parts of Psalm 51 for you as we start. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love. According to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity. Cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me.

Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely, I've been a sinner since birth. Sinful from the time my mother conceived me, surely you desire truth in the inmost parts. You teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean. Wash me, and I'll be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins. Blot out all my iniquity.

And then verses 10 through 12 are actually going to be the focus because we're going to sing that eventually. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. Let's stop there and pray together as we start our class, particularly focusing on sanctuary, priesthood, and sacrifices.

Let's pray.

Gracious Heavenly Father, we start this class together. It's our heart's cry along with the psalmist that you indeed clean us up, create pure hearts within us, and restore to us the joy of our salvation.

Father, we know we get so caught up in ourselves and our own particular agendas and our anxieties. We do pray that in your mercy, you would redirect our thoughts and truly clean us from the inside out. We pray for restoration for those who are struggling with illness or other kinds of pressures at this point that feel overwhelming.

Please grant them a full measure of your spirit to address whatever these issues happen to be. Father, we would also ask that you would use us to be

encouragements to those around us. We would be bold to pray that you would teach us through your word in this next hour.

Help me to teach clearly. May we indeed have a renewed sense of what it means really to worship you. And so we ask all these things, thankfully in Christ's name, amen.

Well, I think we're going to have to review a little bit, but actually just a little diagram first, or not even a diagram, a picture of a model, how's that? You can get this online if you really want to see what a model of the sanctuary looks like. Here it is. It's kind of helpful just to get a visual image of this. We're going to come back to sort of some understanding of how these parts work.

There are, by the way, various models of the tabernacle that have been constructed. Those of you from Southeastern Pennsylvania may have visited the one in Lancaster County, that whole life-size thing. Very, very helpful in terms of understanding what went on in the sanctuary.

So, we can only begin to get a verbal picture of it today after we look at this. But you'll notice a couple of things. Coming in through the entrance, here's the altar, the laver, the wash basin, and then of course, right up in here is the entrance into the tent proper, and we're going to say more about that later.

Notice the altar illustrates to us the fact that the carrying poles are very much there. Now, if you look at this carefully, and if you've read the text carefully, you can see some problems with this diagram, but we're not going to go there right now. It just gives us a little bit of a feeling.

Some introductory issues. What are the categories of Torah? Again, be mindful of the fact that categories are just frameworks to help us think about this stuff. What are they? Shout them out.

Whisper them. I'll tell you one if you'll tell me one. Trevor.

Civil, good. Civil and social Torah, which we did last time, are all those things that have to do with how we function in society. Mary, what's the other one? Yeah, moral, ethical, those moral imperatives, those things that are applicable across cultures, across timeframes, et cetera.

Of course, what's the obvious one we're starting today, Matt? Ritual and ceremonial. That's good, all right. That brings us to a discussion of ritual and symbol.

And let me just say something from the get-go here. I know that we're all coming from different contexts and different worship styles. If we attend worship services regularly, as I would encourage us to do, every one of us is engaged in ritual.

So don't sort of sit back and say, oh, well, I don't go to an Anglican church, or I don't go to a Roman Catholic church, or I don't go to an Episcopalian church or a Lutheran church, so I don't engage in ritual. There's a ritual in every place you're worshiping. You walk over to the chapel; well, we're not going to do it today because there's not a chapel this morning, but there's ritual there.

You know, you stand up, and the praise band starts, and we're praise band singing for three songs, probably. Usually, it's three, right? Sometimes four if they're short ones. The last verse is usually without the instruments.

Quiet it down. There's ritual, there's stuff that's been designed. It's just as ritualistic there as you have in any kind of liturgical church because we need ritual.

We need it to help guide our thoughts and move ourselves into a position where we worship. And then, of course, it depends on what kind of symbols are being used. First Testament worship, the stuff we're going to talk about today is full of symbolism, full of symbolism and ritual.

It all has lessons embedded deeply in it, and we can learn from them, even though our particular rituals may change to a degree here and there. I have one more to say about that in a moment. Leviticus is an interesting book.

I may have said this before, and I think you may have read it in Dr. Wilson's book, but when an Orthodox Jewish child, or conservative maybe even, or whatever, someone who's taking their religion seriously, when that child begins to really study and study what we call Bible, they don't start with the really fun parts like Exodus. They start with Leviticus. They start with Leviticus.

Isn't that interesting? That's the book we sort of put off until kind of the last ditch. The reason they start there is something we mentioned the other day, and that is in Leviticus, we see an overarching emphasis on the holiness of God. Okay, it's there over and over and over again.

Do this because I'm holy. You be holy because I'm holy. And then, of course, everything with regard to sacrifices teaches that very same lesson.

Now, sometimes we look at Leviticus and think, ah, how do I put all this together? Well, maybe it helps us to break it down just a little bit, and I've got some suggestions here in terms of some broad-brush outline if you will. Chapters one through 10, about which we're going to speak today in much greater detail. Chapters

one through 10 talk about the sacrifices and the ordination of the priesthood, okay? So this is talking specifically, as I indicate for you, about the way to the Holy One, approaching God.

Once you pick up with chapter 11 and actually go all the way through 27 with a few things thrown in there, but primarily 11 through 27, there we're talking about what some scholars call the way of holiness. In other words, all of life is lived in the presence of God, all right? So, the thing we want to keep in mind is that, yes, we're well aware that God is present with us right here and now. He knows exactly what you're thinking and how bored you happen to be right now, okay? He's present with us no matter what.

But there are times and spaces in the First Testament and likewise in our culture. There are times and spaces that are set apart for worship. And so that way to the Holy One is talking about approach to God in those contexts because those contexts are designed to remind us of who he is in terms of his majesty and his transcendence and his utter holiness and his absolute abhorrence, absolute abhorrence of sin, which of course we often forget.

Now, I won't go on a long rant right now, but some of you know how absolutely, I can't even think of the right word, how absolutely horrible it is to see what goes on in our chapel in a place that is set apart for that particular sacred time and sacred space to be a place for approaching God. And I've sort of taken it upon myself to enjoy the balcony lately. And what goes on up there is really, really tragic.

But be your own brothers and sisters keepers because those people are bringing upon themselves, I would say, an ongoing hardness of heart. And I realize that's an awful thing for me to say, but it sure looks like it when I'm up there. So go on up and nudge people.

I know what happens downstairs, too. If they happen to be eating or drinking or talking or playing their iPod or whatever, that belongs there doesn't belong there. Maybe it belongs there at four o'clock in the afternoon.

That's not been designated to time that is sacred time, sacred space. Doesn't belong there on our chapel days. Okay, enough of my soapbox for now.

The stuff that you read for today about the sanctuary, about the priesthood, about the sacrifices has a huge paradox built into it. First of all, what's a paradox? Let's get that on the table. Someone define paradox for me.

Doesn't have to be Webster, just give me a good garden variety definition. Sarah, is that a hand up? Yeah, you give it a try. Yeah, two things that, on the surface, don't appear to go together at all.

They're being put together, but they sort of fight with each other a little bit. And you have to think about how it is that they're both part and parcel of whatever it is we happen to be observing. Well, what's the paradox in terms of the worship scene in the First Testament? Think of what you've read about the sanctuary and then what you've read about sacrifice.

Let's see if we can unpack the paradox a little bit. Anybody wants to take a stab at it? Not stabbing time, huh? What's the sanctuary made of? All the wealth that they took out of Egypt, remember? The sanctuary is beautiful. It represents something about God's sublime nature and his transcendent nature.

And there was an awe and a majesty in that sanctuary. What happens when you kill an animal? There's blood and guts over the place if you stop and think, you know, we don't see much of this unless you've grown up on a farm and you're used to killing chickens. But it's a mess.

Juxtaposed in this one place is God's majestic beauty represented in what's there and also the gore and the mess and the horror and the pain that death is. And, of course, sin is causing that death. We're going to say more about that in a moment, but we're supposed to see that when we see this stuff unfold with regard to sanctuary and sacrifice, know the paradox, and then realize, of course, it's God himself who takes on that mess and that horror and that pain and that anguish.

And then maybe that will give us a better picture. As I said, what we're studying for today or have studied for today has all sorts of symbolism embedded in it. And if nothing else, I hope you get a tiny, tiny re-appreciation of things that we often just sort of let roll off our tongue.

Jesus died for my sins. That's very true, but understand what it means. The Israelites had in their worship system an education and that education was designed to help them see something about God and about themselves.

And we can learn from that. All right, much more to say on this. Implications of approaching God.

As I've already said, this whole approach thing is a specific part of the Torah on ritual ceremonial Torah. And it has to do with those times that were designated to be sacred times and, of course, the sacred space, which in their context was the tabernacle. Of course, there are aspects that change.

And our church contexts are somewhat different, obviously. I'm mindful, I'll just say one more thing and then I really promise I'll get off my soapbox. Anybody read Annie

Dillard in here? She's written some really interesting stuff and I recommend her to you as a fascinating writer.

But she's written a book entitled *Teaching a Stone to Talk*. Is that one of the ones you've read, Mary? Do you remember this section? I'm going to murder it because I'm going to really, really, really paraphrase it. But as part of *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, she talks about worship.

And she says something like this. If we had any idea into whose presence we were coming on Sunday mornings, okay, if we had any idea into whose presence we were coming on Sunday mornings, we would go there with helmets and flak jackets, and we'd be strapped into our pews. But instead, we sort of slouch in and, you know, chit-chat and maybe drink a cup of coffee.

We've become way too familiar. God, yes, is our closest, closest friend. And yet he's God.

Yet he's God. Well, the central feature of the whole worship business was the sacrifice. And, of course, we have much more to say about that in a moment.

But let's just look at a couple of things here. These are two words that aren't used very often. And in fact, you know, they're probably in some circles not really correct because they talk about shedding blood, and they talk about the wrath of God.

And sometimes folks don't like to hear that stuff, but here's the deal. Leviticus 17:11 basically says the life of a creature is in its blood. And when you shed the blood of a creature, that sacrificial victim is basically taking the place of my life.

My life has been forfeited because of my sin. You can go back and read that verse itself and then see Hebrews 9:22, which says, without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sins. All right, so propitiation is a word you want to know.

It's a great word that would show up on say, multiple choice section of an exam. Could, right? Appeasing God's wrath with the shedding of blood. Again, you know, we in our Western culture think, oh, why even talk about shedding blood? What an awful thing to think about.

We've forgotten that truly, as Paul says, the wages of sin are death. And so when that animal dies, he's taking my place. It's taking my place, right? Expiation, another related term, is not exactly the same.

In fact, there's big debates in theological circles about whether or not to use one as opposed to the other. I think they're both exceedingly important. Expiation refers to the canceling of sin.

Because of this blood that has been shed, the sin has been canceled. So, in one case, it's referring to appeasing the wrath of God specifically, and the other is the cancellation of my sin of your sins. And I've already said my next line there.

Perhaps we need to come back and get a little bit of a sense of what's involved in sacrifice. Then, again, graphically illustrated, we see what a mess sin causes. It just does.

And even though we try and whitewash it, and we sort of put it under the rug, and we don't tell anybody, and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, sin causes a mess. And these sacrifices illustrated that kind of thing. Well, in order to make the sacrificial process work, you did need not only the sanctuary, about which we're going to speak further in a moment but also the priesthood in terms of serving as mediators between us as sinful human beings and God in his transcendent holiness.

So, all this stuff then becomes part and parcel of a huge symbolic picture. Well, I've tried to intimate this already. What do we learn about ourselves? Well, we're daily creating messes, basically, as sinners.

What do we learn about God? Well, we certainly learn that he set apart in his utter holiness, and yet, as we're going to see, he condescends to dwell in our midst. That's the beauty of all this. But more on that in a moment.

Well, given what I've said, how do we contrast and compare these two? Let's take a look at some things first. What concepts remain the same? In other words, I've tried to give you some principles, and you should be able to extract those and now basically spit them back to me. What things are still true today for you and me as New Testament believers that were true when these words were revealed to the Israelites through Moses at Sinai? What's still true? Say it again, Lucky.

Need a priest, need a high priest. And, of course, Jesus is the one who has been it, but we need a mediator. We still need a mediator.

And what else? Sacrificial blood is being shed. Hebrews 9:22 that I cited for you a moment ago, without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sins. And what does Hebrews 12:28 and 29 say? This one, again, is not nearly as friendly, perhaps, as some of us might like it to be, but I would suggest it's a fairly important passage.

Let me read it for you. Since we and this is Hebrews, right? This is now after the resurrection, and the church has been formed, et cetera. Let's listen carefully to what the author of Hebrews has to say.

Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and so worship God with fear and awe for our God is a consuming fire. That's not that nasty Marcionite Old Testament God he's talking about. This is a New Testament statement.

Our God is a consuming fire. Let's worship him with fear and awe. So still we need to have an appropriate fear of God when we come into his presence.

I'm not in any way mitigating the beauty of fellowship with God through Christ and the joy that it brings, but that comes best when we understand who God is and do indeed have a healthy fear of him. So perhaps we can nurture that a little bit. What's changed? Well, since we're still in Hebrews, let me read you just a couple more passages that are fairly important.

This picks up on something Lucky said a moment ago. 7:24 and following, because Jesus lives forever, he has the permanent priesthood. This happens to be the end of chapter seven, where the author of Hebrews has drawn on that Melchizedek theme that we talked about when we talked about Genesis 14, all right? Therefore, verse 25, he's able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them.

Jesus is our great high priest. Let me keep reading. Such a high priest meets our need, one who is holy and blameless and pure and set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

Unlike other high priests, this is the change, right? We still need a high priest, but Jesus is dramatically different. Unlike other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for our sins once and for all when he offered himself.

So, very clearly, we've got an indication of all this coming to fruition in Christ. And then one more passage that is also eminently worth reading. Chapter 10, verse 10.

We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And then verse 12, when this high priest, Jesus, had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. So, the picture we're supposed to be getting here, and I know that I'm hammering at home, there are profound, profound truths that carry on.

There is a need for sacrifice, a mediator, and the holiness of God, and yet Jesus has done all that at one point in time. Okay? And the writer of Hebrews is eminently talking about that. Well, with that in mind, let's pick up and go on to sanctuary.

By the way, I've read two passages that talk about Jesus interceding for our sins. Did you catch that? Did you hear those? That's why it's important to say and mean, not just as a little tag on, but to pray in the name of Jesus because he's interceding.

You know, sometimes there's a discussion, oh, we have to put that on there. Well, you don't just put it on there. It means something when we say we're asking; we're imploring God to do this and to offer our thanks to him in Jesus' name.

Jesus is our intercessor. Therefore, it has a profound theological importance. All right, let's talk about sanctuary a little bit.

Notice all the space that's given to the sanctuary. If you are reading, you know, you come cruising along, and all of a sudden, at the end of chapter 24, you put on your brakes and say, ah, what have I got into with chapter 25? Because 25 right on through 40, well, it's a lot of stuff about the sanctuary, punctuated by three chapters on the golden calf incident. But notice all the space given over to this place.

Get the idea it's important? It is. It's terribly important. And we'll talk about why in a moment.

Notice also what we've got about placement. After the giving of the 10 commandments, after that whole body of Torah that we have, particularly in chapters 21 through 23, after the ratification of the coven ceremony, where Moses and the elders of Israel and Nadab and Abbi who go up to the mountain and they eat with God, it says. They have a feast celebrating the covenant.

After that, then we have the instructions for the sanctuary. All right? Starting with chapter 25. So it's getting the place ready.

Now that the covenant has been made, it's getting the place ready. And then, starting with Leviticus, we've got the sacrifices that are going to take place in that place. The chapters on the golden calf are among the most tragic, probably after the Garden of Eden.

And let me just mention a couple of reasons as to why this is true. Moses is up on the mountain. He's receiving instructions with regard to a place that God is going to dwell in their midst.

You know, the fellowship is going to be beautiful. He's receiving instructions about Aaron and what Aaron is going to do and what Aaron is going to wear. And at that point in time, what is Aaron doing? He's down at the foot of the mountain being swayed by the popular unrest.

And he's fashioning a golden calf. Of course, what does he say when Moses challenges him with it? It's a little bit of an interesting twisting of truth. Chelsea.

Yeah, the calf just sort of came out after we put all this stuff into the fire. So, Aaron is prevaricating. He's not telling the truth in this case.

Now, there's a whole discussion in terms of what this golden calf was and what it represented. Some people say, oh, well, they're just going back to their gods of Egypt because one of the many deities of Egypt had a bovine fashion to it. However, what's probably going on is what Aaron thinks, because he says so, here is the God who has brought you out of Egypt.

And Aaron thinks he is presenting to them a representation of God as he's making this calf form. Now, of course, he wasn't supposed to do that. And it's the worst case of idolatry.

Aaron has very successfully broken the first three commandments, just like that. Of course, this means that the covenant is broken. When Moses comes down from the mountain, he breaks the tablets of the covenant in a symbolic representation of that.

What's fascinating about the placement here is that after that incident, what does God do? He says, basically, get on with it and build it. I'm going to dwell in your place, in your presence anyway. Now, it comes as a result of remarkable intercession on the part of Moses.

As you read Moses's prayer, particularly in chapters 33 and the beginning of 34, Moses is interceding in an unbelievable way on behalf of his people. But God does indeed determine to dwell in their midst. And as they make the sanctuary, that's why so much space is given over to this.

Instructions, broken covenant, and yet God's intent to dwell in their midst indicated by five more chapters on the actual fashioning of the sanctuary. So, good thing on that. Any further questions? By the way, we could spend a whole hour on the golden calf.

I know that. Let me say one more thing. The reason that a lot of scholars are going the direction of saying that Aaron is actually making something that he thinks is God, not an Egyptian idol of some kind, is because of the description of the cherubim.

Now, you remember the cherubim, don't you? We had cherubim, right? And we're going to see them again as we start talking about some of the things that are part and parcel of making the sanctuary decorations. And there was a cherub that was put, there were cherubim that were put up at the Garden of Eden as guards. When you look at Ezekiel chapters one and 10, and we'll get there in a couple months, and

you see Ezekiel's description of cherubim, they have, and again, this is putting into human words something that's coming from the celestial spheres, but they have a face of an ox, don't they? And feet like calves' feet.

And so, something about the bearing of the presence of God, you know, holding it up because the cherubim are underneath that expanse, and then above that is the throne of God. Something about that is represented in words, at least, as having some kind of a calf-like structure, for lack of a better word. In the ancient Near East, for those of you who've had Dr. Wick's class, you probably know this already: in the ancient Near East, major throne rooms of major kings of major empires were guarded by these great big stone-winged creatures.

And the root word for those creatures is related to cherubim and keruv, all right? So, there might be some connections going on there as well. Well, that's a little bit of a digression we need to carry on to the sanctuary. When we read about this in the text, there are some Hebrew words that are helpful to understand.

So, first of all, this place is called a mikdash, which does indeed mean sanctuary because it means to be set apart. A Hebrew word kodesh means holy, okay? So, this is the actual description of this place, which indicates in the word itself that it's set apart, sanctuary. And we have bird sanctuaries, right? They're places that are set apart, wildlife sanctuaries.

The second word is actually indicative of another aspect of this because it comes from a Hebrew word that means to dwell, a neighbor. The Hebrew word for neighbor is related to this word, shahein, okay? This is a mishkan. So, it's the dwelling place of God.

Who's going to be, if you want to put it this way, neighbor to us, right? And then, finally, the Tent of Meeting, the Ohel Moed. This is where God met with Moses and then obviously later on Aaron. Moses actually has some special privileges in this regard that we don't have time to get into.

Let's carry on just a little bit and talk about purposes because what I've just said in terms of the words themselves give us some pretty strong hints on purposes. You know, what's happened after Eden that I was just talking about is that there's been a complete separation between that wonderful harmonious relationship where God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. After sin, they were driven out, the cherubim are placed there.

With the sanctuary, we have the beginnings of what it's going to be like when we're back together in the presence of God, when the Epic of Eden has worked its all the way out to its final culmination. But the sanctuary is a step towards that. It's a step towards that.

And so, God has chosen in his mercy to dwell in the presence of his people. And that's a remarkable choice. And as I said a moment ago, even in spite of the golden calf and the idolatry and all the things that implies in terms of the broken covenant, nevertheless, he's doing this.

It's also, and probably one of the most important things, to get the people ready for the incarnation. Because what does Immanuel mean? God with us. And Isaiah chapter seven says, you shall call his name Immanuel.

And then Immanuel comes through four more times in chapter eight, okay? God with us. And then, of course, we have in the birth of Jesus, the incarnation, and actually, John chapter one verse 14, which says, anybody knows what John 1.14 says? That's a dramatic statement. We've all read it too much, but it's a dramatic statement.

What does John 1.1 say? In the beginning was the word. Okay, we got that. And the word was with God, and the word was God.

So, we know something about the inextricable binding together of word and God in that context. What does 1.14 say? Just run back down through your, and the word became flesh. And here's the next part.

I mean, that's shocking enough for a Jewish audience. That is shocking enough. The word became flesh, but then what does it say? Yeah, and dwelt among us, and the Greek word is, and tented among us.

Don't think for a moment that John's reading audience wouldn't have that whole background to understand that we've got God's presence, had it in the tabernacle, now in the word incarnate, tenting among us. The word is chose there on purpose. And, of course, then it talks about the manifestations of his glory as well.

John does, referring back to God's manifesting himself in the tabernacle context. Prefigures the heavenly dwelling. I won't read these passages to you, but clearly, and we've seen this already, what is showing up in this whole system of Torah, and particularly now with our ritual Torah, is giving us a picture in a very small way of what's going to be when we have heaven restored.

So, you can look up those references. And then I've stolen this one straight from Gordon Hugenberger, who says, if you look at the tabernacle, which becomes the temple later on, it really is, in some ways, a picture of on our way back to Eden, as I said earlier on. This is the way that we see to make our way towards Eden, because God's presence is with us, and is even in the path to the temple.

I think we're going to see it here in the next structure. Oh, well, I'll get there in a minute. So, I'll finish that sentence up.

Even as a worshiper makes his way, or her way, through the curtains to the altar, the priest takes the blood and sprinkles it on the altar. All of that is part and parcel of coming back to the tree of life, the source of life. Well, at any rate, let's talk about the structure, and then we'll look at yet another diagram.

Frames made of acacia wood. Acacia wood grows out in the Sinai area. That's the poster tree out there.

In fact, it's probably about the only real tree. And it's not big, which is why their frames are not very big either. Just one quick note from a geographical perspective for those of you who are interested in this, or even if you're not, you're going to hear it anyway.

Acacia trees have remarkably deep roots, remarkably deep roots, because you get at the max four inches of rain per year in the Sinai Peninsula, and yet these trees survive, so they send roots way, way down, so that even though there's not a lot of rain, they can survive. So they're a tough tree, and your frames are going to be made out of acacia wood for the tabernacle. And then, of course, the curtains around about it, which indicates, again, are symbols.

God's dwelling is going to be set apart. Yes, it's surrounded by the tribes. Yes, he's dwelling in their midst, and yet it's set apart, and the curtains symbolize that.

There is also, within the actual sanctuary itself, once you get through the courtyard, you get the tent itself that has four layers of curtains, but you have the holy place and the most holy place, and we'll talk about the furnishings of that in a moment. Cherubim, I've mentioned them already. On the curtain, particularly, that separates the holy place from the most holy place are the cherubim.

Again, symbolic of going back to the tree of life, reminding us of Eden, reminding us that the cherubim serve to protect, in some ways, the presence of God, and to guard. Well, let's talk a little bit about what's inside this. Again, thinking of our structure, and I'm going to have a diagram again in a moment, but the structure is most holy place, inner sanctum, and then holy place.

Within the most holy place is the Ark of the Covenant, called that because it's that chest, or box, in which the tablets of the testimony were kept. Right? So, remembering the covenant that we've been talking about, two tablets of the covenant made, one for the suzerain, one for the people, the tablets of the covenant were kept in this chest. That's why it's called the Ark.

The Aaron is the Hebrew word of the covenant. Now, not only do you have those cherubim on the curtain between the most holy place and the holy place, as you read the text, and as I've indicated up here, they're also overshadowing the cover of the Ark, and the cover of the Ark is called the atonement cover. Kippurah, Kippurit, I think, is the word here, and you're going to hear, if you have Jewish friends in that word, Kippurit, you're going to hear Kippur, and perhaps you know about Yom Kippur.

New York City pronunciation, Yom Kippur. Maybe you've heard that, but really, Yom Kippur, right? So, that is dealing, then, with this whole idea of the day of atonement. We're going to talk more about that, Lord willing, on Friday.

So, atonement cover is over this Ark that has the tablets in it. Moving out from the most holy place, and again, diagram forthcoming momentarily, on the north side of the most holy place is a table. And the table is specifically for putting out bread.

Right, putting out bread, and you're thinking, bread? Well, remember that back then, you know, a significant part of one's sustenance came from bread. People have estimated as much as 60% would come from bread-type things. So, bread was the best representation of the source of life, and then, of course, all we need to do is start thinking of the connections here.

Manna from heaven, Jesus calls himself bread from heaven. So, built into the actual sanctuary is bread, which is going to be symbolic, I would suggest, and looking forward to an adumbration of the living bread. That's on the north side.

On the south side, we have the lampstand. The lampstand is going to show up also later on in some very symbolic passages. We're going to look at it in Zechariah.

We're going to look at it in the book of Revelation, and we're going to see this whole idea of light coming to symbolize and connect spirit. Now, I'm not sure how far you want to push this, and I'm not one to, you know, pick everything apart and find the trinity everywhere, but it is fascinating to me that as you look at the three main pieces of furniture, if you want to call it that, that are in the tabernacle proper, it's the Ark of the Covenant with God. It's the bread of the presence that has symbolic pointing towards the living bread from heaven, Jesus, and it's this lampstand that points toward spirit.

It's kind of interesting stuff. Not only that, we have an altar for incense placed right next to the curtain, separating the most holy place and the holy place, and as that incense goes up, it's a protective covering and cloud. Every time the high priest, once a year, went into the most holy place, he carried the incense ahead of him, and that was intended to protect, protective covering, which then, again, becomes a very interesting symbolic indicator, and the Book of Revelation picks up on this.

In fact, it already occurs in the Psalms, not just in Revelation. I can't remember which Psalm exactly.

I have to go back and look at it, but it talks about the prayers being incense, and incense representative of prayers. So, interesting stuff there. Moving outside into the courtyard, we have the altar itself.

Fairly large altar. If we were to sort of unpack those dimensions, it would probably be somewhere around six feet on each side. Wood, but overlaid with bronze, obviously so it could be carriable, not terribly heavy, and it's on the altar that the sacrificial animals would have been burned, and against that altar, that the blood would have been sprinkled on those animals as well.

In between the altar and the actual tabernacle proper was the basin, sometimes called the laver, and this, of course, is also important because after this priest has dealt with all the blood and the gore of the sacrificial stuff that goes on, I'll talk more about the priest's role and the offerer's role, but once that's happened, before the priest can go into the tabernacle, there's got to be a major cleaning process taking place, and so the laver is for that purpose as well. Well, here, I think, is going to be a diagram. Here it is.

Again, probably you've seen much more sophisticated diagrams, but this'll at least help us. East side here, the entryway. Notice the most holy place is intended to be a square, and I'm not the greatest artist in the world, so that's our arc that is representative of having a cover and some cherubim over it, you get the picture, but here's our path.

Coming in, the altar has horns on each side, you know, this kind of things that poke up a little bit on each corner, yeah, Rebecca. When they sacrificed the animals, did they just kill them? No, you brought it in. In fact, if I can just fast forward from this position about 1,500 years, when we read the instructions in terms of, in rabbinic materials, you know, Jewish materials that talk about the first century, when Jesus would've been living, talks about the temple that was standing at that particular point in time, and says, there were hooks in the walls all the way around, and there were hooks on which the offerers, when they brought their lamb, would hang that animal, kill it at that point, collect the blood, take it to the priest, so yeah, I mean, this is intended to be, as I said, a really graphic lesson about the mess that's involved, and the pain that's involved, and the horror that's involved in dealing with sin.

We've lost sight of it, and perhaps it's a very good educational tool to get ourselves to think about it again. Probably the closest you could come, probably the closest you could come would be watching The Passion of Christ, because I didn't see it, because I couldn't take it, but the people that saw it told me how seemingly

interminable that crucifixion scene was, but it was done for a purpose, to show us a little bit of how awful that really was, but yeah, the answer's yes. At any rate, the altar, those protrusions on each corner, those representing the horns, the things that actually extend up, were basically designed to keep all the wood on the altar.

You've got a fire going there, and of course, these are holding that wood in place. They will come to have their own symbolic significance later on in the history of Israel, which we will talk about later. Well, here's our basin or our laver, and then of course, the priest comes in, and they had to do things in the holy place.

They had to deal with the burning of the incense, a daily exercise, deal with the table for the showbread, and keep the lamps and the lampstand burning, because those were supposed to be interminably, well, that's not the right word, eternally burning as well. All right, that's our little diagram. A couple more details, and then we need to talk about sacrifices.

Part of being set apart was the process of anointing. The Hebrew word means to smear with oil. Now, anoint sounds like a nice little term, but it means to smear with oil, and of course, the verb is *mashach*, from which comes *mashiach*, which comes *messiah*, which is translated into Greek as *Christos*, Christ, so when we're talking about Jesus Christ, we're talking about Jesus, the anointed one, and therefore, the setting apart of not only the high priest, but also kings, involved anointing, smearing with oil.

As this whole process gets underway, setting up the sanctuary, doing the ordination process, if you've read very carefully the first 10 chapters, first nine chapters of Leviticus, and actually in Exodus, I think it's 38 as well, it's talking about putting the oil on these people, and then putting blood on the ear, and the thumb, and the big toe, symbolic, at least according to the rabbinic idea, of the priests being ready to hear the word of God, and properly speak the word of God, okay? And do actions that were appropriate, and walk in a way that was appropriate. So anyway, a little bit of an aside. Incense is a special incense for being burned in the Tabernacle, unlike other incense.

This was supposed to be a special mixture. That's probably what Nadab and Abihu did wrong, when it says in chapter 10, they took their censers, and they went kind of dashing into the tabernacle, contrary to the command of the Lord. And although we're not told explicitly what that was, it may be that they had taken something that was profane in terms of the incense.

There might be some other reasons in there too, that I'm going to suggest in about five minutes. The sanctuary is maintained by a half shekel tax. A half shekel, if I remember correctly, is about a fifth of an ounce.

When you first read this, it sounds like it's a one-time contribution. But as we continue to read through the historical narratives in the Old Testament, we get the feeling, the impression that it's something they collected on a regular basis, and that becomes eminently clear when you have the incident with Jesus in Matthew chapter 17. Does anybody know what I'm referring to when I talk about temple tax, Jesus, and a story in the Gospels? Does anybody know that one from, yeah, Trevor?

Are you talking about when he goes to the temple and turns over to the people? No, but that's actually no. I was trying to think of a way to get around that and make you feel good. Yeah, there they were doing money-changing.

And by the way, I'll add this anyway, just for kicks. The money changers were there, because this is Passover, right? And there were people coming from all over the Eastern Empire with different kinds of coinage. And so, they would have to change their money in order to pay the appropriate temple tax.

The problem with the money changers was they had sort of migrated right up onto the temple precincts instead of being where they should have been. But I'm actually looking for something else after all that. Sarah? Yeah, what about the fish? Yeah, good, all right.

Well, here's the deal. Some of the opponents are, did I hear a Peter? Yeah, you did, okay, good. Some people are kind of challenging.

And so they come to Peter, and they say, so did your master pay the temple tax? And Peter says, sure, of course, yeah, definitely. So, then it all gets back to Jesus. And he says, Peter, why don't you just go find this fish? And of course, in the mouth of the fish is going to be enough temple tax for Peter and for Jesus as well, even though he goes on to say that the son, in other words, himself, the son of the king, doesn't really have to pay the temple tax.

But yeah, it's an interesting narrative. And it's helping us understand a New Testament story that picks up on this half-shekel tax idea. Well, let's carry on.

Moving from the Tabernacle itself, and in some ways, our anointing discussion, kind of is a segue to talking about the priests and the Levites. And there's lots to say about the Levites. Numbers chapter three, for example, talks about their functions as well in terms of carrying and caring for the tabernacle.

But that was their Levitical function, to be those who packed up the stuff, carried it, camped around it, again, in order to be kind of an outer boundary or barrier beyond the courtyard curtains. And of course, once the temple comes along, they're going to have other things that they're going to do as well in terms of caring for it. They're also teachers.

They're also going to be singers and musicians. Those of you who are music folks, you know, the Levites played a major role in terms of temple, not tabernacle now, but temple sanctuary, prophesying with music and then singing as well. Well, the priests, specifically, are the ones who offer the sacrifices.

This is going to be a bone of contention a little later on when we start talking about a rebellion on the part of the people. Notice they're both responsible for teaching Torah. God has his ministers, and they are supposed to be teaching so the people are not bereft of knowing what it is that God wants them to do.

Well, that moves us from priests and Levites in general to the high priest himself. And let's just, as we go through these things that the high priest was wearing when he was officiating, what I want you to look for in almost all of these is the ways in which the high priest's clothing represented his role as mediator. All right, that's what we're really looking for.

How does this represent his role as mediator? So, first of all, what's the ephod? Word we don't use very much. Anybody know what the ephod is? It's that garment that seems to have been, well, the best thing I can come up with to describe it is you know, those vests that policemen wear when they're out and they've got this fluorescent orange on them and you have Velcro straps that kind of attach around the waist and it might be about so long? Well, extend it down a little farther. It's got a front part.

It's got shoulder pieces, just the way those little vests do. And it's got a back to it, and then there are probably some ties that kind of hung it together on the sides. It's not a complete garment.

It's an overgarment. And of course, on the shoulders we have, and here's the key in terms of the ephod, on the shoulders we have engraved the names of sons of Israel, children of Israel. So of course, as the high priest is making his way into the sanctuary, he is carrying the sons of Israel on his shoulders, part of his intercessory role.

He's bearing them into the presence of God. In addition to that, we have a thing called the breast piece on the front of the ephod. It has two significant roles.

First of all, it's got 12 stones. Again, over the heart of Aaron, now not carrying them on his shoulders, now carrying the 12 children of Israel represented in those stones over his heart as he goes into the presence of God. The 12 stones each, again, representing one of the 12 tribes.

But then we've got this urim and thummim thing, little pocket inside the breast piece in which something called the urim and the thummim, which we don't really know what it means or how it worked. The most common suggestion is that it means lights and perfections because the Hebrew word for light is or, and so the plural would be orim, urim. You can hear the similarity there.

Tam means whole, complete, et cetera, so tumim, perfections. So, lights and perfections. There are other ways of looking at it that say, well, or starts with the first letter of the alphabet, and tumi starts with the last letter of the alphabet, so maybe in some ways, it's kind of a comprehensive thing. However, that works.

Some folks say, well, or it might not come from light; it might come from the Hebrew word for curse. The curses on the one hand and the good things on the other, perfections. I don't know how it worked.

But here's the key. In Exodus 28, and by the way, all this stuff is described in Exodus 28 if you want to go back and check on this. Exodus 28 says that Aaron will bear the means for making decisions.

And that's what the urim and thummim were. They were the means for making decisions. So however they worked, when he brought a difficult case into God's presence, somehow he would get an answer with regard to it.

And we actually have, as some of the history of Israel unfolds, some indications that this thing did indeed keep being used, at least for a time, through David's time, maybe beyond that. So, we'll come on to that, come back to that later. He also has a purple robe, a rich light blue sort of robe, and it has bells and pomegranates around the bottom.

Pomegranates probably representing the fruitfulness of the land. The number of seeds in a pomegranate says something about its fruitfulness and symbolic of that kind of thing. But also, the bells are so that he's going to be heard while he's in the inner sanctum.

We also have a turban. What's engraved on the turban? Holy to the Lord. So, he's carrying on his head a declaration of his position as mediator. And then white linen underclothes, an indication of purity in that case.

I've already said this, but just to remind ourselves that as Jesus is our great high priest, as the book of Hebrews makes eminently clear, he's filling that intercessory role then. And that's why it is indeed, I would suggest, so important that our prayers really be offered intentionally, not lamely, but intentionally in the name of Christ Jesus. Well, we need to talk about ordination.

You get a sense as you read these chapters how carefully they did this. Everything done just right. Nothing haphazard, nothing spontaneous here.

Not that God doesn't like spontaneous worship, but that wasn't to be the case in this case. Nadab and Abihu seem to have engaged in spontaneous worship. Again, whatever the case was, we don't know precisely, but it was contrary to the command of the Lord, and it was an affront, a complete affront to the holiness of God.

And therefore, they will lose their lives as a result. Fire consumes them. And you can read all about it in Leviticus chapter 10, okay? It's a tragic situation.

But as we're going to see, it's not only here, but whenever there's a new step forward in God's design for his people, there are always people who seem to push the boundaries. And at that point in time, God chooses to teach a lesson. Usually, he's extraordinarily merciful in not wreaking punishment like this.

But in this case, we have it. So, the restrictions for the priests, they've articulated actually after the Nadab and Abihu incident, some of them. And some of these may then give us a little indication in terms of what they might've been doing wrong.

Also, Leviticus 21 gets at some of these restrictions. The whole idea here is to sustain, without a shadow of a doubt, God's holiness. And therefore, the ministers who are priests needed to demonstrate in their lives God's holiness.

So, they weren't to engage in mourning practices. In other words, tearing their clothes, letting their hair grow, and becoming dirty. Obviously, if that was the case, they couldn't come into the presence of God.

That wasn't right. Couldn't drink while officiating, which some people say, well, maybe that might be one of the issues behind the Nadab and Abihu thing. Maybe they were just, as part of this celebration, somewhat inebriated and went dashing in there without thinking very carefully.

By the way, one more quick distinction here. Some people go all the way back to Exodus 24, and you'll remember that Nadab and Abihu were the ones who were up on the mountain with the elders of Israel and so forth and seeing the presence of God. The suggestion is, maybe they kind of got, well, they expected that that was going to be their place.

After all, they'd had this experience on the mountain with God. Why? They sort of translated that arrogantly and said, we deserve to be in his presence. We're going in and taking that presumptuous move in a very awful way and not distinguishing between holy and profane.

That's the big deal there. The last three come out of Leviticus 21, weren't to trim beards, were to marry virgins, no physical defects. By the way, people with physical defects who were in the Levitical line were still provided for, but they couldn't go into the sanctuary of God.

All right, it's 10 past. We're going to pick up and finish sacrifices really quickly next time and then go on because that'll be a good way.