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## **THE TABERNACLE OF MEETING**

***- EXODUS 40:1-13,34-38. - AUGUST 4. -***

**Golden Text: – "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle."**

OUR Berean Studies of the Tabernacle have familiarized us with the main features of this lesson. In the Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices we learned of the form, size, construction, etc., of the Tabernacle which God directed the Israelites through Moses their mediator to erect for his worship. It was portable, and every way suited to the forty-years journey in the wilderness which the Lord foreknew would be their portion as a people. Whenever they encamped the Tabernacle was erected as the center of the camp and the tents of the Israelites were grouped about it: first the tribe of Levi, immediately surrounding it, divided into its various families; outside of the Levites were the tribes of Israel – on the north three tribes, on the south three tribes, on the east three tribes, on the west three tribes. Joseph's tribe being divided into two, Ephraim and Manasseh, made the twelve complete without the Levites.

The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night continued to be the representation of the Lord with his chosen people, and this cloud and fire-pillar seem to have been associated with the Tabernacle in the sense that a branch or foot came down from the cloud to the Tabernacle. When it left it indicated that the time had come for them to travel. They followed the leading of the cloud: when it stayed they rested, constructed their camp, and a connection established itself as before between the cloud and the tabernacle. Thus Israel had continually before them a manifestation of God and his protecting care over them as his people. They had craved an idol

to go before them and to serve as an outward manifestation of God; they had been punished for the idolatry implied in the making of the golden calf; they had learned the lesson and repented, and God had given them what he had already planned – something far superior in the way of an evidence of his presence in their midst and his guidance of their affairs.

## **GOD FIRST – THE CENTER**

From the arrangement of the Tabernacle and its relationship to the camp of Israel we can see that the lesson to that people must have been God first – religion the center of all ambition and activity. All the tribes were related to the [R4028 : page 217] Tabernacle because it represented God, and they were all related to each other because they were each and all surrounding and directly in contact with this Tabernacle of God. There they and all their interests touched and centered. And thus it must be for Spiritual Israel, whoever, wherever, whenever. Whoever comes into harmony with the divine arrangement will find such an ordering of divine providence as will bring him into touch with all others who are in fellowship with the Father and his glorious plan.

It is in vain that we seek to have order in the Church or harmony with the brethren except as this common center is recognized. If all look to the Lord for guidance then all are ready for his providential leading, whether it be to move or to stay. If all look to the Lord for their laws and government and guidance in all of life's affairs, then all may be in harmony the one with the other, as recognizing the same central standard of divine atonement. But if this central authority be ignored, or in proportion as it may be ignored, there will be discord and conflict. Undoubtedly this is the difficulty with many of the Lord's people who are striving for peace and harmony and meaning well in their hearts. They fail to recognize the Lord and

his Word as their standard, and fail to appeal to this standard only in cases of dispute.

### **THE HUMAN BRAIN SIMILARLY ORDERED**

Without claiming that Phrenology has reached a perfection of development – without claiming that any has learned to read accurately from the shape of the human skull the various traits of character therein represented, even while admitting that such a reading of character might be defective, and particularly so with those whose characters have been transformed by the renewing of their mind through the begetting of the holy Spirit – nevertheless we may admit that Phrenology so far as understood fully corroborates the picture given us in the arrangement of the Tabernacle of Israel surrounded by the camp. Thus: –

If we imagine the human skull as spread out flat, we find that the central part would correspond to the Tabernacle and its court; for in the very center of the head on top lies spirituality, and directly in front of it lies veneration. **[R4029 : page 217]** The latter organ would correspond well to the court, the former to the holy. As to enter the holies it was necessary to pass through the court, so to enter into a proper heart-appreciation of the spiritual things it is necessary that we enter in through veneration, reverence for God, which will lead us to worship him and to seek to know and to do his will.

Surrounding these two central organs are others which correspond well to the different divisions of the tribe of Levi – the sacred tribe devoted to the service of God in the court and in the Tabernacle. These organs represent faith, hope, benevolence, conscientiousness, firmness, etc., and then outside of these again come the various organs of the mind, which have to do more particularly with earthly things. These, useful and valuable in themselves, all need to be controlled and guided from the center. Even as in the camp of Israel, the center, the Tabernacle, was not

controlled by the tribes, but the tribes were controlled and guided from the Tabernacle. Thus all the talents and qualities of mind and body which we possess, and which are all represented in our brains, are all to be subject to and guided by our reverence for God and our spiritual perception of his will concerning us, which will is to be expressed primarily through the intermediary organs of benevolence, faith, hope, conscience, etc.

### **CONVERSION THUS ILLUSTRATED**

Thus may be illustrated the philosophy of what is known as conversion. Thank God it has not been necessary to understand the philosophy of conversion in order to have and to enjoy that blessing, otherwise very few would have been thus blessed. But it will be of advantage to some to be able to analyze the philosophy of conversion and to see how beautiful and how reasonable a matter it is. The natural man, "without God and without hope in the world," is like the Israelites as a Jewish horde when in Egypt, disordered, incongruous, slaves to sin, laboring under taskmasters, and knowing not how to escape. The first step toward order is the hearing of the Word of the Lord directing our course to the promised land, out of bondage. This implies the recognition of Moses, the leader whom God has appointed, and obedience to him in fleeing away from sin.

A time must elapse, whether a moment or year, in which the enslaved one realizes his liberty accomplished by God through the hands of the great antitypical Moses, and thus he is brought finally to a hearing of the law, to a realization that even though all of his past were forgotten he would be unable to keep perfectly the divine law because of the weakness of his own flesh. To this point the divine arrangement is indicated, namely, that to all those who consecrate themselves to the Lord a begetting of the holy Spirit will be granted, and they will be inducted into favors and blessings of the Lord and assistances

from him hitherto unknown. This is conversion – the acceptance of the Lord and his will as instead of self-will – in all of life's affairs: the full consecration of heart and life, time and talents, to the Lord, and the recognition of Christ as our Head or High Priest, our Advocate or assistant in all these matters.

The transformation which then takes place corresponds to the setting in order of the tribes in relationship to the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was recognized as the center of the camp and each tribe had its own place in relationship to it, sometimes here and sometimes there. There was no longer any confusion as to one tribe choosing this or that location, sometimes in a preferred position and sometimes in a less preferred position; henceforth each tribe had its own position, its own responsibility and its own relationship to the Tabernacle.

### **ORDER IS HEAVEN'S FIRST LAW**

So with the converted heart and head. Previously sometimes selfishness would be in the center and in control, sometimes conscience, sometimes acquisitiveness, sometimes hope and sometimes fear would occupy the center, around which the various organs would group themselves. But now, as soon as the heart is given to the Lord, his organization and his arrangement is recognized, and the various powers of mind and body represented in our brains are fixed in their relationship to the central ones, which henceforth become **[R4029 : page 218]** the dominating ones and always occupy the prominent place of authority. To the truly converted, consecrated Christian, the center from which will proceed all the arrangements of life must be spirituality, which corresponds to the holies in the center of Israel's camp.

This implies veneration for God. Henceforth the various organs must all look to this common center for direction. Acquisitiveness might say how wealth might be acquired, but

has no authority to move until first the message shall be received from spirituality and veneration. And this authority must be passed on through the first circle, represented by the Levites: benevolence will have a word to say, so will conscience, so will faith and hope, as to whether or not acquisitiveness may take possession as it proposes. And benevolence, faith, hope and conscience will all surely inquire of the Lord through veneration, spirituality, as to what is the will or mind of the Lord on the subject before giving permission to acquisitiveness to act as proposed.

Combativeness is another of these organs which used to be at times a central one commanding the others, but now it is relegated to its proper place on the outside, at a distance from the center; it cannot act until authority is granted, and the authority can only come through benevolence, faith, hope, conscience, etc., and these again must inquire of veneration and spirituality as to whether or not it would be the proper thing for combativeness to gird on its sword and take the field, and what and how much it may do in any event. If the cause be good permission will be granted, if the cause be evil permission will be refused, and the organ of firmness will see to it that the decisions of the central court are carried out by all the outlying members.

For instance, if combativeness is aroused and wishes to cooperate with selfishness or acquisitiveness in any form, the decision from the central court will be, No! Combativeness may never be exercised selfishly; but if combativeness be aroused in cooperation with conscientiousness for a defence of the faith once delivered to the saints, the decision from the central court will be, Yes! contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Nevertheless benevolence, love, cooperating with caution, will be detailed to see to it that combativeness shall not, even in defence of the faith delivered to the saints, take a harsh

and aggressive form of action, but shall be supervised by benevolence, love.

No wonder that worldly people have been astonished to find so radical a change of character and life on the part of some who have come into harmony with the Lord through a full consecration of their hearts to him – some whose minds have been reordered, transformed by the renewing of their wills – by the placing of all the qualities of their hearts and minds in control of and in harmony with the Lord. We sometimes speak of conversion as though it worked a miracle, because its operations worked so wonderful a change in our hearts and lives and sentiments by bringing them under the new management, under the control of the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love, the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of a sound mind.

### **THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE**

In the lesson before us, when the Tabernacle had been constructed and the tents of the Israelites had been ordered in harmony therewith, the first important event was God's recognition of it. This is referred to in the thirty-fourth verse of our lesson in these words, "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle." It was called the Tabernacle of the congregation, or more properly the tent of meeting, not because the Israelites met there as a congregation, not because it was their meeting house, but because they were a holy, separate house or people of God, and in this tent in the center of their camp God made his dwelling-place, and it was here that he met the children of Israel by receiving and communicating with their representatives of the tribe of Levi, through whom, by the Urim and Thummim, the divine will was communicated. Applying this now to us individually, as Spiritual Israelites: When our conversion took

place it meant not only the ordering of our minds in accord with the Lord, placing spirituality and veneration first – in the center of our affections – but it meant more than this.

This much we were to do and did do under direction of the Lord's Word. But God then did something more, something very necessary for us, viz., by his holy Spirit we were begotten again to a newness of mind. In other words, the heart which thus ordered itself according to the divine instruction of the Word God recognized. He took up his abode with us, and our meeting-place with him, represented in the organ of spirituality, was blessed by the Lord and lightened. The glory of the Lord filled us. We realized to some extent that we were accepted of the Lord, and the enlightenment of the holy Spirit has since then been with us, an ever-present help and guide: a pillar of cloud, it has blessed us by day in shielding us from the things that would be too trying for us; a pillar of fire by night, it has granted us enlightenment in darkness, and the keeping, protecting power of him who has promised that all things shall work together for our good because we are his and love him and have placed him first in our hearts, and are thus amongst **[R4030 : page 218]** the called ones according to his purpose. Thus the new will ordained of God and instructed from his Word may, as the priest in each of us, have intercourse with the Father in the merit of the great atonement sacrifice.

And this new will, consecrated, anointed, set apart, may bring out the wise decisions of God in respect to all the other organs of our bodies, and show what each may and may not do, and how each may or may not cooperate with the others, and which should be restrained and when, and which should be cultivated and how, that the whole body may be full of light, full of order, full of divine blessing, and that as the people of God we might go onward from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, from strength to strength, and be prepared for the



everlasting conditions beyond Jordan in the promised land to which we are journeying – the heavenly city.

### **A TYPE OF THE FUTURE ALSO**

This arrangement of the Tabernacle was not a permanent one. It pictured rather the conditions of this Gospel Age, so far at least as the Church is concerned – the Royal Priesthood, who are now permitted to enter the holies as members of the great High Priest, Jesus, and who during the Millennial Age will with him guide all the people of God [R4030 : page 219] who are willing to be led into the grand eternal rest which remains for them. During the Millennium all who desire to become true Israelites, to come into full harmony with the Lord, will find a place in the divine plan: the Royal Priesthood first, nearest the Lord, yea, even at the very gates of his favor, even as the priests encamped immediately in front of the gateway into the Tabernacle courts; and next to these will come the Great Company, as represented by the Levites in general; and in due course all the families of the earth will come into harmonious order, all looking to God, all seeking to walk in the light of God's favor, and ultimately there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, because all lovers of sin will have been cut off in the Second Death, and because all others will have come to a full harmony with God through the ministrations of the priesthood.

### **"I THAT SPEAK AM HE"**

JOHN 4:26; 9:37

She came, the thirsty one, to fill her pitcher,  
And found a stranger sitting on the brink;  
And while she poured for him the well's refreshment,  
He gave the precious cup of life to drink.  
And when she wondered at her life's revealing,

And if Messiah deeper depths could see,  
He graciously her rising faith encouraged, –  
"I that speak to thee am he."

And so when we, blest Master, come all empty  
To fountains we but drink, and drink, in vain,  
Be thou with satisfying waters waiting,  
That we may drink and never thirst again.  
Our wayward hearts' true inwardness disclosing,  
Constrain our timid faith to hope in thee,  
And let us hear again the gracious message –  
"I that speak to thee am he."

They turned him from the synagogue accursed,  
Whose gift of sight the Savior had bestowed;  
And, burning under grief and indignation,  
He sought again the well-remembered road.  
And while he mused upon his kindly patron,  
And if he could indeed Messiah be,  
Lo, One with beaming countenance addressed him,  
"I that speak to thee am he."

And so, dear Lord, when our dim eyes are opened,  
And one-time friends thy healing power despise,  
Be thou anear with words of cheer and comfort,  
To grant our saddest hour a glad surprise.  
And when life's subtle mysteries perplex us,  
Unlock to us with faith's unfailing key,  
That we may hear from out the open portals,  
"I that speak to thee am he."

The proud and haughty still a sign requiring,  
In vain the zenith and horizon scan,  
While walks among them One with vesture girded,  
To wield the purging and discerning fan.

But he who humbly treads the path of duty,  
With eyes unsealed shall his Deliv'rer see;  
His trial hour shall brighten with this token –  
"I that speak to thee am he."

– *R. B. Henniges*

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