

**THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNES IS  
A PATTERN FOR THE 12 NEW TESTAMENT  
CHURCHES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**

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Since the 12 churches in Acts picture the composite Church, we can expect to see through them the different parts of the tabernacle. For God commissioned Bezaleel and Aholiab with the wise hearted to spin the goats hair, mold the gold, etc., and then bring them all together by the groups that worked on them. In Exodus 40 Moses is setting up the tabernacle, by His Spirit, to be a habitation for God to dwell in. Check these items and you'll see a parallel with the particular church they represent.

1. The tabernacle was made from those 48 boards of acacia wood overlaid with gold, each one with its pair of silver sockets, and the five bars going through them (Ex 40:18). The **Jerusalem** assembly was where God set up His Church as pillar and bulwark of truth too. These 48 boards are the principles set by God in order to build a strong model church. Paul's epistle to Timothy explains in detail all this principles so we may understand what is the length, breadth, height and depth of these 48 boards. For the sake of the present article we are going to mention that Jesus Christ the Son of man and the Son of God, is represented here by the wood and the gold respectively, this gives us the right nature of the church in Divine Order, built on the only one that could relate and supply to our natural and spiritual needs. Also, the fivefold ministry mentioned in Eph 4:11, pictured by the 5 bars that went all the way through the 48 tables is seen here, the fivefold ministry at Jerusalem is seen in that (1) "they continued in the apostles doctrine," (2) Agabus and others developed in the prophetic ministry (Ac 11:27), (3) Philip and the rest that were scattered fulfilled the evangelist calling, (4) James, the Lord's brother, became the pastor, and (5) Peter and John fulfilled the teaching ministry (Ac 5:25). Of course the silver sockets speak of Christ's redemptive work, which is the twofold support (by the blood and by the Spirit) for each one of these boards. This tabernacle (or tent) includes the linen ceiling too, speaking of God's righteous covering upon the church, to become the container of His glory. This first covering protect us from God's judgments, so when Ananias and Sapphira broke the white linen covering of righteousness (right relationships) with God the Holy Spirit, by lying to Him, Peter's sentence on them showed how they were exposed to God's righteous judgment. Death is not always physical; many other times when individuals or churches walk outside God's righteousness, spiritual death comes upon them. Through Christ's righteousness the church is able to walk without condemnation continually before the presence of God.

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2. **Samaria** church is represented by the second covering, the one made of 11 curtains of goats' hair and coupled by 50 brass taches in the middle (Ex 36:14-18), and the onlooker would notice, on approaching the door that the first curtain is doubled up. It's also significant that this particular coat was covered by the red-blood one above it. Yes, the Samaria church was originally a simple group of wild goats, but when they heard the gospel with signs and wonders, they gave up their individual lives as living sacrifices by spinning their lives together, to become united into one company of saints, "**covered by the blood.**" Here was where Christ met the Samaritan woman, and this goat's hair covering is a picture of the Bride's glory covering (Song 4:1), Christ's authority over her. The Samaritan church, being in their first love, was just such a church. The goats' curtain is the protection from flesh. Walking in submission and self-denial before our Lord and Savior, and being crucified with Him, shields us against every lust of the flesh. This is shown when Peter rebuked Simon the sorcerer's lust of power, asking him to repent, so the fleshly thought of his heart might be forgiven.

3. **Damascus** church is going to show the third covering, the ram's skin dyed red. "And they overcame him (the Accuser) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev 12:11). Those Christians had on them the ram's skin dyed red covering, that's why they were untouchable. Satan had deceived Saul of Tarsus to fight against the saints, but the blood of the Lamb (a baby ram) called for the highest authority, the same Lord Jesus, whose intervention stopped the rampant persecution of His saints. This is the reason why even with the authority of the priests Saul couldn't get to them; and not only that, the same Saul was transformed by that blood into a new creature. The forces of the Enemy constantly threaten this type of church, nevertheless she must rest assured under the covering of the **blood**, not loving their lives unto death.

4. "The covering of the tent above upon it," the outer badger skin covering was the protective covering over the whole tent. Though the badgers are unclean animals, earth-dwellers -in holes- noted for their persistency, its skin was used as part of the most holy habitation of God. Yes, Cornelius and his Gentile family and friends, considered unclean by the Jews, represent this covering. This covering was exposed to the wind, cold, sand, heat, etc. **Caesarea's church** is noted for their devout principles and persistency (Ac 10:2). This church served as a refuge in the storm; Peter and Paul both dwelt there in the crisis of their lives. Rejection prepares the heart with mercy, to receive those who are rejected or persecuted. This is God's covering against the world system, to be afflicted with Christ by bearing His reproach is the best way to be insulated from those rough attacks of this world. This covering also speaks of our testimony to the world, though without worldly beauty, reaches out to the needy people, calling them to come under the shadow of the Almighty.

5. The testimony was placed in the ark, the staves were set in, and the mercy seat put upon with the pure gold cherubim on it. It was the central attraction in the camp, for God dwelt in the mercy seat's overshadowing pillar of the cloud, and, in the journey or in the battle led forth. **Antioch** church has a hidden glory; it was there where God saw fit to first put the Pauline revelations and the grace teachings. Also, it took the central attention in the Christian world; and because of its apostolic calling, it became the leading church in the gospel's journey throughout the whole world, in Paul and companion's lives and ministries. The fact that the believers were called Christians first at Antioch reveals that pure gold-life of Christ revealed in them.

6. "And set up the veil of the covering..." (Ex 40:21). Four pillars upheld this veil. The veil's great strength resided in its tightly woven linen threads. When it was wrent, it made way to enter into the glory of God's presence. The church that shows this part of God's habitation among men is **Philippi**, Paul and Silas suffered, as Jesus did, unjust chastisement and stripes, they were thrown in jail, and their feet were fast in the stocks. How wonderful it was for them to be considered worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, in the same token, as when Jesus was crucified and the earth quaked and the veil was wrent, this time, when they were worshipping God in the midst of their adversity, again an earthquake shook the place, the doors of the prison were opened and salvation came to the lost. That scared jailor came into God's presence and asked; what must I do to be saved? This reveals the veil removed from this man's eyes that together with his family were the beginning of a church in God's presence.

7. "He put the table in ... he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord" (v. 22). This table had two rows of showbread, showing a double portion of provision. **Thessalonica and Berea** are the twin churches that received the Word of the Lord in much affliction (1 Thss 1:6), as it is written; "It is most holy unto Him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire..." (Lev 24:9). The Bereans were noted for being "noble", having all readiness to receive the scriptures. Though we find ourselves in much affliction or persecution for Christ, the Lord always prepares a table in the presence of the enemies. The frankincense upon the bread pictures the sweet aroma of suffering for Him without complaints. We delight in living by God's Word despite the circumstances around.

8. The Candlestick. This will show **Corinth church**, at first it might seem that this city is in the opposite side of walking in God's light, nevertheless it is precisely these people who needed the light the most. Jesus revealed Himself as the "I am the light of the world" immediately after dealing with the woman caught in adultery. God's purpose here was to command the light to shine again out of darkness (2 Cor 4:6). The candlestick with all of its rich details pictures this type of churches, in the sense, as Paul writes to the Corinthians: "That in everything they were enriched by Him" (1 Cor. 1:5). This candlestick made of pure gold is reflected also in those words written by Paul; "that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v 8), we must remember that God sees them as the finished perfected product in glory, not in their faults alone. The beaten work needed to shape the candlestick is seen in the different disciplines that that church had to undergo, none of those for their destruction, but for their building up in the Lord.

9. "The golden altar", (Ex 40:26) "And he burned incense thereon." which shows God had a Christ-centered group that would be pure in their worship. The first question Paul asks to the disciples at **Ephesus** is: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" That turned out in making those disciples true worshippers in Spirit and in Truth. Paul stayed with them for three years teaching them God's Word and giving them all of God's counsel. Afterwards, when he wrote the letter to them, he reminded them on how they received the Holy Spirit after they believed (Eph 1:13), and to not to grieve the Holy Spirit (4:30). The purpose of this kind of churches is to keep the vision of the Christ-centered worship regardless of the consequences, as when those of Demetrius stirred up the whole city regarding goddess Diana that the whole Asia and the known world worshipped at that time. True worshippers have to be tested in their loyalty to the only one that deserves all glory and honor and power.

10. "And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door..." (v 29). This was the place of sacrifice, and that's exactly what **Troas church** shows. There are several things they had to sacrifice in order to become a model church. Paul's first visit to them where he received his Macedonian call, had to be interrupted till the right help was found, then, the long wait till he came back, when he finally got there he only spent 7 days with them, then, that last meeting they had to sacrifice their sleep and finally the death of a young man. After Eutychus resurrection they were not little comforted, showing that no matter the size of the sacrifice there is a greater reward for the faithful ones. Lastly, Paul decided to go afoot for 20 miles to Assos after watching the whole night, showing a sacrifice lifestyle for them, his example was one of such continual sacrifice, too. It is also noticeable that there were many lamps in the upper room where they were, speaking of the fire that should never go out. Also, in this meeting, they celebrated the Lord's Supper, remembering the sacrifice of the Lamb of God at the cross of Calvary, which is the fulfillment of all the sacrifices made at the brass altar.

11. "The laver", made of the women's looking glasses. These women transformed their instruments of vanity and external beauty into an instrument of judgment for cleansing; the beauty of the Lord is not in the outward appearance, but the inner one of the heart washed by the water of the Word, as referred in Ephesians 5:25 where we see the N.T. Laver in relationship to the Wife. The women at **Tyre**, bringing the children along, were cooperating with the church together with their husbands. They, as Mary did when she sat at Jesus' feet, had their priority in the kingdom of God, knowing that the rest would be added unto them. This type of church is where God's ministers can go to and not only "get washed" but also look into the laver and see God's purposes for them, as Paul could discern God's will in his trip to Jerusalem. The laver washes the feet, the walk, and hands, the service.

12. "And he reared up the court round about... and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work." (vs. 33). This speaks of the kind of church that has a widespread testimony of Christ's righteousness all over the world. Even the Gentiles could see this. Right in the Gentile world center would be a natural place that you would expect God to raise up such a strategic church. And so Paul writes to the **church at Rome**, "For your obedience is come abroad unto all." and "First, I thank my God that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Satan likes to get into God's air currents of election and ride them, too. He can't create; he can only steal the things of God and use them for his glory, that's why the false church at Rome, once established, spread so fast all over the world. But as God rises up true Rome churches, the false must give way. Let's remember that the testimony of the Lord was given by Paul all the way from Jerusalem to Rome to all those governors and kings the Lord foreordained to listen the gospel, before the foundation of the world. This is as if Paul was placing, one by one, those 100 silver pillars all around the Roman empire together with their hangings and the gate, so anybody, rich and poor, small and great, may come and enter through the redemptive work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.