

## “Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

**Feb. 17, 2016**

- Exodus 39:1-40:38 – Preparation of priest’s garments (39); furnishings of the Tabernacle (40).
- John 6:52-71 – Jesus’ discourse of eating His flesh and drinking His blood.
- Song of Solomon 5:5-9 – The Shulamite’s dream of looking for her lover.

### Commentary:

1. Exodus 39:1-40:38. In chapter 40 we have description of the Tabernacle going from the inside to the outside. Its name declares its meaning, ‘the tent of meeting’. It was the meeting

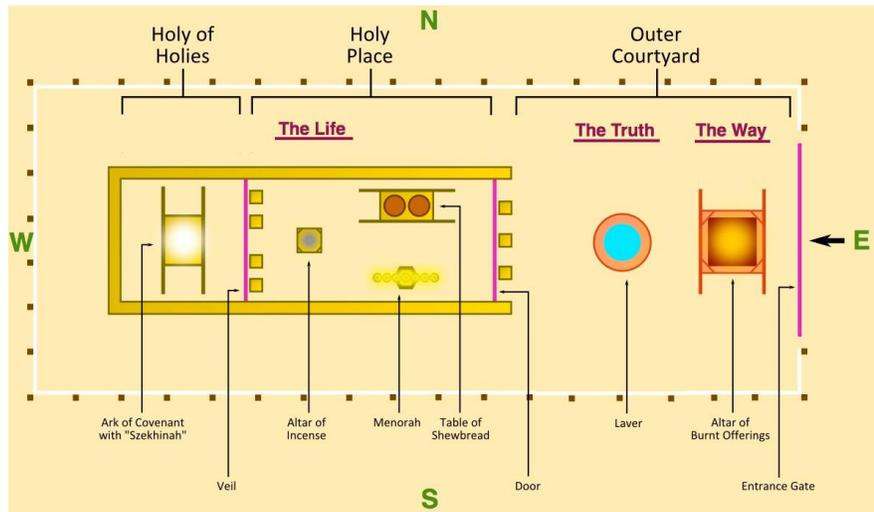
place of God with man, as the name is explained in Exodus 29:42, ‘where I will meet with you, to speak there unto thee.’ It is also named simply ‘the dwelling’; that is, of God. It was pitched in the midst of the camp, like the tent of the king with his subjects clustered round him. Other people at this time had grand temples, like the solemn structures of Egypt; but this movable sanctuary was



a new thing, and spoke of the continual presence of Israel’s God, and of His loving condescension in sharing their wandering lives, and, like them, dwelling ‘within curtains.’ It was a visible representation of a spiritual fact of reality of communion between man and God. It is also a prophecy of a future communion of Heaven and Earth, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men.’ The enumeration of the furniture of the Tabernacle starts from the innermost shrine, and goes outward. It was fit that it should begin with God’s special abode. The ‘holy of holies’ was a tiny chamber, closed in from light, the form, dimensions, materials, and furniture of which were all significant. There, in the thick darkness, unseen by mortals except for the one approach of the high-priest on the day of atonement, dwelt the ‘glory’ which made light in the darkness, and flashed on the gold which covered all things in the small shrine. The ark of the testimony was a small chest of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, and containing the two tables of the law, which were called the testimony, as bearing witness to Israel of God’s will concerning their duty and a testimony against their transgressors. The holy place was eminently the people’s, just

as the most holy place was eminently God's. True, only the priests entered it; but they did so on behalf of the nation. The symbolism of incense as representing prayer is frequent throughout Scripture. Twice a day the incense was kindled; and all day long, no doubt, it smoldered, 'a perpetual incense before the Lord.' The position of the altar of incense was right in the line between the altar of burnt offering, in the outer court, and the entrance to the holiest place; by which we are taught that acceptable prayer follows on reconciliation by sacrifice, and leads into 'the secret place of the Most High.' The great seven-branched candlestick, or lampstand, stood on the right of the altar, as the priest looked to the most holy place. The lamp was a clustered light, representing in its metal oneness the formal and external unity of Israel. The New Testament unity is of a better kind. The seven candlesticks

are made one because He walks in the midst, not because they are welded on to one stem. Consistency of symbolism requires that the table of shewbread should, like the altar and the candlestick, express fellowship for true worship. We pass outwards, through another veil, and stand



in the court, which was always open to the people. There, before the door of the Tabernacle, was the altar of burnt offering. The order of our chapter brings us to it last, but the order of worship brought the worshipper to it first. Its distinctive character was that on it the blood of the slain sacrifices was offered. It was the place where sinful men could begin to meet with God, the foundation of all the communion of the inner sanctuary. The great lesson taught by the altar and its place, is that reconciliation is needed, and is only possible by sacrifice. As a symbol it taught every Israelite what his own conscience, once awakened, endorsed, that sin must be expiated before the sinner and God can walk in concord. As prophecy, it assured those whose hearts were touched with longing, that God would Himself 'provide the lamb for the burnt offering,' in some way as yet unknown. For us it is an intended prefiguration of the great work of Jesus Christ. 'We have an altar.' We need that altar at the beginning of our fellowship with God, as much as Israel did. A Christianity which does not start from the altar of burnt offering will never get far into the holy place, nor ever reach that innermost shrine where the soul lives and adores, silent before the manifest God between the cherubim. The laver, or basin, was intended for the priests' use, in washing hands and feet before ministering at the altar or entering the tabernacle. It teaches the necessity for cleansing and purity, in order to priestly service. Thus the three divisions of the Tabernacle and its court set forth the stages in the approach of the soul to God, beginning with the reconciling sacrifice and cleansing water, advancing to closer communion by prayer, impartation of light received,

and offering of self to God, and so entering within the veil into secret sweetness of union with God, which will be fulfilled when we pass from the “holy fellowship” on earth to the most holy fellowship in Heaven. The priesthood required continual succession because of the temporary nature of the lives of earthly the priests. As Hebrews points out, this is unlike Jesus Christ, our High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).

2. John 6:52-71. The word *flesh* refers to the human life of Jesus. It was totally misunderstood by the Jews (52). It differs from the word used at the Lord’s Supper (‘body’ instead of ‘flesh’), which shows that this statement is not to be read in the light of the Supper but vice-versa. The word *world* in v 51 should be understood as the world of people.

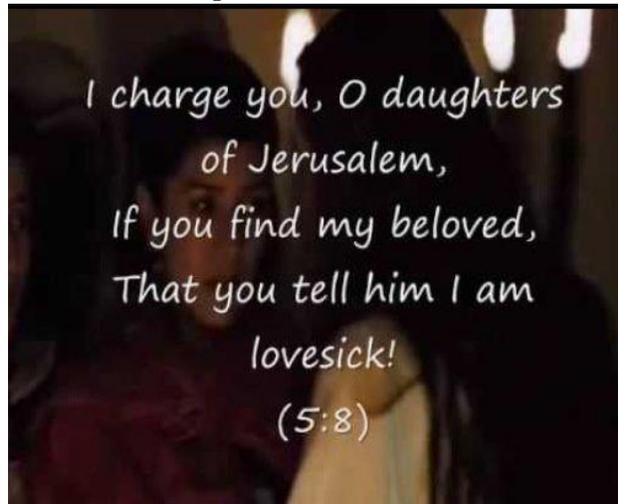
It was because the Jews put a literal interpretation on the words of Jesus that he gave a further explanation in vs 53–58. On the one hand, it is difficult to understand that the Jews could not see Christ’s metaphor. Their objection is likely an attempt to ridicule Him. On the other hand, it is not so

surprising that the Jews did not penetrate to the spiritual meaning of Jesus’ words, for understanding was possible only through God enabling them to exercise supernatural faith, and it has already been noted that they did not possess faith. The eating and drinking of the



*flesh* and *blood* of Jesus is clearly an act of faith (53). The metaphorical language can be understood only in the light of the coming sacrifice of Jesus. Dependence on what Jesus has done is, therefore, vividly described in terms of eating and drinking. The result of such dependence is seen in vs 56–57, in a mutual indwelling. Jesus’ dwelling in believers means that he identifies Himself with them, but their dwelling in Him means that they continue to depend on him.

3. Song of Solomon 5:5-9. In her first dream the watchmen helped her look for her lover (3:3), but this time they mistook her for a criminal. In her dream this action by the watchmen may indicate that she was to blame for her separation from her lover. More importantly the dream symbolized the pain of separation brought about through her selfishness and the dream dramatized her need of the lover for her well-being and protection. The beloved sought the daughters' help in finding her lover. The message they were to give him, I am faint with love, meant that she now wanted his embrace. Though she had been indifferent to him (5:2-3), her attitude changed so that now she was anxious for him.



On the Glory Road,

Pastor Don