

SYMBOLS OF THE LORD

Lesson Aim To learn how Old Testament worship in the tabernacle portrayed Jesus Christ.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson and insert the following questions where they fit the lesson for class discussion.

Introduction: On Mt. Sinai the LORD gave Moses instructions that had to be kept in every detail because they were largely symbolic of Jesus Christ's ministry on earth and in Heaven. He would come to sacrifice His life for our salvation and then rise from the dead and ascend to Heaven to be our great high priest forever. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb 10:24).

How did the consecration of the priests show that Christ was superior to them? 29:1-37

The priests were consecrated by washing their bodies with water (4), but Christ was sinless and needed no washing (1 Jn 3:5). The priests were anointed with holy oil (7), but Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38). The priests offered animal sacrifices for their sins (10-25) even though the blood of animals could not take away their sins (Heb 10:11), but Christ, who needed no sacrifice for Himself, was the one and only sacrifice for all the sins of the entire world from the days of Adam to the distant future (1 Jn 2:2; Heb 9:28; 10:12).

Why were two lambs burnt on the brazen altar each day? 29:38-46

The continual burnt offering was a daily sacrifice of a lamb in the morning and again in the evening. It was to show the dedication of the Israelites to the LORD. In return, He promised to meet with them at the tabernacle, dwell with them and be the LORD their God. Jesus Christ fulfilled the significance of the burnt-offering sacrifice by His complete dedication and obedience to His Father (Heb 10:1-18). His sacrifice propitiated (satisfied) His Father's demand to take away the sins of the world and make them holy (Jn 1:29; 1 Jn 2:2). However, only those who accept Christ's sacrifice for their sins will receive the benefit of eternal life.

How were the altar of incense and the laver used in the worship of God? 30:1-10, 17-21

The altar of incense, a gold altar, was placed before the inner curtain in the holy place. It was used twice daily in the tabernacle by the priests for the burning of incense. The fiery coals for burning the incense was taken from the brass altar and carried on a pan to the gold altar of incense. The incense was placed on the coals which sent up an aromatic cloud of smoke. God gave Moses the formula for the incense, which was not to be duplicated for personal use as it was reserved for sacred purposes. It symbolized the fragrant intercessory prayers of Christ to His Father on our behalf (Jn 17:1ff; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25). It also symbolized the prayers of all believers (New Testament priests) who praise God with thanksgiving and intercede for others in their work to glorify God (Eph 6:18-19; Heb 13:15; Rev 8:3, 4). On the Day of Atonement the high priest took a pan of fiery coals and put incense on it to produce a cloud of smoke that covered the mercy seat where God dwelt.

The laver was solid brass (bronze) made from the mirrors provided by the women who dedicated themselves to serve at the door of the tabernacle (38:8). The laver contained the water for the ceremonial cleansing for the hands and feet of the priests before they ministered in the presence of God. The guilt of the priest's sin had been cared for at the brazen altar, but the priest's needed cleansing for their work and walk before they carried on reconciliation for the congregation (30:21). In New Testament thought, it would correspond to daily sanctification of a believer's hands and feet for fellowship with God and service for God by the washing of the Word (Eph 5:26). It is appropriately placed between the brazen altar and the tabernacle proper.

Who was given the sign of the Sabbath? 31:12-17; cf Ezk 20:12, 20

The LORD gave Israel the Sabbath as a sign of the covenant that He made with her. The sign was fulfilled when Jesus came into the world through Israel, died on the cross and rose from the grave to give rest to all who receive Him as their Savior.