

The Most Holy Place: A Metaphor for Our Minds

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The Old Testament sanctuary is an object lesson that represents and teaches many truths. The sanctuary itself represents the person of Jesus, His spirit temple that was crucified and which He raised up three days later (John 2:19). It also teaches the plan of salvation, the sacrifice of Jesus and the corporate restoration of humans back into unity with God and the heavenly host.

The sanctuary also reveals lessons about our individual spirit temples, the restoration of God's image within us, and the healing of our minds. Let's take a closer look at this idea.

The ultimate goal of salvation is the restoration of sinners to unity with God. This "at-one-ment" is when God removes all the defects of sin from our hearts and minds, healing us to be at one with Him so that we may be reunited with Him and the heavenly angels. This is represented symbolically by the Most Holy Place—where God's presence (Shekinah) dwells above the ark of the covenant, the angels (representing the heavenly host) appear on the lid of the ark, the lid of solid gold (representing Jesus) covers the box, and the porous wooden box (representing the hearts/minds of saved sinners) filled with pure gold (the righteousness of Christ).

The gold lid, which represents Jesus, is the link that unites or connects all the other elements: the box

touches the lid, the angels touch the lid, and the Shekinah rests upon the lid. This unity of all things, which was achieved by Jesus, is the mystery of salvation:

“And he made known to us the **mystery** of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the **times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ**” (Ephesians 1:9, 10 NIV84).

Jesus is the connecting link. He is the unifier, the One through whom God unites His universe. The apostle Paul wrote that the mystery of bringing sinners back into unity with the rest of heaven (at-onement) would happen when the time for it to happen was reached. We are now living in that time, the time of the fulfillment of this mystery is the time right before the second coming of Jesus. But what is this mystery?

“The **mystery** that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this **mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**” (Colossians 1:26, 27 NIV84).

The mystery of atonement—of bringing all things into unity under one head, Jesus—is the end-time work of God that reproduces Christ in you and me. This is atonement. This is what is taught in the Most Holy Place. Unification with God is what is to happen in our hearts and minds.

The Shekinah Glory

We are to be living temples in which God dwells by His Spirit (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16). When God dwells in us, we become beacons of heavenly light, the light of God’s character, His love; God’s truth is to shine out from us to others. The Shekinah (presence) of God is to burn within us, and when it does, it not only gives us life, but it also sparks insight, inspiration, wisdom, godly creativity, hope, joy, and the burning fires of heavenly love! This light of God’s living presence is to radiate from us and lighten the world around us as it directs all our actions. As Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16 NIV84).

The Shekinah of God’s glory represents His character. This fire of God, the power of God, the glory of God, given to radiate His character, shines above the *hilesterion*, the golden lid that represents Jesus and His perfect character of love. If we want God to live within us, to shine out from us, to inspire us, to burn away the impurities of our unconverted life, then we must surrender our hearts to Jesus, accepting Him as our Savior and choosing His principles and methods. We must receive from Him a new heart and right spirit and, with those new desires, choose to follow where He leads. We must choose to leave behind what Jesus says, through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, is no good for us. We must choose to embrace and practice what Jesus teaches is for our health and wellness. We must choose to do that which we know Jesus would have us do. And when we choose to follow as He directs, then we receive divine power to succeed. It is in this humble, trust-centered relationship with Jesus that we develop a Christlike character.

The Three Keys to Victorious Living

The Most Holy Place object lesson teaches us the keys, the steps, to experience this victorious life in Christ, how we can have His character reproduced within us. Our hearts, our characters, which have been damaged by sin, corrupted by fear and selfishness, are symbolized by the wood with holes throughout. The holes represent our many defects of character. We, like the box, need to have all the defects filled with the pure gold of a Christlike character. And this happens for everyone who brings into their life what that box contained.

Three elements were placed into that box to teach us the sequence for the healing of our hearts and the restoration of God's perfection within us.

The **first element** to be placed in the box was manna, the bread sent from heaven. Jesus said:

"I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever" (John 6:48-58 NIV84).

When we eat bread, it is broken down into molecules that become the building blocks of our bodies. Jesus is the Word made flesh, the living Word of truth (John 1:14). To "eat the flesh" of Jesus means that we internalize into our minds and hearts the truth that Jesus reveals. God's truth, revealed perfectly by Jesus, becomes the building blocks of our ideas, concepts, beliefs, and worldviews. With the lies of Satan dispelled, our perspectives change and the truth about God wins us back to trust in Him. In trust we open our heart to Him, and we then receive His love, His presence, His life. (This is also symbolized by "drinking the blood," for the life is in the blood; see Leviticus 17:11). We are transformed to be like Him, to live out His methods, principles, and design laws.

The **second element** placed into the box was the Ten Commandments, which represent the law of love. In the new covenant, God writes His law upon our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10), which is what is symbolized by the placement of the *unbroken* commandments into the ark. Remember that Moses was given two sets of the Ten Commandments; the first set he broke when he came down the mountain and found the people worshipping a golden calf. It was the unbroken second set that was placed in the ark.

This distinction is important because some versions of Christianity teach that the lid, which represents Jesus, "covers" the "broken law" that we sinners have violated. If that were indeed the intended lesson,

God would have had Moses put the broken tablets into the ark. But He didn't; instead, He had Moses put the unbroken law into the ark. Why? Because the object lesson doesn't teach paying penalties for a broken law or the covering over of lawbreaking. No! It teaches the reality of God restoring His living law, the law of love, the law upon which life is built to operate, into the hearts and minds of His people.

God's law is not a list of rules like humans make up; it is the living law of love that life itself is built to operate upon. It is only by restoring His law of love into us that we are saved. Jesus came and lived God's law perfectly, and when we partake of the Word, have the lies dispelled and are won back to trust, we open our hearts and receive via the Spirit the mind of Christ, the love of Christ, the motives of Christ—He writes His living law of love into us, and we live to love God and others more than self.

And this new life of love is represented by the **third element** that went into the ark. After the manna (partaking of the Word), after the law (having had God's living law written into us), then we become like Aaron's rod, which budded—illustrating that we who were dead in trespass and sin (Ephesians 2:1) are made alive and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness! (Philippians 1:11). When we partake of the Word, when the law of life is written within us, then our lives begin to truly thrive and the beautiful fruits of godly character are manifest—the cruel become kind, the impulsive develop patience, the selfish love others, the deceitful become honest, and the fearful live courageously.

Our lives are to be the fulfillment of this mystery of the Most Holy Place. Our hearts and minds are to be the place where God dwells via His Spirit. Having internalized the living Word, having had the living law of love written upon our hearts, having the character of Jesus reproduced within us, having the angels of God attending, protecting, and ministering to us, we will become radiant lights of God—as His Shekinah glory inspires, enlightens, empowers, ennobles, and shines forth from us into this dark and desolate world.

I encourage you to share in “the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27 NIV84).