

Calling us Out to Call us in [The Presence of the Lord – Exodus 25:21]

Lee Strobel

An avowed atheist and legal editor for the Chicago tribune said, “I heard the message of Jesus ... if this is true it has huge implications in my life.” Investigated Jesus for a year and nine months “It would take more faith to retain my atheism than to become a Christian and swim upstream a torrent of evidence pointing to the truth of Jesus and I was trained in journalism to respond to truth.” **Seeking and needing the presence of God**

We are designed to be in the presence and in relationship with God. The creation is created to be one with the Father. God did not create and leave. He created and we left.

- Buddhism – escape the cycle of rebirth and attain nirvana (release)
- Gnosticism – supreme God is unknowable the creator god is evil and matter is evil
- Hinduism – Humans are in bondage to illusion but are able to escape. Ultimate goals is to gain release from rebirth or a better rebirth
- Islam -- Submit to will of Allah and gain Paradise after death.
- Agnosticism – nothing can be known of the existence or nature of God beyond material phenomena

May we open our hearts to the living Word of Truth that is a light to our path and a lamp to our feet. This is the glorious truth of Christ to us today!

The Presence of the Lord [Exodus 25:10-22]

[A Mobile Home \(Exod. 25:21\)](#)

We find Israel, after fleeing the oppressive regime in Egypt, longing for the presence of God. This longing for the presence of the Creator continues today. This longing is a desire that was birthed from the beginning.

Why? Because we have the image of God and are constantly trying to fulfill our purpose. The image of **the Creator acts as a magnet that pulls at our soul.**

How can this be so? God's desire and design is for the Creator to eternally dwell with the creation.

In Genesis 2:15, the first man Adam is formed by the very hand of God and placed in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. From the onset, the story of God is the story of Him dwelling with His people. In Genesis 3:8 we find Adam and Eve hiding from the sound of the Lord God walking because they had sinned. And the Lord drove them out of Eden and stationed cherubim and a flaming sword to guard Eden. **Adam and Eve were in the presence of the Lord (having everything they needed)** and they bought the lie that they needed to be **"like"** God.

In Genesis 6-9, in a world that was so broken and sinful, we see the Lord regretting that He made man and deeply grieved (6:6), but Noah found favor. So God in His infinite desire to dwell among His people, gave instruction for Noah to build a sanctuary (ark) for the flood waters used to carry his family through chaos. This ark was a place for the family of favor to find security and comfort through the disorder of their world. In a sense, this was a *new creation*—God again dwelling with His creation.

In the first month and first day, the flood waters dried up and Noah removed the ark's cover (Gen. 8:13). On the very same month many years later the tabernacle is set up and dedicated on the first day of the first month (Exod. 40:2). One is thereby invited to see the building of the tabernacle in chapters 35-50 in terms of re-creation, God's beginning again with world/Israel on the far side of apostasy (Fretheim). The Tabernacle reminds us in vivid color and proclamation: **You are designed to be in the presence of the Lord and your search will never end until you find Him!** We have a heavenly father and Creator who is knowable and wants to be known.

Every element in the Tabernacle points us to the nature and character of God. If God's ultimate design is for His people to dwell eternally with Him, the tabernacle is a glimpse of how that takes place.

Bronze Altar—Is the first article of furniture seen as you enter the place of worship reminding that the Lord requires sacrifice for those who draw near. It is only through the ultimate sacrifice of the Lamb Jesus Christ that we have uninterrupted entrance into the presence of the Lord.

Bronze Basin- Used for ritual cleansing. As priests went into the Holy Place they would wash hands and feet before entering into God's presence. We can not dwell with the Lord unless we have clean hands and a pure heart and do not lift our souls to another (Psalm 24:4)

Tabernacle Proper-->

Table of Showbread—A perpetual reminder of God's sustaining daily presence. Twelve cakes of bread upon the table were consumed daily by the priests. Likewise we are taught: give us this day our daily bread...

Lampstand—Crafted from 75 lbs of pure gold. The lampstand had three purpose. .
Functionally it gave light. Aesthetically it conveyed beauty and majesty. Symbolically it was a reminder of life and that the way to God was always lit.

Altar of Incense – The altar of incense located immediately before the veil going into the Holy of Holies. The incense was burned every morning and throughout all generations. The smoke from this special incense was symbolic of prayer. How beautiful a picture to know that a prayer of faith will rise before a Holy God.

The final piece of furniture in the Lord's mobile tabernacle was the ark of the covenant, which we will look at in more detail next.

Each detail of the tabernacle reminds the community of faith that the Lord does not stand above his people and lord over his servants but, dwells and tabernacles among them.

In sum, this tent of meeting is laden with redemptive significance, not just because of the sacrifices, furniture, and offering within its walls, but was a piece of holy ground amid a world that has lost its way.

You are designed and purpose to live in the presence of God and He desired for you to know Him.

[A Mercy Seat \(Exod. 25:17\)](#)

As we continue to travel deeper inside the inner sanctuary we find the veil of separation marking the Holy of Holies from the Holy place. The most holy location contained the Ark of the covenant. This ark/sanctuary included manna, staff of Aaron, and the ten commands and was the only piece of furniture in the HOH.

One fascination element of the Ark was the Mercy seat. This atonement cover was not merely the lid of the ark. It was a solid gold component fitted on top of the lid and was a sacred fact of Israel's existence.

What a strange name for a lid... the Mercy Seat... and what does this canopy tell us about the Lord our God?

The Hebrew word employed here is kapporet (KPR) a root that in various ways points to the concept of atonement or reconciliation—the process of causing people to be true friends and not to be distance, hostile, or at odds (NAC).

The truth of the Gospel is that we are all in need of reconciliation. Remember – the creator has made us in his image to be in relationships and we through our sin and rebellion have walked away and walked out of the garden of Eden. And we cannot enter again on our terms.

At the Mercy Seat we find that God has covered us

This mercy seat was a place where blood would be sprinkled on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:15). During Aaron's day no one could enter into this place except the High Priest one day of the year. And yet, Jesus makes atonement through His sacrifice on our behalf. He is our sacrifice. It is through Christ that we have fellowship with the father. To all who receive Him, he gave them right to be children of God who those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

At the Mercy Seat we find that God is kind and gracious.

The name mercy carries with it the definition and emotion of kindness, love, grace, and eternal provision. The mercy seat reminds us that the Lord is rich in mercy, because of his great love for us (Eph 2:4).

At the Mercy Seat we find that the Lord meets with us

It was in the Holy of Holies, a location forbidden to the populace, that we find the covering atonement of the Lord, His kindness and grace, and we find a place to meet Him face to face (Exod 25:22). Yahweh constantly is pursuing relationship with His people. This morning, God wants to meet with you. **Don't miss a change to dine with the greatest celebrity the world has ever known!** This is the world greatest VIP dinner.

How wonderful to know that God meets His people at a mercy seat not a judgement seat.

What a glorious Mercy Seat and what a merciful Savior we have who has designed us to dwell with Him.

An Immutable Dwelling (Exod. 25:21)

Because of the glorious atoning sacrifice (mercy seat) of Jesus Christ, God became flesh and dwelt among us. The CSB says that the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. This Greek word (Skeno) can be translated “to fix one’s tabernacle.”

In Jesus, God has a permanent (Immutable) dwelling among his people. Why? The only remedy for exile is the presence of God, because we are created to be in relationship with the Lord. And this longing never goes away.

This immutable dwelling is not a future home, but a realized promise to those who believe. The Apostle Paul echoes the language of Exodus when he reminds the church at Corinth that “don’t you yourselves know that you are God’s temple, and that the Spirit of God lives in you (1 Cor. 3:16)?”

This is the promise of God to you his bride: If you receive the Lord Jesus you are His temple—NOW—and this is a permanent dwelling of the Holy Spirit. He is dwelling with you at this very moment and in this very location. What a wonderful gracious Savior!!

So now, is the world seeing the presence of Christ in and upon my life? Are we living as if the holy God was walking with us and living in our lives?

And not only in this dwelling place now... it is forever more. In Revelation the beloved apostle John has a first hand look at the new beautiful Jerusalem and records: “I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Rev. 21:22).” Jesus is the temple, He is the tabernacle, God is dwelling with us!

My Response to the Gospel

The Lord calls us out (of bondage) to call us in (to his presence)

The odd thing was that before God closed in on me, I was in fact offered what now appears a moment of wholly free choice.... I became aware that I was holding something at bay, or shutting something out.... I felt myself being, there and then, given a free choice. I could open the door or keep it shut; I could unbuckle the armor or keep it on.

Neither choice was presented as a duty; no threat or promise was attached to either, though I knew that to open the door or to take off the corslet (piece of defensive armor) meant the incalculable. Conversion of CS Lewis

The Lord God has created each of us to dwell with him forever. Have you receive the Lord Jesus Christ?

Gospel: Creator—creations – fall short – our conscious – held accountable – Jesus lived a perfect life – died our death – to offer us eternal life and a restored relationship – died/rose/reigns – calls and invites you into a new relationships

Are you living in light of his Mercy?

Does the World see Christ in you?

Notes

Creation and the Tabernacle

Ark—Tabernacle

Both “sanctuaries” are portable, one on sea, one on land; they are used to carry the people through the waters/sands of chaos. Both are viewed as a means by which the people of God can move in a secure and ordered way through the disorder on their way to a new creation (Fretheim).

It is on the first day of the new year that the floodwaters abate and the covering of the ark is taken off (Gen. 8:13), the same day that the tabernacle is set up and dedicated (Exod 40:2). One is thereby invited to see the building of the tabernacle in chapters 35-50 in terms of re-creation, God’s beginning again with world/Israel on the far side of apostasy (Fretheim).

Importance of the Tabernacle

God does not stand above his people but takes up residence with the people, tabernacle with them (Fretheim).

God dwells in the midst of Israel entirely at the divine initiative (Fretheim).

The tabernacle therefore, is laden with redemptive significance, not just because of the sacrifices and offering within its walls, but simply because of what it is: a piece of holy ground amid a world that has lost its way (Enns).

Exod 25:16 Put the tablets of the testimony that I will give you into the ark. **17** Make a mercy seat of pure gold, 45 inches long and 27 inches wide.

Mercy seat

The Hebrew word employed here is kapporet from the piel form of kpr, a root that refers in various ways to the concept of atonement or reconciliation – the process of causing people to be true friends and not to be distant, hostile, or at odds (NAC).

The atonement cover was not merely the lid of the ark. It was a special, solid gold appurtenance that fitted on top of the lid and represented a paramount happy and sacred fact of Israel’s existence: their God, the only true God, had in his eternal kindness and love arranged for them to enjoy reconciliation with him as the key provision of the covenant (NAC).

The mercy seat was the place where blood would be sprinkled on the day of Atonement (Lev. 16:15).

18 Make two cherubim of gold; make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. **19** Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end. At its two ends, make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat. **20** The cherubim are to have wings spread out above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and are to face one another. The faces of the cherubim should be toward the mercy seat. **21** Set the mercy seat on top of the ark and put the testimony that I will give you into the ark.

22 I will meet with you there above the mercy seat, between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony; I will speak with you from there about all that I command you regarding the Israelites.

The chest was always regarded as the visible symbol of God's presence and in Mosaic days it was hailed when going out or coming in.

The holiest place of all in the Tent was the resting-place of this sacred chest, which to touch was death to a commoner (2 Sam 6:7), (Cole).

26:33 Hang the veil under the clasps and bring the ark of the testimony there behind the veil, so the veil will make a separation for you between the holy place and the most holy place. **34** Put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. **35** Place the table outside the veil and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table; put the table on the north side.

The ark of the Covenant, being the throne of God, being symbolically guarded by cherubim, and being isolated in the holy of holies, indicates that God is scarcely approachable by sinful mortals (Garretts).

In contrast to every pagan temple, the inner sanctuary is marked by one glaring omission, there is no image of the god. Instead of an idol, there is the Ark of the Covenant – an empty throne (Garrett).

Bronze Altar

- ◆ 27:1ff
- ◆ Altar of Sacrifice
- ◆ In open courtyard of tabernacle
- ◆ First article of furniture seen as enter place of worship

- ◆ NT Application: Sacrifice of Lamb essential to entry into Christian life

Laver

- ◆ 30:17ff
- ◆ Function was for cleansing
- ◆ As priests went into Holy Place, would wash hands and feet before entering into God's presence
- ◆ NT Application: need for daily cleansing (1 Jn. 1:9)

Tabernacle Proper

Table of Presence Bread

- ◆ 25:30ff
- ◆ Represented God's sustaining presence
- ◆ Twelve cakes of bread upon it were memorial offering to God (Lev 24:5-9)
- ◆ NT application: "I am the bread of life"

Lampstand

- ◆ 25:31ff
- ◆ Three purposes
 - ◆ Functional – give light
 - ◆ Aesthetic – give beauty
 - ◆ Symbolic – convey concept of life
- ◆ Light never to go out
 - ◆ "Way to God always lit"
- ◆ NT Application – "I am the light of the world"

Altar of Incense

- ◆ 30:1ff
- ◆ Special incense to be offered only on this altar
- ◆ Smoke from incense symbolic of prayer (Revelation uses this imagery)
- ◆ Placed immediately before veil going into Holy of Holies
- ◆ 25:10ff
- ◆ Contained tables of stone, Aaron's rod, golden pot of manna (later)
- ◆ "Mercy seat" was covering of ark
 - ◆ God dealt with Israel in mercy
- ◆ Only piece of furniture in the "Holy of Holies"

Ark of the Covenant

- ◆ 25:10ff
- ◆ Contained tables of stone, Aaron's rod, golden pot of manna (later)
- ◆ "Mercy seat" was covering of ark

- ◆ God dealt with Israel in mercy
- ◆ Only piece of furniture in the “Holy of Holies”

Illustrations

The odd thing was that before God closed in on me, I was in fact offered what now appears a moment of wholly free choice.... I became aware that I was holding something at bay, or shutting something out.... I felt myself being, there and then, given a free choice. I could open the door or keep it shut; I could unbuckle the armor or keep it on. Neither choice was presented as a duty; no threat or promise was attached to either, though I knew that to open the door or to take off the corslet meant the incalculable. Conversion of CS Lewis

Application

The greatest need we have in our lives is the presence of the Lord.

If our greatest need is God’s presence then where is HE?

We will work towards this end: to be in the presence of the Lord.

But God’s presence is not on our terms. He is Holy.

We all have a distorted view of our felt needs.

We need God’s presence

We desire to be like God (Gen. 3:5)

Adam and Eve were in the presence of the Lord—but they bought the lie that they needed to be “like God.”

The only remedy for exile is the presence of God

God meets his people at a mercy seat not a judgement seat

The Word became flesh and tabernacle among us (John 1:1)