

Context. Having arrived at Mount Sinai, thus completing God's half of the covenant between God and Moses (see Exodus 3:11-12), God will now empower Moses at Mount Sinai so that "he shall serve God".

Background. The Old Testament revolves around 3 main positions, for which people were set apart to do: the king (royal), the prophet and the priest.

Read the following passages. What do these verses tell you about the role of:

- I. **Royals.** Held responsible for everything, especially the people, placed under them by God.
 - A. **1 Samuel 8:10-17.** Main duty was to defend it against its enemies, economic planning, exercise the law.
 - B. **2 Chronicles 5.** Securing the divine presence of God in Israel by ensuring that temple and religious rituals are adhered to.
- II. **Prophets.** Declare on God's behalf and God could speak directly with.
 - A. **Ezekiel 1:1, Zechariah 1:7-9.** Some of their messages are more dramatic than others: some prophets (like Ezekiel and Zechariah) see elaborate visions.
 - B. **Malachi 1:1-5.** Others simply call the people to remember their allegiance to Israel's God and the Torah (like Haggai and Malachi).
- III. **Priests.** Appointed to stand between God and man and to carry out the proceedings of the tabernacle/temple.
 - A. **Numbers 18:1-5, Leviticus 10:11.** Set apart from the rest of the community in order to carry out certain duties associated with worshipping - sacrifice, purification, teaching.
 - B. **Leviticus 16.** Priests functioned as mediators of God's presence and were responsible for performing the rituals on the Day of Atonement.

We often see these 3 roles as separate from each other, or at the most played 2 out of the 3 roles. But was there ever someone who united all 3 roles? **Who was intended to play the role of a royal-prophet-priest?** Man

- Royal: Rule over all creation; instead we ended up being ruled by the serpent - sin
- Prophet: Spoke truth from God; instead we spoke with excuses of the devil
- Priesthood: Avodah (work and worship in Hebrew) in Eden; instead we desecrated the sacred space

At the time of Moses, Israel was left with only the prophet, in particular the patriarch + Moses. In this section of the Biblical narrative, we will see the introduction of the Israelite priest and the tabernacle, which the priests were instructed to care for and manage.

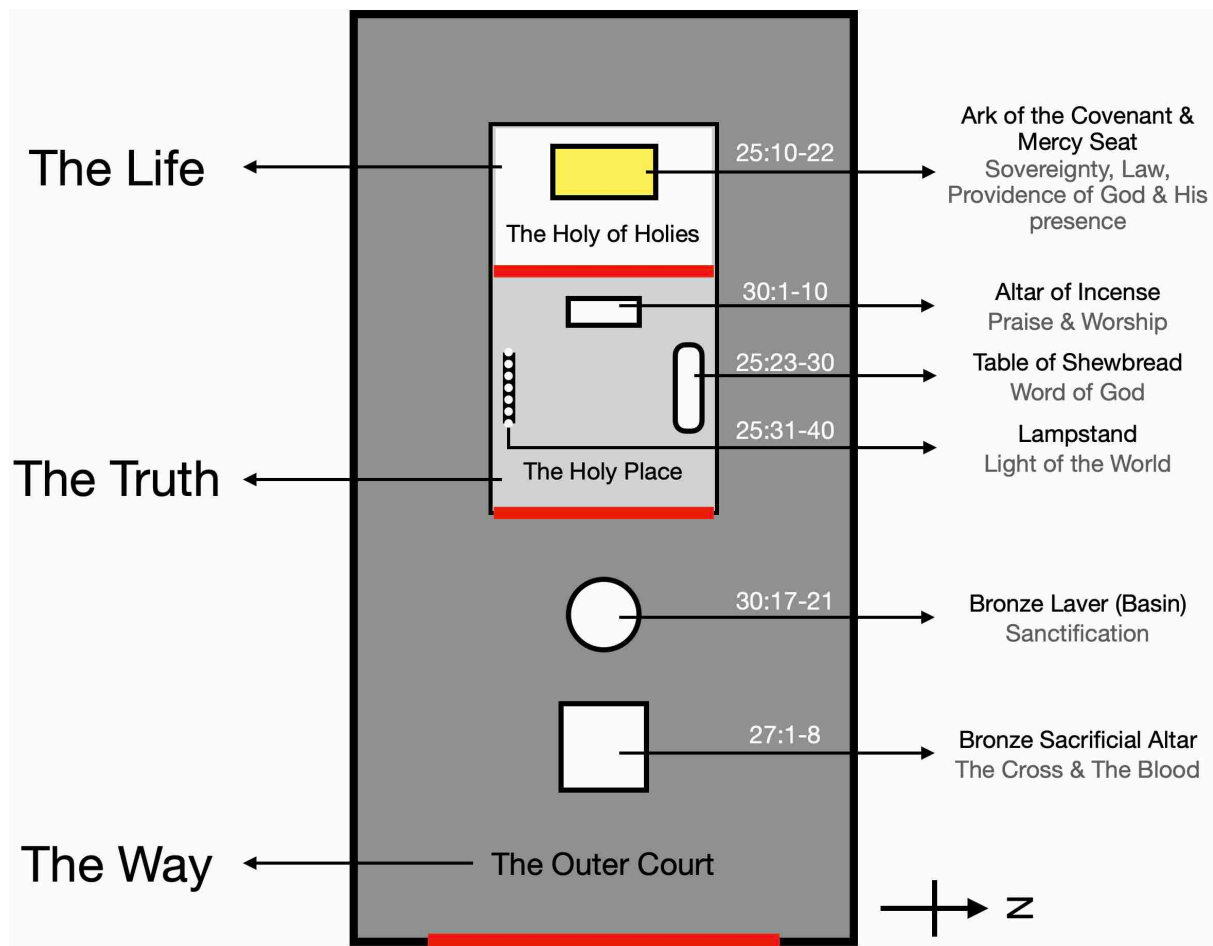
The Tabernacle. What are some names used for the tabernacle? [See Exodus 23:19, 25:8, 27:21]

- House of God
- Sanctuary of God
- Tent of meeting

Fact: In John 1:14, Jesus is described to be the Word, and "the Word became flesh and *dwelt* [Gk. σκηνώω] among us". The word "dwelt" has the same meaning as the Hebrew "tent of meeting".

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TABERNACLE.

On the next page, you will see a schematic of the Tabernacle. In the right-hand column, fill in the various artefacts that were found in the Tabernacle.



Read Exodus 25:19-22. **These verses describe the Mercy Seat. Where will God ‘meet’ His people? What is the significance of this “meeting place”?** [Hint: Exodus 20:4]

God will meet with his people (through Moses/High Priest) above the cover between the two cherubim. God does not speak to his people through an idol image, which in ancient religion represents their gods. Humankind is God’s image. They are to represent God in the holy place (bring up Eden being a holy place).



Read Exodus 27:12-15. **What is the significance of orientating the entrance to the Tabernacle eastward?** [Hint Genesis 3:21-24]

The Tabernacle is the re-imagination of Eden for the Israelites. The outer courts: Eden, The Holy place: Garden (guarded - only those that are clean may enter), The Holy of Holies: Tree of Life + Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Tabernacle serves as a reminder for the Israelites of their sinful behaviour, but God remains accessible to them through a mediator if they follow God’s commandments. When Jesus Christ came to replace the Tabernacle, Jesus now becomes our reminder that we are sinful, but God remains accessible. Only this time, we do not need a mediator because the veil is torn.

Read Mark 15:37-38. **Read Mark’s account of the crucifixion. What is the significance of Mark recording that the “curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom”?** [Hint: 1 Peter 2:9]

When Christ was on earth, he embodied the entire Tabernacle. Upon his death, the curtain was torn, now we have full access to the Holy of Holies, where we, the images of God, can be returned to our rightful place, representing God in His holy place. When the curtain was torn, humankind now have a way of re-entering Eden and continue eating from the Tree of Life, that is how we attain eternal life.