

## Elder Vernon Johnson

### Numbers

### Seven

#### Seven Pieces of Furniture

God had Moses and the children of Israel to construct the tabernacle and all its furnishings according to the pattern that God had showed Moses in the mount. There were seven pieces of furniture associated with the tabernacle worship. The tabernacle was divided into three parts: the outer court; the holy place; and the most holy place. In the outer court were the brazen altar and the brazen wash laver. In the holy place were the table of showbread, the golden candlestick, and the incense altar. In the most holy place were the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat. God had completely furnished the tabernacle with all the furniture that was needed to worship God during that time.

In Hebrews 8:5 the tabernacle and its furnishings were called a shadow of heavenly things: "Who serve unto the example and **shadow of heavenly things**, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." We will now look at the heavenly things of which these seven pieces of furniture were a shadow.

We begin by looking at the brazen altar. The brazen altar is where the animal sacrifices for sin offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings were placed after they were slain. The animals sacrificed were placed on the brazen altar and burned in the perpetual fire. These sacrifices point us to the one great sacrifice of Jesus Christ. All of the animal sacrifices never did away with sin, but only brought sin to remembrance. We read where Jesus Christ made one offering for sin: Heb. 10:14 "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The perpetual fire speaks of God's eternal judgment. Jesus Christ suffered the judgment of eternal condemnation upon the cross that we may be delivered from that judgment.

Brass is often associated with suffering in the scriptures. Jesus suffered for us: 1 Pet. 3:18 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

Only the High Priest and his sons could go into the holy place, with only the High Priest authorized to go into the most holy place. Before the High Priest and his

sons could go into the holy place, they first had to be washed in the brazen wash laver. Then they had to be clothed with the appropriate garments. The High Priest under the law was ordained of men and was of men and therefore unclean and had to be cleansed before he could go into the holy place. Before they could go in the first time, they had to be washed. Subsequently, before they could go into the holy place they had to wash themselves.

Similarly, only Jesus Christ and the elect can worship God in His kingdom, today. The elect have been redeemed by the sacrificial atonement of Jesus Christ: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Thus, their legal standing before God is justified. However, before the elect can worship God in Spirit and truth they must first be washed of God. This washing takes place in regeneration: Tit. 3:5 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." We do not wash ourselves in the new birth, but rather we are washed by God. He effectually cleanses our soul and imparts the spirit in the new birth. Having our souls washed of God in regeneration, we are to clean up our walk (washing that we do): 2 Cor. 7:1 "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." This cleansing begins with repentance. We are to repent of legalism, false worship, ungodly living, and ungodly practices. We are to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

In contrast, our High Priest, Jesus Christ did not have to be cleansed or do any self-cleansing. He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Yet we see him setting forth examples of ceremonial cleansing as he was baptized in the river Jordan of John and he washed the disciples feet.

The High Priest and the sons of the High Priest who were themselves priests went into the holy place accomplishing the service of God. In the holy place was the table of showbread. Placed on the table of showbread were twelve loaves of bread. This bread provided nourishment for the High Priest and the priests. They were arranged so as to be six loaves beside six loaves. They were 6 by 6. The 66 books of the Old and New Testament provide spiritual nourishment for the children of God today.

Our High Priest set the example for us. He said, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Jesus lived by every word as he said in Matt. 5:17 "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." While the scriptures are spiritual food for us, we are also to order our

lives according to their precepts. 1 Cor. 10 tells us that we have a table prepared of the Lord that we may eat of: 21 "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." We feast at this table when the gospel is proclaimed in power and demonstration of Spirit and when we read and study the word by the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The next piece of furniture in the holy place was the golden candlestick with seven lamps. These lamps were designed, of course, to give light. They gave light within the holy place. In the book of Revelation we read of seven candlesticks which the Lord tells us are the seven churches. Thus, the candlestick is equated to the Lord's church. As individual members of the church we are to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). The church is also spoken of as a collection of lights when we are told, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matt. 5:14). The life that we live by the leadership of the Spirit of God and according to the word of God is the light that we are to let shine before men.

The fourth piece of furniture in the Old Testament was located in the holy place (Ex. 40:26 "And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil). In the New Testament, it was located in the most holy place (Heb. 9:3 "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly). This piece of furniture is the golden incense altar. The High Priest burned incense for a sweet smelling savor unto God on the golden incense altar.

Rev. 8:3-5 describes the purpose of the incense altar: 3 "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake." The angel in this passage is the Lord Jesus Christ. The incense is his work of sacrificial atonement, which he offers with our prayers in intercession to God for us making our prayers acceptable to God. During the days of his earthly ministry, he was on earth interceding for the elect. He is now in heaven interceding for the elect.

The sixth piece of furniture was the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant was in the most holy place. It was made of shittim wood and of pure

gold. The tables of the covenant were placed in the ark of the covenant for safe keeping. Also placed in the ark was a bowl of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. The ark of the covenant is a type of the covenant work of Jesus Christ. Just as the ark was made of two types of materials, so Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of man. He has both a divine nature and a human nature. He is the God-man to keep the covenant of God.

He came to preserve the covenant work of God as evidenced by the following two passages of scripture:

1. Matt. 5:17 "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

2. John 6:38 "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

Primitive Baptists are familiar with this covenant work as stated in Rom. 8:29 "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." The final result of this covenant work is that all the elect are raised up in the resurrection unto glorified bodies fashioned like the glorious body of Christ. This covenant work is preserved in Jesus Christ and is fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

Also in the Ark of the Covenant was the bowl of manna. Manna was given to the children of Israel for their food while they journeyed in the wilderness. As such, it was a type of the word of God. When confronted with the temptation of Satan, the Lord responded, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Jesus Christ came to live by every word of God and to fulfill the law to a jot and a tittle. He is the only one that has ever done this to perfection.

The third thing in the Ark of the Covenant was Aaron's rod that budded. The children of Israel had murmured against the authority of Moses and Aaron and God proved to them the authority he had given to Aaron as High Priest and to the tribe of Levi as containing the priesthood: Num. 17:2 "Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their

princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod. 3 And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers. 4 And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you. 5 And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.

6 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. 7 And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness. 8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."

For the dead dried stick of Aaron to bud, blossom, and yield almonds, it took the power of God to give life to the dead stick and bring it to life. Similarly, God proved the authority of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, when after he had died on the cross to redeem us from our sins, God raised him from the dead the third day. With his resurrection, he became the first fruits of them that slept.

We are preserved in the covenant work of Jesus Christ, who lived by every word of God and kept the law to a jot and a tittle. He then died on the cross to redeem us from our sins and arose the third day having obtained eternal redemption for us. He is certainly our Ark of the Covenant.

The seventh piece of furniture in the tabernacle is the mercy seat. The mercy seat had the same length and breadth of the Ark of the Covenant and sat upon the Ark of the Covenant. The mercy of God for his people is predicated on the covenant work of Jesus Christ. God met with Moses and the children of Israel above the mercy seat. It is also true that God meets with us today in mercy. We are given the length and breadth dimensions of mercy seat, but we are not given the height dimension of the mercy seat. I am convinced that this is because there is no limit to God's mercy for his children.

There were cherubims on either end of the mercy seat and they stretched forth their wings on high and their wings covered the mercy seat. The cherubs had their faces toward one another. Cherubims are used in scripture as a type of witness. The scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are witnesses to us of the mercy of God. The scriptures are given to us by inspiration of God and thus their wings are

stretched forth on high shadowing the mercy of God and testifying to us of the covenant work of Jesus Christ and the subsequent mercy of God.