

Greetings and Shalom!

From time to time, we are greeted with a kiss. There's also that courteous "pat-on-the-back" hug. The robust hand shake. Or even the occasional nod. We wish to greet you with blessings! It is our prayer that God is blessing your life beyond your comprehension. We count it an honor that you have taken the time to join us as we dive deeper into God's plan for our lives. We hope you receive as much of a blessing from these teachings as we did putting them together. It is also our prayer that you will find that place in your life where you can squeeze just a little more God into it. For that could be the place in which He takes you to new dimensions of knowing Him.

Each month we are seeking ways to better communicate our vision with you. The Chazown (Hebrew word for "written vision") is just one of those ways. You can find information on our Team Members, teachings, our favorite songs and a personal note from our Founder, Tom Long. This month we've added a new section - Resource of the Month. Here we will highlight a resource (i.e. Book, CD, DVD, Movie, etc) we recommend for your personal files.

In The Midst Team Member - Teresa Ellis



Teresa Ellis gave her life to the Lord and was baptized at age 13. She began her journey with the Lord in fear and awe of Him, doing her best to do the right thing. Then in 1976, during her last year at Abilene Christian University in Abilene, TX the Lord showed her more of Himself and brought her into a more active relationship with Him.

In January of 1977 she moved to Nashville, TN to be "in the music business". During her early years in Nashville, she worked for a bank and insurance company while singing background and lead vocals for a jingle house. It was at that time that she found Belmont Church where she began singing on the Praise Team.

As her career began to take shape, Teresa found herself singing back-up vocals and traveling with Amy Grant and David Meece. By this time she and her husband, Thomas, had their first child toddling about. It was during Teresa's last road trip that her heart was convicted that she needed to come off the road and be at home with her family. She continued to do local gigs singing back-up vocals for such artists as B.J. Thomas, Debbie Boone, Kelley Willard and Michael W. Smith.

In 1990, Teresa took some time off from the music scene. As she puts it, it was a time to get "refocused, renewed and empowered!" During this time she began to seek God's destiny for her life. As a result of this special time with the Lord, Teresa found a new place in her walk with Jesus. New doors opened with new opportunities to rejoice in the goodness of God.

Some of those opportunities have included singing with the "Ed Cathy Benefit Concert Choir" (a 100+ voice multi-racial choir put together for the purpose of raising funds to feed the homeless); working with John Elliot on several of his worship CD's; singing lead and background vocals for Dave Durham; singing with a choir for the Nashville Praise March; and doing background vocals for a few Maranatha Praise projects. In her words, "God has blessed!"

Teresa still lives in Nashville, TN with her husband of 25 years, Thomas, and their 3 children, Christopher (21), Stephanie (18) and Jared (16). Teresa has a favorite quote from the movie "Chariots Of Fire", "When I run (sing), I can feel His pleasure." This best expresses how she feels about using the talent God has given her. As she says, "there is no other joy that compares to the joy He brings when I am in His presence with worship and praise – His pleasure is all I need."

The Original Blueprint - The Tabernacle of Moses (Overview)



While much has changed in man's relationship with God since we became covered once and for all by the redeeming blood of Jesus, the final blood sacrifice for mankind, God's blueprint for how he wants to be worshipped is not only still relevant but is still how He wants to be worshipped. He never gave us a new plan nor did he ever abolish the original one.

Understanding this, how can we expect the fullness of God's presence and his blessing upon our plans and our freestyle worship of Him? The

worship is not about us - it's about him. Therefore, doesn't it make sense that we give Him what He wants? In order to fully understand how we are to worship, we must go back to the original blueprint, the Tabernacle, and catch God's purpose behind each action. Step back in time with me as we take a closer look.

The word Tabernacle comes from the Hebrew word *mishkan* (mish-kan') meaning "dwelling place." God instructed Moses to construct a Tabernacle so that they would have a place where he could meet and speak with them (Exodus 25:22). God longed for this communication with them. In fact, He longed to be the center of their daily life. That is why He instructed them to put the Tabernacle in the center of the Israelite camp. He gave them specific orders as to how to construct it. For instance, it was to be 150 ft long by 75 ft wide. The outer wall would be made of curtains. No hammer was to be used to construct it. To accomplish this God instructed them to make "groove and socket" connections. God didn't just say, "build it," He gave them explicit directions as to how to build it.

There was only one gate entering the Tabernacle. To go in one had to enter through this gate. One could assume that this was symbolic of Jesus being the only way to God. Something I find interesting about the original plan which we have somewhat distorted today, is that they 'entered into the gates with thanksgiving' or with their offerings (Leviticus 1:3). It was like their ticket in, if you will. I suggest that this was symbolic of the condition of their heart before God. They had to bring their best – this was a sacrifice. It was also a matter of respect toward the Lord and submission to His authority to enter as He had instructed them.

The Tabernacle had 2 courts – the Outer Court and the Inner Court. As they entered the gate they would find themselves standing before an altar typically known as the Brazen Altar or Altar of Burnt Offerings, where their sacrifices were offered. Behind the Brazen Altar was the Bronze Laver – the place where they washed their hands and feet before entering the Inner Court. The Inner Court was divided into 2 rooms – the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Upon entering the Inner Court they would see the Table of Showbread on the right. This was their form of communion with God. God was not merely setting the stage for what would become the symbolism of eating the Body and Blood of Jesus though that is an important factor to come. This area was all about fellowship. On the left was the Golden Lampstand (constructed of one solid piece of gold). Throughout scripture we see God as the light of our lives, He lights our path, He is light, there is no darkness in Him. On the other side of the room, directly in front of the Veil separating the two rooms was the Altar of Incense – the place where they burnt the incense that God gave them the recipe for and instructions to use ONLY in the Tabernacle. The penalty for violating those instructions was death. Once a year, the High Priest would pass through the veil and into the Holy of Holies where he would pour the blood from the sacrificed animals onto the "mercy seat" located at the top of the Ark of the Covenant. It was here that God said, "I will meet you and speak with you from above the mercy seat."

Over the next couple months, we will examine more closely each article in the Tabernacle and its significance. William Brown wrote in his book, *The Tabernacle: Its Priest and Its Service*, "Though it is not right in every case to judge of the importance of a Bible subject by the space it occupies in Holy Writ, yet it may not be unworthy of remark that much more is said about the Tabernacle than about Solomon's Temple, both in the Old Testament and in the New. Nearly three hundred verses in Exodus are devoted to an account of the Tabernacle and its furniture, while the corresponding account of the Temple and its furniture, in First Kings and Second Chronicles, is comprised in half that number of verses. The Tabernacle, its priest, its rites, and its sacrifices have all passed away, but the description and history of them remain, and form part of those sacred which testify of Christ, who said of Moses, 'He wrote of Me.'" The Tabernacle is one of the least understood subjects in the bible by most Christians but is one of the most important because it forever gave us a blueprint by which God wants to be worshipped.

ITM Song of the Month - Jesus, You Are The Life

There are mansions, in glory; A table spread wide
All my friends there, and loved ones; And the King by there side, Singing

Chorus

Jesus, You are the way
Jesus, You are the truth
Jesus, You are the life
(repeat)

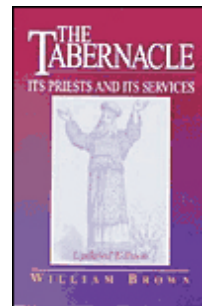
There's a mansion, before us; With gates open wide
There's a groom there, waiting; For His beautiful bride

Lord You found me, and You saved me; Poured Your life over mine
So we come here, in Your presence; With the bread and the wine
Singing

Words and Music by Tom Long and Rob Higginbotham
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Resource Of The Month - The Tabernacle: Its Priests and Its Services by William Brown

This book, by far, has been one of the most helpful books in my studies of the Tabernacle of Moses. Not only does the book go into explicit details of the makings and meanings of each aspect of the Tabernacle, it also provides diagrams and pictures to help you visualize what it may have actually looked like. The original transcripts for this book was written in 1899. The latest edition of the book has been updated and revised for easier reading. This book is a must have for your resource library!



From the desk of Tom Long



I grew up a preacher's son. Yup, you heard me right. What they say is not always the true - we're not all bad! Anyway, growing up I listened to every word spoken from the pulpit (usually because I knew there would be a quiz after church around the dinner table that could result in my sitting next to my mother instead of my friends for the next 2 weeks). I don't ever recall really studying the Bible for myself. I just figured that if my father said it, it must be the truth. Then I went to Bible College. It was there that I was challenged to read it for myself. Picking up the word and diving in, I found things I had never heard or seen before. The Word came alive to me. I also learned that religious doctrines can be riddled with well-meaning misinterpretations.

I believe that one of the laziest and sometimes detrimental things we can do as Christians is to take someone else's word for it. I would suggest that you study things for yourself. Sure, teachings and books can be great resources but don't rely solely on that. Be responsible for feeding yourself. No healthy person would sit and allow someone else to spoon feed them their meals even though they were perfectly capable of that task themselves. Yet, as Christians, we can do that for years at a time and sadly enough sometimes even a lifetime. Pick up the Book for yourself and allow God to make it real to you. That's where the term "Rhema word" comes from - God takes a scripture and breathes life into it for your life.

God wants to speak to you. He wants to show you things about Himself that you've never seen before. He invites you to come in and sit with Him so you can get to know Him better. Don't miss out on this awesome opportunity.

Worshipping God His Way,

Tom Long



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