

The Eightfold Significance of the Tabernacle

Base and Standing

The first thing with which we need to be impressed with when we consider the tabernacle is Christ's redemption. Everything begins with **redemption**. **Silver sockets** formed **the base** of the tabernacle and were one of its most significant aspects. **All the boards stood in the sockets**; thus, these became the foundation of the tabernacle. All the boards were joined together by the bars, but they needed to have something on which to **rest**. They needed **a base** upon which to stand... The silver sockets formed the base, and each socket was about one hundred pounds, because the boards were large and heavy. The heaviest part of the tabernacle was the foundation... We must never forget that the church is built on such a solid base. The church has no weightier standing than the redemption of Christ. The church is not standing upon anything else but Christ's redemption. Without His redemption, the church cannot exist and be built up. Hence, we need to appreciate the weighty redemption of Christ. The Lord went to the cross not merely to open the way for us to come to Him but to prepare a standing place in God for all of us, even a standing place in God for the church. This is what we should consider regarding the silver sockets of the tabernacle.

Nature and Manifestation

The foundation of the tabernacle was of silver, but the manifestation within the tabernacle was the gold; gold signifies the divine nature with the divine life of Christ, which is God Himself. Within the church, the building of God, what must be manifested is not the works, the doings of God, but **the nature** and life of God; what we manifest, express, and show to others should be nothing other than the **glorious divine nature** of Christ. Since the tabernacle is a type of the church, this means that in the church we should see nothing but God. There should be nothing but the divine nature with the divine life of Christ expressed and **manifested in the lives of all the members**. The glorious, divine nature of Christ is the proper expression of the church life.

Humanity and Character

The divine nature depends greatly upon our human nature and our human character... The Bible does not tell us how thick the boards were, but my guess is that they must have been fairly thick. Otherwise, they might bend in windy conditions. Acacia wood is also one of the most durable and dense of the hardwoods... The Ark, which was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, was with the children of Israel for hundreds of years. The points and significance of these details are that we need the humanity of Jesus. Only Christ is the real acacia wood. We need to take this Christ in order to have a transformed humanity and a transformed character so that we can be the standing boards to uphold the testimony of the church... A soft and weak person cannot bear the burden of the church's testimony. We need a new humanity. We need to be Jesusly human, possessing a new character.

Faith and Balance

We need faith for a firm standing in the redemption of Christ, and we need to be balanced by the other members in the Body. This is the way for us to have the church life. The two tenons, which fit into the two sockets under each board, may signify our complete faith in Christ's redemption, which gives us a firm and unshakable standing. At the bottom of each standing board were two tenons in order for the board to rest in the sockets. There are two sockets for a standing board, and each socket weighs about a hundred pounds... The tenons of each board had to fit perfectly in the opening of the sockets in order for the board to be firm and unshakable... In the tabernacle the tenons that extended from the standing board would have fitted perfectly into the mortise in the sockets at the bottom of the board to hold the board in place. The bars that join the boards take care of the lateral forces, but the two tenons at

the bottom of each board account for the vertical forces. Hence, the tenons may signify our complete faith in Christ's redemption, which gives us a firm and unshakable standing.

As believers, typified by the standing boards, we each have "tenons"; that is, we have faith that fits perfectly into the redemption of Christ, which guarantees a solid and unshakable standing. This is why we need to exercise our spirit of faith. We need to have more faith in the Lord, His person and in His redemptive work. Furthermore, two tenons are for balance. We must be checked, tested, and confirmed by others that we may have the balance; otherwise, we will be peculiar and will go to an extreme... We need to be balanced by other members, and this is signified by each board's two tenons that fit into its two sockets.

Match and Reinforcement

The boards were ten cubits in length and **one and a half cubits** in width. These measurements are also very meaningful. In many instances, the basic numbers of God's building were the numbers three and five or multiples of these numbers. One example is the altar, which was square—five cubits wide by five cubits long and three cubits high... This implies that **only when two boards are put together to form three cubits** can there be **the number of building**. What this means is that every brother or sister is only one and a half cubits and that each one needs another one to match him to become a whole unit... The problem is that some brothers and sisters think that they are three cubits by themselves and do not need others to match them. Such brothers and sisters think that they can be Christians alone and do not need others at all. (*Excerpt from The Vision and Building of the Church, chapter 4*)

Joining and Holding

In the building, there needs to be the **joining work** of the Holy Spirit that joins us together into a wall of standing boards... The second function of the bars is **to stabilize, to hold**, the boards together... Even if a building has a strong foundation, it must also be stabilized throughout to prevent it from falling. The bars that joined and held the standing boards made the tabernacle steady, sturdy, and strong against any opposing forces.

Covering and Protection

[The tabernacle] is covered by a "fourfold" Christ (the covering of the tabernacle consisted of **four layers**). The first and innermost layer of covering is of fine twined **linen**... This layer... is the layer visible within the tabernacle. [It] signifies the fine living of Christ manifested through sufferings and trials; this layer was also a protection for the standing boards and all the contents of the tabernacle, signifying that the glory and beauty of the Lord Jesus in His humanity cover, protect and embrace all His believers as the church. The second layer, the **goat's hair**, typifies Christ as the One who was made sin for us and who died on the cross for our sins... The third layer of covering, **the ram's skins**, typifies Christ as the One who accomplished redemption by dying and shedding His blood to meet God's need and ours... The fourth layer, the porpoise skins, signifying that Christ is without comeliness or beauty... The church may appear worthless, but the church within is beautiful. Nevertheless, even the seemingly worthless outward appearance is full of enduring strength for our covering and protection.

Entrance and Separation

We need to become pillars in the Triune God, signified by the nine pillars in the tabernacle; at the entrance of the tabernacle five pillars supported the screen, and at the entrance to the Holy of Holies four pillars supported the veil. [The pillars] provide entrances for sinners to be saved into God's dwelling place and then to be terminated so that they may come into God's Holy of Holies to enjoy God Himself in His fullness. (*Excerpt from The Ministry of the Word, vol. 20, no. 7, July 2016. Ministry Magazine, pp. 261-283*)