

Terrace Studies Term 3, Part 2, 2015

**TRANSFORMED
HEARTS & MINDS:**

Living as People of the New Covenant

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INTRODUCTION

The ‘new covenant’...it’s not something you hear talked about much in daily conversation, is it! So, what is it, and why spend 3 weeks doing a series on it?

Firstly, what is a covenant? It’s a mutually binding agreement between two parties; marriage for example. In the bible, a covenant specifically means a binding relational agreement between God and Israel, based on God’s specific deeds and promises, which Israel accepted by faith in God, for the purpose of living for him as his unique people in the world.

Foundational to the covenant were God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen 12-50), and his actions in redeeming Israel from slavery in Egypt (Ex 1:1-20:2). In response, God called his people to live in a way appropriate for people who trusted him and lived for him (Ex20-24), who were a ‘kingdom of priests and a holy nation’ (Ex 19:6). God set out faith-based sacrifices (Lev 1-16) and prayers (Ps 32, 51 etc) to deal with their sins. The covenant also included clear accountability for them in the form of benefits (blessings) and consequences (curses) (Deut 27-28). As time passed, the covenant incorporated God’s promise to King David of an eternal kingdom (2 Sam 7), from which emerged the concept of the Messiah (“anointed one”). When we get to the prophets, Jeremiah announces the new covenant (Jer 31:31) God promises to change his peoples’ hearts and minds, giving them the desire and ability to keep his law, and to know him even better.

In the New Testament, it becomes clear that it was always God’s plan to send Jesus, and the covenant was always pointing towards him. We’ll be looking at Luke 22, where Jesus talks about the cup which is ‘the new covenant in my blood’ (v20), and then at the book of Hebrews, which shows the many ways in which Jesus is the

fulfilment of the new covenant. As we work through these various passages, keep asking these questions: how do we see God's grace at work through the covenant? In what ways does Jesus fulfil God's promises? How does God want us to act in response? How can we grow in our trust in him?

May God be at work in us through his word and by his Spirit (as promised back in Ezek 36:27!), so that we will know the forgiveness, and the certainty of our promised inheritance, that we have in Christ (Heb 9:15).

Caroline and Katy

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Study 1

Jeremiah 31: 1-14, 18-25, 31-36

Jeremiah is prophesying to the people of Jerusalem (covering the time period of 627-587BC), warning them of God's coming judgement for their persistent sin. Yet, with God, even whilst speaking of judgement, grace is always present. Jeremiah 30-33 form what is often called the 'Book of Consolation'. Those who recognise the seriousness of their sin, and who are forgiven by their gracious God (who always keeps his promises) will have a deeper and stronger knowledge of Him. In ch 31, Jeremiah delivers God's promise about a new covenant.

Read Jeremiah 31:1-14

1. What does God promise to do in the future? Look for all the "I will..." / "The Lord will..." phrases.

Read Jeremiah 31:18-25

2. What will Ephraim's response be to God's restoring actions (v18-20)?
3. How do the images of God as shepherd (v10), and those of level paths and sign posts (v9,21) help to convey what God will do?

The Best is Yet to Come

Jeremiah 31:33-34, Ezekiel 26:24-27

A New Covenant? (Jer 31:32)

God promises:

- Forgiveness and cleansing (Jer 31:34; Ezek 36:29,33)

- New heart and mind (Jer 31:33-34; Ezek 36:26)

- God's Spirit dwelling within us (Ezek 36:27)

Spiritual health check...

Study 2

Luke 22:7 - 23

1. Can you think of a time when you have anticipated something for a long period of time? How did you feel when it finally happened or you finally received it? Did it live up to your expectations?

Context: Luke 22 brings us to a pivotal point in the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus knows that the time of his death is approaching, and he is about to share his last meal on earth with his disciples. Just before we pick up the reading in Luke 22:7, Judas has met with the Jewish Pharisees and agreed to betray him by handing him over to the authorities. *Now read Luke 22:7-23.*

2. Luke 22:7 tells us that Jesus and the disciples were preparing to celebrate the Passover meal (also known as the festival of Unleavened Bread). This was a significant event in the life of the Jewish people. *Read Exodus 12:1-20* and answer the following questions about the Passover.

What happened on the night of the first Passover?

Why did God instruct the people to put blood on their door frames?

What you've been waiting for...

Luke 22:7-23

Great Expectations!

The Passover...not like the last one!

This Covenant...not like the last one!

Therefore, remember and look forward!

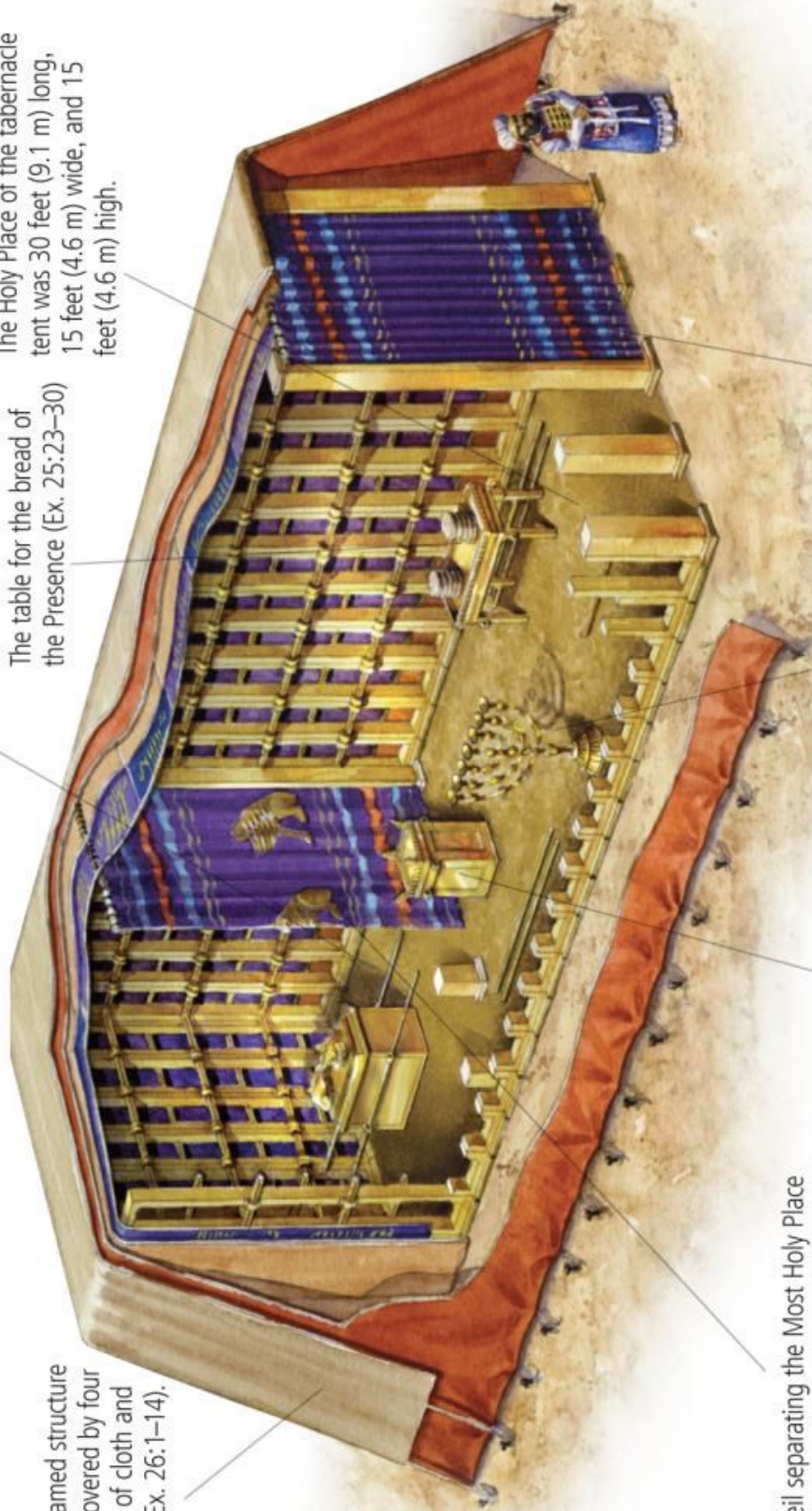
THE TABERNACLE TENT

The entire tent was 45 feet (13.7 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high. It was a wooden skeletal structure, overlaid with gold, with no solid roof or front wall (Ex. 26:15–29). Five wooden bars (overlaid with gold) passed through rings attached to each frame (Ex. 26:26–30).

The framed structure was covered by four layers of cloth and skin (Ex. 26:1–14).

The table for the bread of the Presence (Ex. 25:23–30)

The Holy Place of the tabernacle tent was 30 feet (9.1 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high.



The veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place was made from blue, purple, and scarlet dyed yarns woven with fine twined linen and embroidered with cherubim (Ex. 26:31–33). It hung on four golden pillars.

The altar of incense (Ex. 30:1–5; 37:25–29)

The golden lampstand (Ex. 25:31–40; 37:17–24)

The veil that formed the entrance to the tabernacle was similar to the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, except that cherubim were not embroidered on it. It was suspended on five golden pillars (Ex. 26:36–37).

Study 3

Hebrews 9:1-22

1. Can you think of particular ways in which you, or those around you, have changed since becoming a Christian, whether those are dramatic or subtle changes?

Read Hebrews 9:1-22

2. What do v6-10 tell us about the impact and effectiveness of what priests did under the old covenant?
3. In v 11-14, what has Jesus done as our High Priest, and what is the outcome?
4. What is a mediator (v15)? In what ways is Jesus the mediator of a new covenant?

- God's Spirit dwelling within us

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NOTES

