

## HOW WERE MEN SAVED BEFORE CALVARY'S CROSS ?

**Introduction** When we studied **God's Bridge from Death to Life** (Lesson 6), we learned that **Jesus Christ is the only Way of Salvation**. No truth of the Bible is set forth more plainly or consistently than this.

**John 14 : 6:** "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

**Acts 4 : 12:** "Neither is there salvation in any other."

**John 1 : 29:** "Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

But this strong Bible emphasis upon salvation through Jesus Christ alone poses a problem:

"What about the people in the ages before the Cross? How could they be saved by Jesus Christ, when He had not yet died? How could they know anything about Calvary and its meaning?"

The answer is: **By means of the Hebrew Sanctuary and its services!**

In the centuries before Jesus came, God devised a wonderful method of teaching in advance the Way of Salvation through a sinless Redeemer. This method has been called: "God's Kindergarten School of Redemption". It was an acted, or dramatised prophecy—a kind of sand-tray model—of the saving work of Christ. It began with Abel's simple altar of sacrifice at the Gate of Eden (Gen. 4 : 4; Heb. 11 : 4), and was at length expanded into the solemn and instructive ritual of the Hebrew Sanctuary, which was instituted at the time of Moses (Ex. 25 : 8, 9).

In this lesson we will study how the Way of Salvation was taught from day to day in God's Old Testament "School of Redemption".

### **Discussion** 1.—A DESCRIPTION OF THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY (Heb. 9 : 1-7)

(See Charts Nos. 29 and 30—Sanctuary Exterior and Interior)

Full details of the Sanctuary, its furniture and its priesthood, are given in Exodus, chapters 25 to 30. Its main features were as follows:

- (a) **The Courtyard:** A large enclosure about 92 by 183 ft. (reckoning a cubit at 22 in.), which surrounded the tabernacle. Its entrance was at the eastern end, and it contained the brazen laver (or washbowl) and the large altar of burnt offering.
- (b) **The Sanctuary Itself:** A large tent, about 18 by 55 ft. in size, which was divided into two rooms or apartments separated by a curtain, or veil. The walls were made of boards overlaid with gold, and the roof coverings were of cloth and skins. Obviously, the Sanctuary was not large enough for congregational worship in the modern sense. Yet it was the earthly centre of the whole Hebrew system of worship.
- (c) **The First Apartment or "Holy Place":** This contained the seven-branched candlestick, or lampstand, the table of shewbread and the altar of incense.
- (d) **The Second Apartment or "Most Holy Place":** This contained only the Ark of the Covenant, in which were preserved the two tablets of stone upon which God had written the Ten Commandments. The golden lid of the ark, bearing the figures of two cherubim facing each other, was called "The Mercy Seat".
- (e) **The Priests** were the appointed ministers of the Sanctuary. They were members of the tribe of Levi, of the household of Aaron, and they alone were permitted to enter the sacred tent. Their duties were to assist with the various sacrifices and offerings involved in the Sanctuary ritual, and to care for the upkeep and transportation of the Tabernacle and its furniture. It was their responsibility, also, to instruct the Hebrew laity in the meaning of the Sanctuary ritual (Mal. 2 : 7).