

Exodus 25

We have finished the story of the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Law including the confirmation of the people to promise to obey all that God commanded Moses to tell them. This telling was for the “common folk” and not just for the priesthood, although they were included in much of what was commanded. Once the Tabernacle is built, God will speak to Moses about the priesthood and the offerings (this was recorded in the Book of Leviticus).

Today we begin the final sixteen chapters of Exodus. These chapters focus on the proper way to worship God. It will include a few chapters on how not to worship God (that is, the golden calf incident). Those three chapters are a powerful testimony to the grace and mercy of God. So, from 25-31 are the instructions for building the Tabernacle and its furnishings, Chapters 32-34 are the debacle of Aaron and the calf, and Chapters 35-40 are concerned with the construction of the Tabernacle.

Proper worship was centered around the Tabernacle. We have probably seen drawings that all look somewhat similar, but they certainly include the artist’s own ideas. While we will discuss this again, the “proper” way to worship God entailed blood sacrifices and lots of separation! All throughout Jewish history there’s been an attitude of superiority of the priesthood over the people. The priests and scribes and then the rabbis didn’t want the people to even pray. The religious services came with detail liturgy for people to repeat because no one could be trusted with words of praise and worship! The liturgical model became the way leadership controlled the congregation and also held the Spirit of God back.

The proper worship of the Tabernacle was a shadow of the kind of worship God desired. And everything associated with the Tabernacle was a shadow of the Messiah who would come to rescue the souls of men.

We will be putting light on the shadows as we move through these chapters.

Chapter 25 will include a description of the Ark with its Mercy Seat, the Table for the Showbread, and finally, the Golden Lampstand.

Question: The Children of Israel are marching slowly to the Promised Land and are in mainly wilderness areas. Where did they get the materials to construct the Tabernacle and its furnishings?

The answer to the first question is answered in the first 9 verses of this chapter.

(Exodus 25:1 NKJV) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: (2) "Speak to the children of Israel, that **they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.**

Three major concepts are given in this one verse: First, the offering is **for** the LORD! The material offering is for God who is Spirit! Second, the offering was only acceptable to God from those who gave willingly from the heart, in other words, gave generously and joyfully

because of Him who was receiving it. Third, the purpose was not given until the command to bring the offering! Trust was also an essential feature of the offering!

Strange to our ears is the fact that here in the OT is the model of NT giving. I might call it a tithe or an offering, but the heart is the critical element:

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 NKJV (6) But this *I say*: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (7) So let each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. (8) And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work.

(Exodus 25:3 NKJV) And this *is* the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; (4) blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, fine linen, and goats' *hair*; (5) ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; (6) oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; (7) onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.

These are the things the LORD required to build the Ark. These are not necessarily inexpensive and for some, it would require a sacrifice. Remember, this was the commandment. We will see how well they did when we get to Chapter 35 when construction begins!

I won't go into detail of each item but some of these things require some note:

1. The color "blue" was derived from shellfish.
2. The color "purple" was from a gland of a snail. Purple has been used to symbolize royalty.
3. The color "scarlet" was derived from the eggs and bodies of certain worms. Some say it symbolizes the "earthly aspect of man".
4. The three colors were used in the making of yarns and other coverings.
5. The ram skins that resulted in leather were dyed red
6. The badgers are not in the Jewish Publication Society bible that is considered the official translation. In the JPS version this is the hides of "sea cows" (porpoises and dolphin) found in the Red Sea.
7. The spices are what we might consider "normal", that is, myrrh, frankincense and cinnamon and others from bark, plants and flowers.
8. Onyx stones are of uncertain identification. The Septuagint translates this as "beryl" a "sea-green" color or some type of colored quartz. The LORD did tell Moses how the stones would be used – the Ephod and the Breastplate.

Someone estimated that the offerings would be worth about 13 million dollars and weigh about 20,000 lbs.!

Where did they get all this stuff? When they left Egypt, they received most of these things and more from the Egyptians who were glad to get rid of the Israelites.

(Exodus 25:8 NKJV) And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. (9) According to all that I show you, *that is*, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make *it*.

Three different words are used here that are significant:

1. Sanctuary: *mik-dawsh*

a *consecrated* thing or place, hallowed part, holy place

2. Tabernacle: *mish-kawn'*

A structure used for huts, lairs; but, specifically the *Tabernacle*. While the sanctuary might be the structure within the Tabernacle, the two words are interchangeable. Hebrews 9 gives additional information:

Hebrews 9:1-5 NKJV Then indeed, even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. (2) For a tabernacle was prepared: the first *part*, in which *was* the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; (3) and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, (4) which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which *were* the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; (5) and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

3. Pattern: This word is from another word that means to build. The idea is of a model or replica of something “real”. The Greek word for “pattern” also means “type”. In other words, the LORD showed Moses models of the heavenly realities and Moses had to strictly copy them. Since they were copies, there’s an implied sense that the Tabernacle was meant to be temporary. Even the Temples which came later are temporary until the New Heavens, Earth and the City of God are revealed:

Revelation 21:22 NKJV But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

But even more than these things is the fact that the Children of Israel were to make the LORD God a holy place for God so that He could dwell among them! Absolutely incredible that these stiff-necked, idolatrous, unbelieving people were to build this for their God and the God of all creation! GRACE!

(Exodus 25:10 NKJV) "And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. (11) And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around. (12) You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in its four corners; two rings *shall be* on one side, and two rings on the other side. (13) And you shall make poles *of* acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. (14) You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. (15) The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it.

The first article to build would be an Ark. Many of the furnishings were made with the wood called Acacia but in the Hebrew is called “shittim”. The wood is harder than oak and very resistant to bugs.

The wood is overlaid with pure gold. There are gold rings for the gold-overlaid poles for

carrying the Ark. Most believe that the rings were placed at the bottom of the legs rather than at the top to avoid the possible contact with the carriers.

(Exodus 25:16 NKJV) And you shall put into the ark **the Testimony** which I will give you.

The Ark was to contain the tablets of stone that the LORD was going to give Moses after his time on the Mountain.

(Exodus 25:17 NKJV) “You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length and a cubit and a half its width. (18) And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. (19) Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it *of one piece* with the mercy seat. (20) And the cherubim shall stretch out *their* wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim *shall be* toward the mercy seat. (21) You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you.

The mercy seat was to be one solid piece of gold AND was to have 2 cherubim shaped on either end of the lid. What these looked like is left to our imaginations. The ideas I've seen simply show two winged-angel-like people. We have read about these creatures in Ezekiel and Revelation.

The lid on top of the Ark was called the mercy seat. But the Hebrew word means “covering” or “atonement cover” because the Hebrew root word means to appease, cleanse, forgive, be merciful, pardon...etc. The word was first used in Genesis 6:14 when Noah was told to cover the Ark with “pitch”. The word for pitch is the same root word here. The Ark of Noah was covered in forgiveness, mercy, cleansing and the appeasing of God's wrath. These same word pictures are valid for this Ark. This is where we get the idea that the blood of the sacrifices only covered the people's sin and did not remove it as the blood of Messiah did. The root word also comes with the sense of “delivering or ransoming someone by a substitute! This is one of the greatest doctrines in the world: the substitutionary atonement by Messiah for the sins of the world!

(btw: Tyndale was the first to call it a mercy seat in the 1500's and then Luther did as well in 1534).

(Exodus 25:22 NKJV) And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which *are* on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

Once again God tells Moses that He will meet with him. God will appear above the Mercy Seat in a cloud. He will tell Moses all things that the Children of Israel need to hear.

Psalms 80:1-3 NKJV To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." a Testimony of Asaph. A Psalm. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who dwell *between* the cherubim, shine forth! (2) Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, Stir up Your strength, And come *and* save us! (3) Restore us, O God; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!

(Exodus 25:23 NKJV) "You shall also make a table of acacia wood; two cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. (24) And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around. (25) You shall make for it a frame of a handbreadth all around, and you shall make a gold molding for the frame all around. (26) And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that *are* at its four legs. (27) The rings shall be close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. (28) And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them. (29) You shall make its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring. You shall make them of pure gold. (Exodus 25:30 NKJV) And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.

Next comes the table of Showbread. The gold-overlaid wooden table would hold 12 loaves of unleavened bread.

The "showbread" is literally the "bread of His Presence" or "Bread of His Face". This is a picture of God's ever-present eye on Israel for their protection and for their accountability. It could also be seen as a picture of His continual provision to His people. It is certainly a shadow of the true bread that came down from heaven, Messiah Jesus. Of course, the practical use was for the priests to have nourishment in the performance of their duties.

I need to stop here for tonight and finish up this chapter next time when we will have more time.

Even now we can see the significance of the Tabernacle. It was to be a place where God would dwell with His people and communicate with them.

But it is just as significant that the worship was by proxy and the people were kept at a distance. The Priests would officiate the sacrifices and maintain the Showbread, the incense, and the lampstand. Only the High Priest could go into the Most Holy Place a.k.a., the Holy of Holies and that only once a year. A veil hid the Holy Place and another hid the Holy of Holies.

Isaiah spoke of this which has been the truth for the majority of mankind since the beginning of time.

Isaiah 59:1-3 NKJV Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. (2) But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, So that He will not hear. (3) For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity.

This went on for nearly 1400 years until God sent His Son to offer a way to God for everyone.

Hebrews 8:1-2 NKJV Now *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, (2) a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

Hebrews 9:11-15 NKJV But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. (12) Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (13) For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, (14) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (15) And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new

covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

[Hebrews 9:28 NKJV](#) so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

The simple truth was access to God was a gift of God to whomever believed on the Name of Jesus. Paul made it clear: “if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”. That confession and belief come by the gift of faith and the grace of God so that no one can boast!

As we construct the Tabernacle over the next weeks, we will see how Jesus made the shadows and types real. And we will see true light, the true bread, the true atonement seat, the true altar, and the true laver. The way into the Holy of Holies was a path of sacrificial blood. The way into the presence of God is still the same! But now we have a better hope, a better covenant, a better sacrifice, better possessions in heaven, a better country and a better and perfect blood atonement all because God the Word came and tabernacled with us, died for us and rose from the dead for us!