

EXODUS 25-27

Where did the materials for the tabernacle come from?

What was God's purpose and goal for the offering?

What was the spiritual symbolism of each material used?

Why do you think God was so specific and detailed in these instructions?

Reflection:

What do you learn about the character of God in these chapters?

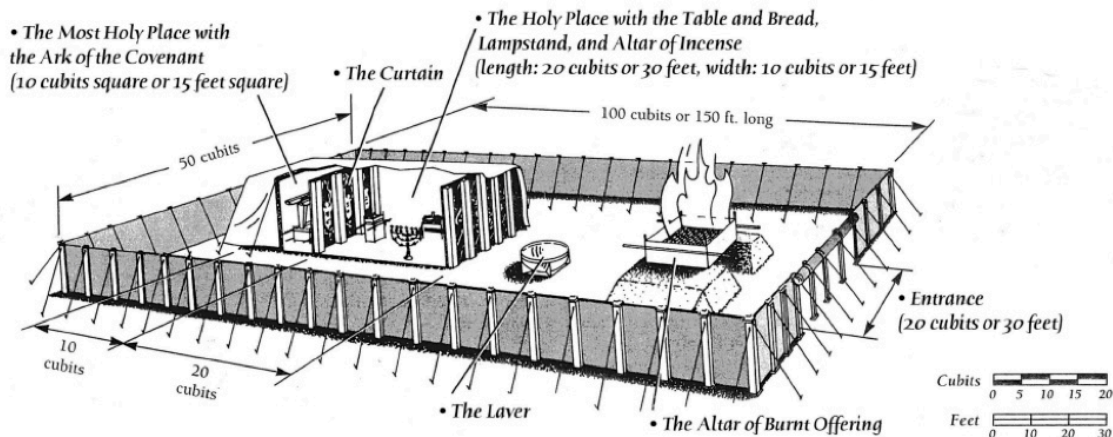
Do the instructions in these chapters affect the way you approach God or think about Him?

At a time when the Israelites were probably most concerned with their basic needs being met, they're given these very elaborate, detailed instructions to build a dwelling place for God, how He can be approached, and by whom. How would you have felt if faced with that task? What is God asking you to do today, during our modern-day chaos? Are you up to the task?

The Tabernacle

***"And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it."
Exodus 25:8-9 (ESV)***

The tabernacle was a portable building that was constructed according to God's blueprint given to Moses on Mount Sinai. God wanted to dwell among His people. The tabernacle is spoken of in over 50 chapters in the Bible and is the primary focus of 37 chapters, including 13 in Exodus, 18 in Leviticus, 2 in Deuteronomy and 4 in Hebrews. (This does not include the temple which is later built as an amplified, more permanent structure for the same purpose.)



Figuratively, the tabernacle points **up** to heaven, **back** to creation and the Garden of Eden, and **forward** to Jesus Christ. First, The tabernacle was pointing up to heaven in the sense that it patterned after heaven. Speaking of the tabernacle and priests, the writer of Hebrews says, ***"They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. - Hebrews 8:5"***

Next, the tabernacle is portrayed as a reconstruction of God's good creation. There were seven acts of creation that all began with, ***"And God said"*** (Ge. 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26). God's instruction for the building of the tabernacle is divided into seven acts, each beginning with ***"And the LORD said"*** (Ex. 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1, 12). The creation account of Genesis 1 & 2 was followed by the Fall (Ge. 3). The instructions for the tabernacle were followed by a Fall - the account of the golden calf.

The tabernacle is in a sense, a return to the Garden of Eden. Like the Garden, the tabernacle is where God dwells. The tabernacle faces east and is guarded by cherubim as with the Garden of Eden. Both the Garden and the tabernacle contain pure gold, precious jewels, trees, colorful life and beauty. The tabernacle was a step toward the restoration of the Garden/Paradise, which is to be completed in the new heaven and earth (Revelation 21-22). But, most importantly we see the Messiah, the Christ, the Lord Jesus foreshadowed in the tabernacle.

Seeing Christ in the Tabernacle

God gave foreshadowings, symbols and prophecies of Jesus Christ through the Tabernacle.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacled] among us," John 1:14 (ESV).

The materials and colors used to build the Tabernacle and what they may foreshadow in Jesus Christ:

GOLD - His royalty and divinity

SILVER - His blood, redemption (firstborn male was redeemed by a blood sacrifice or silver; ransom money for every Israelite male 20 and older)

BRONZE - fire, judgment; Jesus is the ultimate Judge

WOOD - His humanity; the Cross

GOAT'S HAIR - sin offering; atonement; Christ atoned for our sins.

RAM SKIN - substitutionary sacrifice; (Gen. 22); Christ was our substitutionary sacrifice

GOATSKIN/BADGER SKIN/DOLPHIN/SEA COW - exact translation not known, but this was the outermost covering and it gave protection and provision just as Christ does for us.

OIL - Holy Spirit; light; Jesus is the light of the world

INCENSE - prayers; priesthood; Jesus is our High Priest - Heb. 9:11

WATER - Jesus was the living water (John 4:10-14; 7:37-38); also baptism; the word

BREAD - Jesus was the bread of life, the true manna from heaven (John 6:41-58)

JEWELS/PRECIOUS STONES - His priesthood, treasures, heavenly rewards He will give us; foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21)

LINEN - linen was a priestly fabric; Christ is our high priest

WHITE - Christ's holiness, righteousness and purity;

BLUE - Heaven, where Christ is now

PURPLE - royal majesties; Christ is the King of kings

SCARLET - Christ's blood; earthly glory

The furniture/articles of the Tabernacle also foreshadow Jesus:

ARK - wood covered with gold signifying His humanity covered with divinity;

MERCY SEAT (ATONEMENT COVER) - By the mercy of Christ, His blood atones for our sins.

ALTAR OF INCENSE - prayers of believers as a sweet aroma to God (Ps.141:2; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4)

GOLDEN LAMPSTAND - made of pure gold showing His pure divinity; The design of the vine and the branches points to Jesus in John 15:5 *"I am the vine; you are the branches."* Also, *"I am the light of the world,"* John 9:5.

TABLE OF BREAD - points to Jesus as the Bread of Life (John 6) and His humanity covered in divinity again.

VEIL - Christ's flesh torn for us (Mark 15:38; Hebrews 10:19)

DOOR - only one door, one way in to God; John 10:9 *"I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved"* John 14:6 *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

HIGH PRIEST - Jesus is our High Priest - Hebrews 4:14-15 - *"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."* See also Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 5:5; 5:10; 6:20; 7:23-28; 8:1-3; 9:11, 25; 10:21.

The Furniture of the Tabernacle



Altar of Incense



Table of Showbread



Bronze Basin



Altar of Burnt Offering



Ark of the Covenant



Golden Lampstand

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The High Priest

