

Exodus:

The redemption of God's people (1-18),
the covenant with God's people (19-24),
the plans for a worship center for God's people (25-31),
the failure and renewal of God's people (32-34),
the worship center of God's people (35-40).

IV. Comment on the Writing

- A. The Redemption of God's People from Egypt, 1:1-18:27
- B. The Revelation to the God's People at Mount Sinai, 19:1-40:38
 - 1. The revelation of the Mosaic covenant, 19:1-23:33
 - a. The preparation of the people for the giving of the covenant, 19:1-25
 - b. The covenant delineated, 20:1-23:33
 - 1) The essence of the Mosaic revelation: The Ten Words, 20:1-17
 - 2) The response of the people, 20:18-21
 - 3) Instruction for proper worship, 20:22-26
 - 4) The elaboration of the covenant: the ordinances, 21:1-23:33
 - 2. The ratification of the Law, 24:1-15
 - "Everything the Lord has given us we will do (v. 3)."
 - 3. The instructions for the worship of God, 25:1-31:17
 - The redemption of the Lord's people from slavery (12-14) is followed by the gracious revelation of His ways (20), His holiness. The consequence of God's disclosure to live among His people is the covenanting of the people to be His servants, walking in His ways (24). Now the people were able to worship the Lord. God reveals to Moses the plans for the wilderness tabernacle. It was designed for "glory and beauty (28:2)."

The tabernacle was designed by several names.

Sanctuary (25:8)

Tent (26:7, 11-14, 36)

Tent of Meeting (27:21)

Testimony (38:21)

Tent of Testimony (Num.9:15), the location of the two tablets of the Law [within Ark, under the mercy seat].

Some general observation concerning the Tabernacle itself.

The instructions for the building and furnishing of the structure begins with the Holy of Holies, the presence of God dwelling among His people, outward (the Holy Place, the Tent, the courtyard), and the outer walls. Instruction for the golden altar of incense is described with the courtyard furniture though it was placed before the veil of the Holy of Holies.

The beauty of the Tabernacle is also progressive from the Holy of Holies outward (Gold overlay in the Holy of Holies, silver in the Holy Place, bronze in the courtyard).

The prominent colors of fabric were gold, blue, scarlet, and purple. Embroidered cherubim were on the wall coverings in the Holy of Holies.

The outward covering of the Tent was not impressive being weather-resistant seal skin and black goat hair.

a. Instructions for a proper worship center, 25:1-27:21

The grand, central truth of the tabernacle symbolism was the gracious presence of God with His people as a righteous governor, whose justice had to be upheld by sacrifice, so that His righteousness is not tarnished in the forgiveness of sin. In the description of the tabernacle, the movement is from the interior to the exterior, the ark to the altar of burnt offerings.

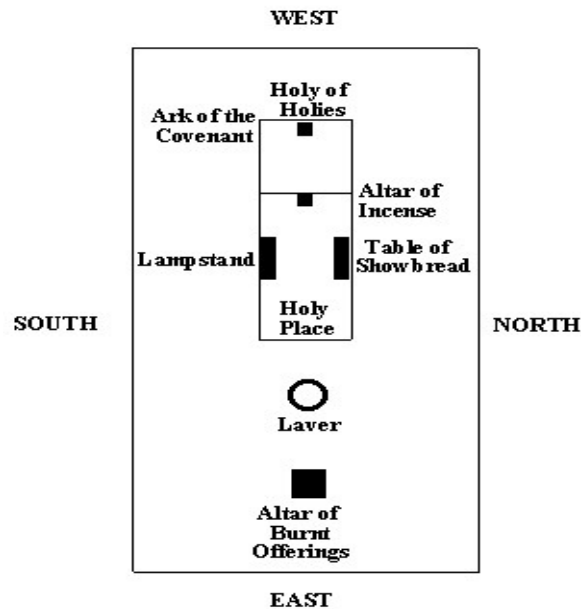
1) The collection of materials, 25:1-9

The collection was voluntary (gold, silver, bronze; yarn [scarlet, purple, gold], goat hair, ram skins, and sea cow hides).

2) The construction of the furniture, 25:10-40

Moses first received instruction concerning several pieces of furniture in the tabernacle. Within the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant with the mercy seat and cherubim, within the Holy place the Table of Showbread, the Golden Lampstand, and the Altar of Incense. The description of the furniture precedes the building because of its greater importance.

THE PLAN OF THE TABERNACLE



Is there any significance in the fact the Tabernacle faced eastward? Could it be that the sun rises in the East shattering the darkness of the night? Could it be symbolic of the reversal of the Fall when our parents were cast to the East out of Eden? Evil is frequently said to originate from the East in the Bible (the removal from the garden [Gen. 3:24]), false worship [Gen. 11:1], invading nations).

a) The Ark of the Covenant, vv. 10-22

The ark or chest (vv. 10-16), the Ark of the Testimony, was a rectangular box (23" wide, 39" long, 23" high"). It was carried by poles with rings attached to the chest.

The focus of the furniture is the mercy seat (vv. 17-22) where shed blood would be poured out to cover the sins of God's people. The mercy seat prefigures Christ's death, His blood shed to atone for us; Christ has become our mercy seat, the place of cleansing.



b) The Table of the Bread of the Presence, vv. 23-30

The table is also called the Table of Presence (1'6" wide, 3' long, 2'3" high). With the twelve loaves representing the tribes of God's people, it suggests that the nation is in communion with the Lord. The priests' consumption of the bread (Lev. 24:9) suggests fellowship with God. Fresh bread was placed on the table every Sabbath.



c) The Menorah, vv. 31-40

This was the most elaborate piece of furniture. It lit the way into the presence of God prefiguring Christ, the Light of the World (John 8:12) who reveals the way to God. It was crafted from solid gold piece.



3) The Tabernacle, 26:1-32

Moses then received instruction about the construction of the tabernacle structure the tent (a three-sided wooden frame forming the Tent the beautiful curtains, clasps, and boards). The tabernacle was 45' long by 15' wide. The colors are stunning (blue, purple, scarlet, gold), the images of royalty. The tabernacle was surrounded by a large courtyard (150' by 75'). Attention is drawn toward the interior of the tabernacle.

a) The ten curtains, the walls, vv. 1-6

Each linen curtain was 6' wide and 42" long, woven yarn gold, purple and scarlet (forming the inner walls and ceiling) with embroidered with cherubim. They were joined together with fifty golden clasps

b) The eleven curtains, the roof and side coverings, vv. 7-14

Over the colorful curtains and wooden frame were eleven curtains made of black goat hair and seal skins, being weather-resistant, cancelling the beauty of the interior.

b) The interior roof and frame, vv. 15-30

The walls of the tabernacle were not solid, consisting of a frame that held the curtains (15' by 2'3") secured by crossbars.

c) The interior curtain, vv. 31-32

4) The placement of the furniture in the tabernacle, vv. 33-35

(See the diagram on p. 3)

5) The exterior curtain, vv. 36-37

The curtain into the Holy place was the same as the interior curtain, the entrance into the Holy of holiest, but without the embroidered cherubim. Also, the posts (5) that secured the curtain was bronze, not silver (as in the holy place) or gold (as in the Holy of Holies).

6) The outer courtyard, 27:1-19

Moses is told about the outer court of the complex, its furnishings and outer wall. The single piece of furniture detailed is the Bronze Altar, not the Laver. The point of the altar is that the only approach to God is through the shedding of blood (Heb. 10:1-18). Fire burned on the altar continuously and the priestly functions never stopped until Christ.

a) The bronze altar, vv. 1-8

The altar was the place of animal sacrificing (also called the “altar of burnt offering.”

It was made of acacia wood, a hollow square in shape (7’ 6” and 4’6” high), and horn-shaped objects on each corner. It was overlaid with bronze. A grating was placed on a ledge about in the center of the square.

b) The exterior walls, vv. 9-19

The perimeter walls, rectangular in shape (150’ by 75”), of the tabernacle complex was made of linen curtains supported by twenty posts each on the south and north side, ten on the west side, with bronze bases and silver hooks.

The entrance faced the east, 30’ wide, with curtains and supporting posts.

7) The oil for the lamp, vv. 20-21

The candelabra in the Holy Place was lit continually providing light for the work of the priests (incense burned there twice daily).

b. Instructions concerning the priesthood, 28:1-29:46

The ceremony consisted of two parts: the preparation of the priests themselves (washing, clothing, anointing) and the preparation of the priestly function through the priests (three sacrifices). It concluded with a communal meal before the Lord signifying acceptance and fellowship.

1) The appointment of the Aaronic priesthood, v. 1

Aaron's four sons officiated in the tabernacle (Nadab, Abihu, Eleazer, and Ithamar), the latter two succeeded Aaron (Nadab and Abihu were killed by the Lord).

2) The garments of the high priest, vv. 2-39

The garments of the high priest suggest the dignity of the office. Four pieces comprised the high priest's outfit: the blue ephod (the sleeveless outer garment, decorated with bells and along the bottom hem), the names of the twelve tribes on the shoulder (imprinted in onyx stones), the breastplate (9" by 9") of twelve stones (attached on its four corners with golden chains), the white robe beneath the ephod, and the turban with the inscribed plate of gold.



The breastplate was folded double, creating a pouch, that contained the Urim ("lights") and Thummim ("perfections") (in Hebrew Urim begins with the first letter of the alphabet, Thummim the last). *We are not sure how the two functioned, some guessing that they were symbols of authority. Others suggest that the first stone indicated a "yes," the second a "no."*

The turban was made of linen with a gold plate attached by a blue cord and inscribed with the words, "Holy to the Lord."

3) The garments of Aaron's sons, v. 40

The priests were to wear a white linen tunic, a head covering, and a sash.

- 4) The command for their formal consecration, v. 41
Once fully attired, Aaron and his son were to be formally appointed to priestly service.
- 5) The undergarments of the priests, vv. 42-43a
- 6) The perpetuity of the priesthood, v. 43b
- 7) The consecration of Aaronic priesthood, 29:1-46
 - a) The elements of ordination: stated, vv. 1-3
Moses is instructed in the ritual of the consecration of Aaron and his sons (repeated in Lev. 8). It is interesting that the first sacrifice is a sin offering (a young bull, v. 14) for Aaron and his sons (priest needed cleansing). Then followed a burnt offering (two rams) signifying fellowship and dedication with bread, cakes, and wafers mixed with oil.
 - b) The anointing of the priestly garments, vv. 4-9
 - c) The offerings: invoked, vv. 10-34
 - (1) The sin offering: the bull, vv. 10-14
The blood of the bull consecrated the Bronze Altar, the altar of sacrifice, the placing of hands identified Aaron and his sons with cleansing (the transference of sin to another who dies). The altar of sacrifice was sanctified by placing blood on the horns and pouring blood at its base. The fat of the internal organs is to be burned on the altar, the animal, the intestine, and remains outside the camp. It was totally consumed; it was for cleansing or separation (only blood cleanses from human uncleanness).
 - (2) The burnt offering: the first ram, vv. 15-18
By placing their hands on the ram, Aaron and his sons identify with the sacrifice as an act of dedication; the entire animal is consumed signifying total dedication.
 - (3) The ordination/ burnt offering; the second ram, vv. 19-22
As the altar was cleansed in the bull and ram offering, here the ram's blood is applied to the priests. Blood is to be placed on the right ears, thumbs, and big toe of the priests, blood splashed on the altar, the priestly garments, and the priests. The mixing of oil and blood suggest service. Fatty portions of the animal are to be set aside as well as the right thigh was waved and entirely burned, a food offering

(4) The wave offering: the foods, vv. 23-37

Bread, mixed with oil, is to be waved before the Lord. The consumption of food signified fellowship, acceptance before the Lord. That, with the breast of the ram and left thigh, were the portion of the priests; they were to eat them before the Lord.. This was a ritual that was to be repeated for seven days (v. 35).

d) The daily offerings of the priestly function, vv. 38-42a

Two lambs were to be sacrifices daily of the Bronze Altar, one in the morning with wine, flour, and olive oil (called a drink offering) and one at twilight with the same additions (called a food offering). Together, they were designated as Burnt Offerings.

e) The promise of divine presence, vv. 42b-46

The section ends with wonderful promises. “I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God” (v. 45) and “They will know that I am the Lord their God... that I might dwell among them” (v. 46).

c. Further instructions concerning tabernacle 30:1-31:17

1) The Altar of Incense, 30:1-10

The Altar of Incense was placed before the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies (Heb. 9:3-4 considers it a part of the Holy of Holies). Incense symbolizes prayer in the Bible (Rev. 5:8), as well as the presence of God.



a) Its construction, vv.1-5

The incense altar was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, rectangular (3' high and 1'6" each side), with horns. Poles were

permanently attached for conveyance. Incense was burned twice daily when the lampstand was attended.

b) Its ritual function, vv.6-10

2) The half shekel tax, vv. 11-16

In our Lord's Day the half shekel silver coin was the equivalent of two days wages. Coins were not invented until the 8th century BC. Prior to that time value was in the metal determined by their weight.

3) The Bronze Laver, vv. 17-21

The Laver was in the outer court between the entrance into the Holy Place and the bronze altar. The priests had to wash their hands before entering the tent suggesting the need for purity through cleansing.



4) The oil, vv. 22-33

a) Its ingredients, vv. 22-25

A mixture of 12.6 pounds of myrrh, 6.6 pounds of cinnamon and cane respectively, and cassia bark.

b) Its function, vv. 26-33

The anointing oil functioned to consecrate the tabernacle and the priests for holy service.

5) The incense, vv. 34-38

- a) Its ingredients, vv.34-36a, 37-38
This consisted of three unknown spices frankincense, and salt burned on the Altar of Incense.
- b) Its function, v. 36b
- 6) The appointment of artisans, 31:1-11
Two were appointed as master artificers: Bezalel of Judah was to direct the overall endeavor and Oholiab of Dan was to be his assistant.
- 7) The command to observe the Sabbath, vv. 12-17
- d. The confirmation of God's covenant, v. 18
Moses received the covenant inscribed by God in the "Ten Words."
After forty days and nights he descended the mountain.

Applications

1. The priest stood for the people before God; he is a figure of Christ, the great high priest. The priest wore the breastplate over his heart (28:29) signifying his care for the people. This is a wonderful picture of what clergymen should be to their people (a caring shepherd who labors before God for his people) and even more so the great shepherd, Jesus Christ. Priests prefigured Him and our pastors figure Him. Have you thought of the weighty responsibility that falls to your pastor as well as the great privilege he has in care for your soul? Are you thankful for your pastor?
2. The worship of God is a very serious matter. The investment of a lengthy description of the tabernacle, its furnishings, and the high priests' garments suggests that the worship of God was a very serious matter in the life of God's ancient people. God dwells with His people today, not in a building among them, but within us. The proper worship of God remains an important duty for all of us. It is to be a priority and done in the proper manner with regularity, humility, and reverence. How often is our worship thoughtless and irreverent?
3. God delights in beauty in our worship. He is a God of aesthetics. A shabby, unkempt worship center shows disrespect for the Lord. What does this say about our houses of worship? A well-maintained church and its surrounding says a lot about our attitudes toward the worship of God. The nature of beauty is not necessarily suggestive of expense; it means that the aesthetics in our churches should focus on the God we worship and function to facilitate reverence meditation without distraction. Is that true of your church? What could you do to make it more worshipful?

4. We are to regularly give for the support of the Lord's work. The Old Testament saint was required to give the maintenance of the tabernacle and later the temple. While we are the dwelling place of God in the New Covenant era individually, we gather corporately to express the unity of the family of God and worship. The obligation to show our reverence for God by financially supporting the house of worship has not been abolished; it is simply defined less specifically in this new age of greater insight into God's mercy and grace. Do you take the support of your local church seriously?
5. The proper approach to worship has not changed with the passing of centuries. To stand before the Lord to offer to Him due praise and recognition of worth requires a prior cleansing at God's true laver, the atoning mercies of the Savior. It requires even more since redemption does not bring about the eradication of sin and misdeeds of conduct, thought, and motive. It, therefore, requires a daily cleansing at the "laver" of the fountain of forgiveness prior to entrance into worship. Confession of sin is a daily ritual for all of us, not seeking forgiveness to become part of His family but relational forgiveness being already a part of His family. Is this true of you?
6. The acts of atonement for sin at the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies and in the daily and monthly offerings showed the Old Testament saint that the only approach to God was through the death of another, through the pouring of blood. While animal sacrifice could not appease God for sin, it was an act of faith looking forward to the one who would come to make the only valid and worthy sacrifice. Christ is our mercy seat who poured out His own blood for us. Are you not glad that we do not have to make animal sacrifices, that Christ death ended the OT ritual forever?
7. The Table of Bread prefigured Christ who is the true bread of life just as the Lamp, the Menorah, prefigured Christ who is the true light. Jesus said, "I am the Bread of life (John 6:35)" and "I am the Light of the world (John 8:12)." The proper way to read the OT is to see it in the more complete revelation of God in the NT. The OT anticipates and finds fulfillment in the Savior. Do you look for Christ when you read the OT? There are riches in the shadows, the OT, that is brought into the light by the NT.