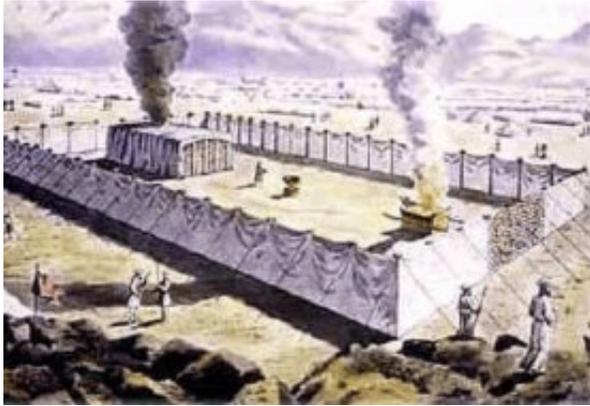


LESSON 1

THE BUILDING OF THE TABERNACLE

Scripture Texts: Exodus 35:4-5, 10-21; 39:42-43; 40:16-17, 34-36



We continue to study Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan, from slavery to freedom under God. We have come with them as far as Mount Sinai, where God gave them His Law by which they were to be governed.

While Moses was communing with God on Mount Sinai, God gave him instructions and the plans for the building of a tabernacle for the worship of God (Exodus 25-31). Now Moses is down from the mountain, ready to build the tabernacle.

We study history, not only to learn the facts, but more importantly, to find examples by which we may avoid Israel's sins and follow their obedience. Also, it is written to give us types of spiritual truths in the church. Then the type was a material thing—something done or seen or that could be touched. Now the fulfillment, called the antitype, is a spiritual truth. It is not a material object, but it takes place in hearts. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-11. Apply it throughout the quarter.

MEMORY VERSE: *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*
 — Romans 15:4

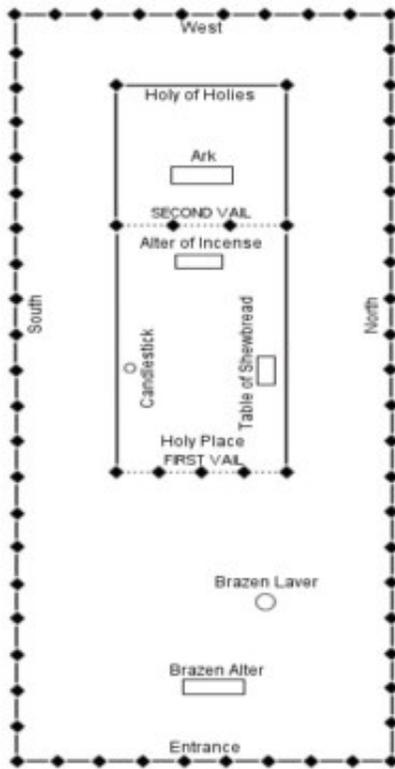
God Commanded an Offering

Exodus 35:4-5 God commanded the people to bring materials for the making of the tabernacle and its furnishings. Notice four points: 1. The gifts were to come **from among you**—from their own personal possessions, not bought from strangers. Here we can learn something of God's method for support of His work; direct giving out of a heartfelt desire to give. Incorporated into the tabernacle, the gifts were to contribute as much to the closeness of the tie between God and the people as possible for inanimate objects to do. Compared to this, how should we value the raising of money by solicitation from outsiders or from baked goods sales and other merchandising?

2. The offering was to be **unto the Lord**—not to be given to Moses or the nation, but to the Lord for His use and control. It was to be an offering, not an extraction. The motivation was to arise in the giver rather than in another. God has no use for gifts not given from the love and joy of the giver. He values gifts according to the purpose of the heart. **God loveth a cheerful giver** (2 Corinthians 9:7). He cares not for materials unless He first is given the heart.

3. It was to be given by **whosoever is of a willing heart**. There was to be no taxation, begging, or pledging. It was not to be given for the sake of competition, to gain recognition, to fill a quota, or to please other persons. It was given only to please and serve God. God desires no gift that comes only from the hand. The quality of the heart behind it affects the good the gift can do. Only saved hearts feel the willingness God asks.

4. **An offering of the Lord**—OF Him, as well as TO Him. He is the Originator of the thought, the Former of the desire, the Receiver of the gift, the Promoter of the work, the User of the gift, and the Giver of the blessing. The generosity of the people abounded until they had to be **restrained from bringing** (Exodus 36:6-7).



The Making of the Tabernacle

Exodus 35:10-21 As the materials were to come from the people and not to be bought, so the workmen were to be of the people, not hired from the outside. The **wise hearted**—able, talented, skilled—were to do it. God chose overseers. God put in them the talents to do the work and to teach others how (Exodus 31:1-11; 35:30-35).

There was to be the portable **tabernacle**, or tent, made of pillars, boards, and curtains, easily set up and taken down. The **ark**, a gold-covered box containing the tables of the Law, was the most sacred part. It occupied the **holiest place**. Its lid was the mercy seat with a golden cherub on either end. From here God spoke to the high priest. A **vail** was hung between the holiest place and the holy place. In the **holy place** were the **table of shewbread** on the north side, the **candlestick** on the south side, and the golden **incense altar** before the veil that closed the holiest place. The holy place was also closed on the east by a hanging, or curtain.

Outside the tent in the court were, first, the **laver** with water for ceremonial washings. Farther out, the **brasen** altar where sacrifices to God were burned. Each article of furniture had its necessary tools and accessories. It was all enclosed by a fence of curtains hung on pillars, forming a **court**. The gate at the east end of the court was closed by curtains. All faced the east.

Moses Inspects the Temple

Exodus 39:42-43 The children of Israel made all the work, finished building. **Moses did look . . . behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded . . .** God had insisted that it be made according to all that I shew thee, after the pattern . . . (Exodus 25:9). **See . . . that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount** (Hebrews 8:5). Why? Because the tabernacle was to be a type of the coming church and must be a true picture.

Raising the Tabernacle

Exodus 40:16-17 The tabernacle was finished; it had passed Moses' inspection. **In the first month in the second year**—just about a year from the time they left Egypt (Exodus 12:2) and nine months since they reached Sinai (Exodus 19:1)—they raised the tabernacle. This raising was a visible promise of the later building of the church by Christ.

Exodus 40:34-36 Now the time had come for the supreme test. God would now inspect the work; would it pass His inspection? When a people with an obedient spirit comply with God's Word—the Pattern—God blesses their work. He sent two visible marks of His approval and presence. 1. **A cloud covered it**, the same cloud which had led them from Egypt (Exodus 13:21), which protected them from Pharaoh (Exodus 14:19-20), and which stood at the tabernacle door while God talked with Moses (Exodus 33:9).

2. **The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle**—filled so completely by the Lord that Moses could not enter. It was a sacred high point in the history of Israel's worship. It is truly the sacred high point in the worship of the church today when the Spirit of the Lord fills the tabernacle, whether it be an individual soul or the place of worship.

JUST A THOUGHT

**The trouble with most of us is that we would rather
be ruined by praise than saved by criticism.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
It is revised and posted here with written permission from
(c) Bible Paths Publications, PO Box 299, Keithville, LA 71047