

# EXODUS 25 – 26

## *A HOLY TENT AND SOME HOLY FURNITURE*

As we pick up our study today, Moses is still atop Mt. Sinai getting instructions from God. These instructions include the construction of the Tabernacle, the furnishings of the Tabernacle as well as the patterns for the priestly garments. There is a great deal of detail in this section of Exodus. This goes to show us that God is a God of order and detail. How else could He have created everything? It also shows us that since our God doesn't slop through stuff, we shouldn't either.

*According to The Associated Press, the North Carolina state medical board suspended the license of a neurosurgeon in Wilmington, North Carolina, after an investigation turned up remarkably casual behavior on his part during brain surgery.*

*The investigation revealed that in the middle of one surgery, as a patient's brain was exposed, the neurosurgeon left the operating room for twenty minutes to go and have lunch. While he was having lunch, no other physician was present in the operating room to care for the patient.*

*In another case the neurosurgeon told a nurse to drill holes in a patient's head and work on the outer brain even though she was untrained for such procedures.*

*When a person regularly deals with awesome things, he or she can become too familiar and too casual with them. We must guard against that ever happening with the sacred things of God.*

One of the main aspects of the Tabernacle, the priesthood and the worship that went on there, is the sanctity, the holiness of the place (sacred space) Too many people come to church nowadays with something of a lackadaisical attitude toward worship. I'm not saying we should walk around like we have steel rods down our spines, but we should acknowledge the holiness and the importance of the God we worship. So, as we go through this portion of the study, please take into account the great differences in the way we worship as the Church, compared to the way Israel worshipped. However, we should see that we worship the same God. Though we don't have to bring animals to church to sacrifice them, we are to bring ourselves as a living sacrifice to the Lord.

***1 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. 3 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. 8 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.***

We can infer from verse one that God isn't one to worry about offending anyone. The first thing He mentions is an offering.

Some people hate this sort of thing. They don't like anyone getting into their pocketbooks. As I have said before, that is usually the last thing to "get saved" on a person. We like our money. But we really shouldn't look at it that way. First of all, we shouldn't be mad at God for taking up an offering because in this case, just as it is with us, God is the provider of everything we have. You might go to work and make your money, but God is the one that gifted you with the skills you have. He is the one that got you the job in the first place.

### **I Chronicles 29:14**

**And praise Your glorious name.**

**14 But who am I, and who are my people,  
That we should be able to offer so willingly as this?  
For all things come from You,  
And of Your own we have given You.**

In the book of Isaiah God speaks of the humility of the giver.

### **Is. 66:1,2**

**1 Thus says the Lord:  
"Heaven is My throne,  
And earth is My footstool.  
Where is the house that you will build Me?  
And where is the place of My rest?  
2 For all those things My hand has made,  
And all those things exist,"  
Says the Lord.  
"But on this one will I look:**

**On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,  
And who trembles at My word.**

God not only created everything that would be used in the construction of the Tabernacle, but He also provided it when He touched the hearts of the Egyptians so they would give it to the Israelites. Once again, as King David said, 'All that we have is from God all we give is given back to Him from His own hand.' The amazing fact is that the people brought so much, God had to tell Moses to tell the people to stop. What a problem to have!

This offering was to be taken up so that the Tabernacle and all its furnishings could be made. Most of us would have started with the tent and the fence around it, leaving the furniture for last. However, God started from the inside, at the holiest place and worked His way out from there.

***10 "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.***

*Slide of the ark*

I won't go into detail concerning all of the furniture, but I did want you to see that God went into detail. He gave the size, materials and the way each piece should be crafted. Why is this? It is because details matter to God. Holiness matters to God. Attitudes matter to God. Punctuality matters to God.

We fail in each of these things at times, but all these details go

to show us that God has a standard of holiness we can never hope to reach without the grace and sacrifice of Jesus.

*Slide of the layout of the tabernacle*

The Ark of the Covenant sat on a table and was placed in the 'Holy of Holies.' This is also called the 'Most holy Place.' The Ark had a cover made of solid gold. Made onto that cover were two cherubim. This cover was also known as the 'Mercy Seat.' It was on this cover, between the two cherubim that the shekinah glory of God would rest. In this way He would  **dwell**  or  **tabernacle**  among His people. The tablets of the Law Moses brought down from the mountain as well as Aaron's rod that budded and a sample of the manna from Heaven was kept inside this ark. This was to be a reminder to Israel of the permanence of God's Word and His promises.

***The Table for the Showbread***

***23 "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.***

*Slide of table of showbread*

This would have been on the right side of the 'Holy Place' as you entered the Tabernacle. The loaves of bread would have been quite large when you take into account how much flour was used to make them. There were 12 loaves; one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel. A fresh batch was made every week. When they were replaced with a fresh batch, the priests would eat the week old bread. This would remind the priests that they

served the all of the people of Israel. But it also looked forward to Jesus in that He is the bread of life. Israel was to be a light unto the Gentiles, as we are to be a light unto the world. We are to nourish those around us by telling them of the Bread of Life.

On the left-hand side of the 'Holy Place' was the Golden Lampstand.

### ***The Gold Lampstand***

***31 "You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and flowers shall be of one piece. 32 And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side.***

### ***Slide of the lampstand***

This was the only light source in the 'Holy Place.' It was powered by olive oil, which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The only true light in this world is the Word of God and we are to let our light so shine.

### **Mt. 5:14 - 16**

**14 " You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."**

This symbolism also shows us that we can do nothing in and of ourselves.

**Jn 15:5**

**5 “ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**

The lamp doesn't work without the oil. Likewise, we can do nothing without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Our lives are to produce fruit. Without the Holy Spirit making the fruit, at best we can only produce fake fruit. Plastic fruit in a bowl may look good from a distance, but it does nothing as far as nourishment is concerned.

***The Tabernacle***

***1 “Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them. 2 The length of each curtain shall be twenty- eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. And every one of the curtains shall have the same measurements.***

The Tabernacle was a large, portable tent. It was beautiful on the inside but it wasn't much to look at on the outside. In this it was symbolic of Jesus.

**Isa, 53:2 (speaking of Jesus)**

**2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,  
And as a root out of dry ground.  
He has no form or comeliness;  
And when we see Him,  
There is no beauty that we should desire Him.**

*Slide of the tabernacle*

The Tabernacle did not compare to the pagan temples of Egypt or Canaan. It was the presence of the Lord that mattered, not the outside of the building. But we must also see how detailed the interior was; pieces of furniture made of solid gold, or gold leaf. God isn't cheap, but the gold stood more for the eternal Kingship of God and His holiness rather than just eye-catching design. Keep in mind that the interior of the tabernacle and eventually the Temple represented Eden, which represented the abode of God and what it would be like to be in His presence in everyday life.

The frame of the Tabernacle was made of acacia wood. It was then covered by curtains made of woven cloth, which were decorated with cherubim. These formed the interior walls. Draped over these curtains was another covering made of goat's hair. There were then two other coverings placed over this one. One was made of tanned rams' skins and the final one was one of badger (goatskins). If you take the time to read all of the instructions you can see how it was designed to be put up and torn down so as to be portable as the Israelites moved through the desert to the Promised Land.

## **Hebrews 8:1 – 6**

**1 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.**

**3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have**



**something to offer. 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.**

The book of Revelation mentions a brazen altar, an altar of incense, a throne, priests, lamps and cherubim. We will get to see the read deal one day!

It should be a basic principle of ministry that we follow the example or the pattern given from Heaven and not the ways of the world.

### **Romans 12:1,2**

**1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

We can see from all this that God is a God of order. In the creation account, we see God bringing order out of chaos. As he does this, everything He creates has a purpose and a function. Adam and Eve, as well as all mankind to follow, were given a vocation – a mission or ministry to God's icons and viceroys

here on earth. Nothing was created in vain the Bible says.

We then see that God gave His children, His chosen people the opportunity to give. This can be a touchy subject, but if we recognize that everything they gave ultimately came from God, then we can cast a different light on things. They only gave back a portion of what was given them in the first place. When we give we are not only worshipping, but we are acknowledging from whence our belongings came, but we are also acting in faith, believing God will continue to provide for us.

God then commissioned the people to build the tabernacle and all things in it. Now He is allowing them the privilege to partake in its construction. God still works this way today. He has a plan, but we are the working cogs of the machine. We are the ones, who in obedience to Him, move His plan forward by ministering to others and giving of our time, talents and treasury. God has blessed us with these three areas for a purpose. And that purpose is that we are His imagers here on earth. We are stewards of all He has given us.

“But,” we may say, “I am not able to do these things.” But if we look at the story, we can see that God’s calling is His enabling. He delegated different things to different people according to their talents, just as we saw last week in the parable of the talents. Those who were skilled in working metals or wood were used for those purposes. Everyone had something they could contribute. And those who weren’t skilled in those things contributed elsewhere. Everyone was able to give, because God had the Egyptians give them things as they were leaving Egypt. No matter how you slice it, whatever was contributed, whether gold, silver, textiles or skills – all these things came from God. They were just giving some of these things back to the one who

had bestowed them upon them. That is a form of worship and act of faith. And it is an opportunity to plug in our giftings to ministry.

And finally, as we go back to the construction and design of the Holy of Holies, we need to recognize that only the High Priest could enter into God's presence there. Today, we can all enter into His presence, as the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from everyone else was torn when Jesus was on the cross. Plus, all believers are now the Temple of the Holy Spirit and God no longer dwells only in temples made with hands. But there is one more thing.

No one could see what went on inside the Holy of Holies as the High Priest entered once a year in order to seek atonement for the sins of the people. Only one man was present. He knew and God knew what went on in that holy place. But that was the most important part of all of Israel's worship. And the same goes for us today. The most important part of our worship is the part that only God sees – what goes on between us and Him; the private part.

Our personal relationship is the part that should be nurtured the most. So, don't let just think of the Sunday service as worship. Let every day, when it's just you and Him be thought of in the same way. We tend to think of these quiet moments as not as important, but they are the most important.

**Fred Craddock, in an address to ministers, caught the practical implications of consecration: To give my life for Christ appears glorious. To pour myself out for others... to pay the ultimate prize for martyrdom – I'll do it. I'm ready, Lord to go out in a blaze of glory.**

**We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking a \$1,000.00 bill and laying it on the table - "Here's my life, Lord. I'm giving it all."**

**But the reality for most of us is that He sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000.00 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid's troubles instead of saying, "Get lost." Go to a committee meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home.**

**Usually giving our life to Christ isn't glorious. It's done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it's harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul.**

Throughout the week I would like for you to ponder just how much work and effort it took to worship at the Tabernacle under the old covenant. Think of the barriers that came between the people and God. (Curtains) Then I would like for you to see how easy we have it today. It isn't complicated and it isn't hard. It just takes a little time, devotion, effort and love. So, go out this week and thank God for the access we have to the throne of God. And let us make ourselves a living sacrifice to Him!