

Exodus

The book of Exodus, the book that gives us the Tabernacle, logically follows the book of Genesis -- because Genesis tells the story of man's failure. It begins with the sublime expression, "*In the beginning God...*" and closes with the symbolic words, "*In a coffin in Egypt.*" The book of Genesis is the story of man going from a perfect creation to sin and death. However, the book of Genesis gives the hope of a promised Redeemer. Thus, the story of Genesis!

Then, follows the book of Exodus, ***the book of Redemption!*** It covers 40 chapters, 13 of which have to do entirely with the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and the priests who were to minister therein.

However, before any mention is made of the Tabernacle, the story of redemption is written in language that cannot be mistaken. The opening chapter of Exodus tells the story of slavery -- a picture of the sinner's bondage to Satan and sin. The children of Israel were given a deliverer from the bondage of Egypt in the person of Moses. (We are offered the only Savior from bondage to Satan in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.)

The story of the birth of Moses and his call from God to deliver Israel is told in the early chapters of Exodus. Then, follows the record of God's righteous judgment upon those who turned an unheeding ear toward God, the only Deliverer. The ten plagues upon the Egyptians are a picture of judgment on all who refuse to accept God's salvation in Christ Jesus. The last, of which was associated with the first Passover in Israel, is a type of Christ the Paschal Lamb.

Exodus is a continued story of God's redemption. Immediately after the Passover, Israel was delivered from the hosts of the Egyptians at the Red Sea, another beautiful picture of God's redemption for all who will put their trust in His Beloved Son.

From the Red Sea on, the story in Exodus is one of Israel's wilderness wandering for forty years as God took care of His children.

In order to show Israel how helpless they were in their own strength, their need of the promised Redeemer, and that they could never measure up to God's perfect standard of holiness apart from this promised Redeemer, God gave them the Ten Commandments and the detailed explanation of their meaning.

This is the story of Exodus up to the beginning with chapter 25 where we have the description of God giving the pattern for the Tabernacle.

Men attempt to *cut* portions from God's Word and to present a mutilated *shorter* Bible. All Scripture is inspired and, yet, do we not commit virtually the same sin through neglect of some portions of God's Word? The bare enumeration of materials, quantities and dimensions relating to the Tabernacle may be regarded by the casual reader as "*uninteresting*" and "*unimportant*," until one considers that the Holy Spirit has borne record that "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable to all*" (2 Timothy 3:16).

The account of the Tabernacle begins in Exodus 25, as Moses receives instructions from God during his 40 days on Mount Sinai. It is important to note that God gave Moses *two* important things on the mountain -- the Ten Commandments and detailed instructions for the building of the Tabernacle.

The Israelites, in bondage 430 years (Exodus 12:40 & Galatians 3:17), was now delivered from the rule of Pharaoh. Since that time Moses had been their leader, he, in turn, received his instructions from God. In Exodus 18:5-6, God proposed to give them laws. God was now their King. This was the beginning of the Theocracy. Naturally two events followed:

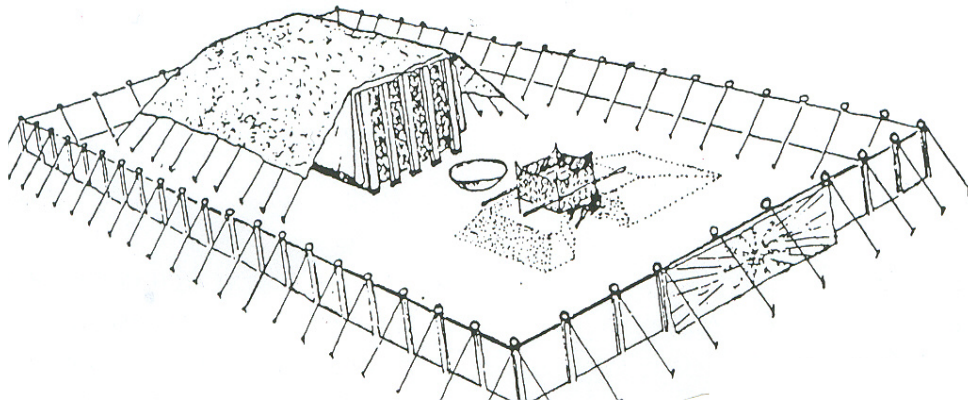
1. A code of laws was made (Exodus, chapters 20 through 24)
2. A dwelling place for the King was build (Exodus, chapters 25 through 40)

The very first mention of the Tabernacle is in Exodus 15:17. This was God's dwelling place among men. The word "*Tabernacle*" means, "*dwelling place.*"

From the completion of the Tabernacle until the present time God has never been without a dwelling place on earth. After the Tabernacle, the Temple was God's house, and, then its glory had departed, God came to earth in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:14 & Colossians 2:9).

When Jesus left this earth, He sent the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and He dwells in the hearts of individual believers today (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). And, so the whole body of believers forms the true Church, the habitation of God in this present Church Age (Ephesians 2:21-22 & Exodus 25:8 with Matthew 18:20).

Moses, at God's command, went up in the mount, and for six days waited for God's voice. He was forty days getting the pattern of the Tabernacle, as God was showing him into the heavenlies, and telling him exactly how the pattern of the Tabernacle should be built.



When Moses came down from the mount, after getting the pattern for the Tabernacle, his face shone! He had beheld God's glory and had seen the true Tabernacle in the heavenlies (Acts 7:44).

Note the striking similarity between the Heavenly Tabernacle and the earthly one – on the previous page.

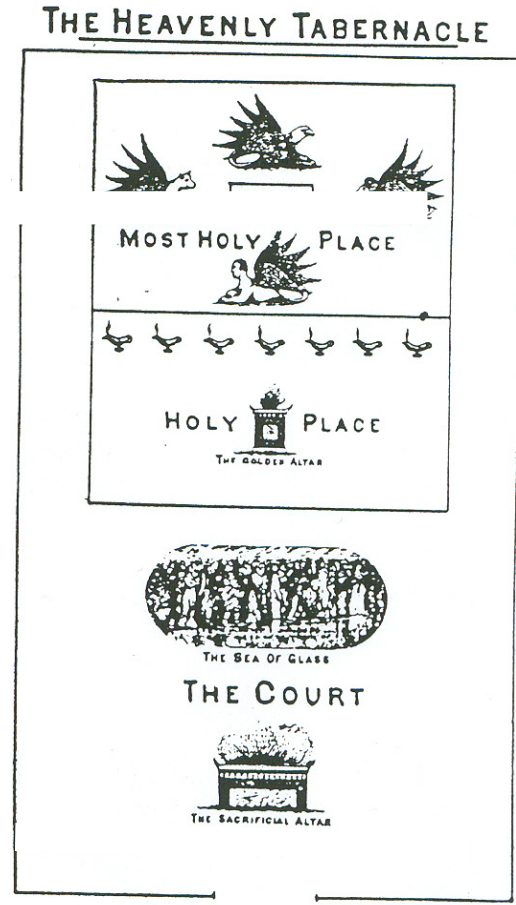
A study of the Tabernacle is, without question, one of the most enlightening studies in the Word of God. The importance of the Tabernacle cannot be missed because of the fact that God devoted so much of His Word to reveal its construction, its meaning, its priesthood, and worship instructions to this Tabernacle. There are 13 chapters in *Exodus* -- 18 in *Leviticus* -- 13 in *Numbers* -- and 4 in *Hebrews* dealing with the Tabernacle. This is remarkable when one considers that only *two* chapters in the Bible are devoted to describing the creation of the entire universe.

Not only the amount of information in the Bible about the Tabernacle points to its significance, but, when we begin to realize the cost of its construction that God ordered the Israelites to assemble, the implication of lessons implicated in the Tabernacle are remarkable. Without doubt the Tabernacle was the most expensive and beautiful portable house of worship ever built, but more than that, there has never been such a costly prefabricated structure of any kind constructed. More over, constructed according to the pattern God gave to Moses in the Mount, it was amazingly simple to dismantle and reassemble.

When God told Moses to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness according to a specific pattern, He said to construct it “according to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments (furniture) thereof, even so shall ye make it” (Exodus 25:9).

God inspired the writer of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament to explain the *spiritual* significance of the Tabernacle. Hebrews 8:1-2 states, “Now the things which we are saying — [that is, the things written in the book of Hebrews] — is this: We have an High Priest such as has been described — [described previously in the book of Hebrews] — Who has taken His seat at the right hand of God’s majestic throne in heaven: where He ministers in then Sanctuary in the true Tabernacle, built by the Lord and not by human hands.”

Moses’ writings especially the book of Exodus that deals with spiritual redemption, points to Christ. This is obvious from the words of the Christ Himself, who stated in Luke 24:26, “Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter His glory.” Then verse 27 He goes on to state, “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning **Himself**.”



Jesus said in John 5:39, “*You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me.*” And in verse 46, He said, “*If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.*”

The Tabernacle symbolically foretold of Christ and His death for the forgiveness of sin. God painted a portrait of Christ through the Tabernacle, and some 1,500 years as John says, “*the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). Interestingly, the Greek word translated as “*dwelt*” here is actually the same word as “*tabernacle,*” or actually, “*tabernacled.*” Through the Tabernacle God foreshadowed many beautiful lessons about Christ that will greatly enhance our appreciation for the Savior.

The Purpose of the Tabernacle

The purpose of the Tabernacle was threefold: First, it was to give the Israelites a much needed physical symbol of God’s presence in their midst. The natural tendency of the Israelites, even after all God had done for them, was to turn from God (Exodus 32:1-6). In Numbers 17:7-8 the Tabernacle is twice called “*the Tabernacle of witness.*” Thus, the Tabernacle was to be a physical witness of the **PRESENCE** of God among His people, as the Lord said in Exodus 28:8, “*that I may dwell among them.*” It was to be a sanctuary, a place set apart, for God to dwell among His people.

The second purpose of the Tabernacle was to foreshadow the One in whom all the symbolism and sacrifices would be fulfilled. Hebrews 9:22-26 explains the spiritual purpose of the Tabernacle, when it states,

“The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifice than there. For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. Nor did He enter heaven to offer Himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

The third purpose of the Tabernacle was to represent a divine means through which sinful humanity could approach a holy God. It was to reveal how the broken relationship with God caused by sin could be restored, ultimately through the Supreme High Priest, Jesus Christ.

The Tabernacle was to be a *portable* structure so that it could be moved along with the Israelites as they traveled to the Promised Land. Today the dwelling place of God is still portable and is still intended to be a witness of God’s presence in the world and of the way of redemption.

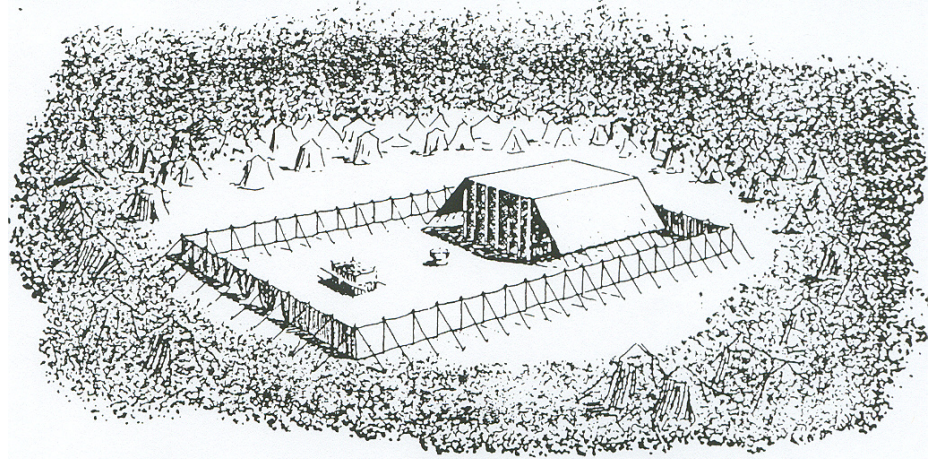
2 Corinthians 6:16-18 states,

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters,’ saith the Lord Almighty.”

And, Acts 1:8 states, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and **YOU** will **be** My witnesses.”

After Israel left Egypt,-- Moses received clear instructions from God for the building of the Tabernacle -- revealed in the book of Exodus.

(1) Exodus, chapters 20-24 give *the code of God's laws*, (2) Exodus, chapters 25-40 give instructions for *the dwelling place of God*.



Before beginning a *detailed* study of the Tabernacle, I like for us to take a “*bird's eye*” view of this tent in the wilderness. The Tabernacle was the worshiping place of the Hebrew people from the time of their wandering in the wilderness to the early days of the Hebrew kings.

GOD, the ORIGINATOR and ARCHITECT

God entrusted the actual building to Moses, however, He as the Superintendent of construction.

Not only did God give the plans for the Tabernacle, He had a “*model*” in Heaven to go by from which He gave His blue prints – (See Hebrews 9:23).