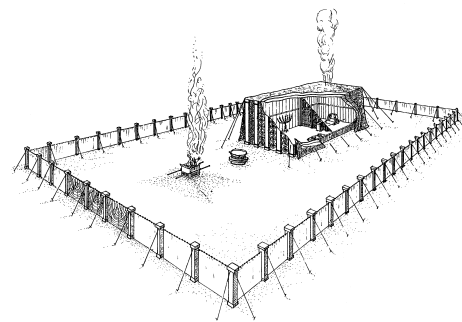


Journey Into True Worship



LESSON 1 . . . God's Model for True Worship (THE TABERNACLE—Exodus 25:1-9)

Nothing in the Bible reveals more about true worship—how God wants to be worshipped—than the tabernacle. The importance of the tabernacle is revealed by the number of entire chapters devoted to its construction, the priesthood, offerings, and sacrifices. There are twelve chapters in *Exodus* (25-30 & 35-40), twelve in *Leviticus* (1-10, 16, 23), five in *Numbers* (8-9, 18, 28-29), and four in *Hebrews* (4-5, 8-9). That adds up to thirty-three chapters. In comparison, God devotes only two chapters to creation. The tabernacle is God's object lesson for true worship. We must understand the principles taught in the tabernacle to understand what words of Jesus in John 4:24?

NOTES

To understand **God's model for true worship**, let's begin with . . .

The Purposes of the Tabernacle

There are at least **three** purposes of the tabernacle . . .

1. It provided a sacred place to worship God. What does God say to Moses in Exodus 25:8?

Here God calls the tabernacle a *sanctuary* (MIQD• SH, mik-dawsh'), which means "a consecrated place" or "place of holiness." In our church building, we have a *sanctuary* that is used for worshipping God. That's why we don't allow our worship center to be used as a public building or civic auditorium. The word "auditorium" means a building, or hall, used for lectures, concerts, and other events. The place where we collectively worship God should be called a "worship center," or *sanctuary*, not an auditorium. Every time someone drives by and sees our worship center, I want them to know it is a sacred place to worship God.

2. It was a witness of God's presence. God tells Moses to make this *sanctuary* according to *the pattern of the tabernacle* and *the pattern of all the instruments thereof* He showed him on Mount Sinai (25:9). The word

tabernacle means “dwelling place.” In Numbers 17:8a, we find another name that clearly reveals this purpose for the tabernacle. What is it?

The *tabernacle* was to be a physical *witness* of God’s presence among His people. As we shall see later, every aspect of the tabernacle gives us a picture of Christ. What does John 1:14a tell us about *the Word*, Jesus?

The word translated *dwelt* (SK•NO• , skay-no´-o) means “tabernacled.” When Jesus was physically on earth, His body was the tabernacle of God.

3. It teaches how sinful people may worship a holy God. The tabernacle reveals how a relationship broken by sin can be restored. It reminds us of what truth in Ecclesiastes 7:20?

Therefore, if we want to worship God, we must first know what must be done about our sins. The seriousness of our sins is revealed in the sacrifices required at the tabernacle. To approach and worship God, two things are required: a blood sacrifice for our sins and a mediating priest. Today, both are available in Jesus Christ.

True worship requires an understanding of **the purposes of the tabernacle** and . . .

The Provisions for the Tabernacle

God also tells Moses exactly how to obtain the **provisions**, or materials, for constructing the tabernacle. God could have just spoken the word and the tabernacle would have gloriously floated down from heaven. But that is not how God does things. He tells Moses to tell the Israelites to bring an offering (Ex 25:2a). What does God require of the givers (25:2b)?

The offerings were to be of gold, silver, brass, dyed rams’ skins, shittim wood, oil, jewels, and other materials needed to construct the tabernacle (25:3-7). This is a wonderful example of how God’s house and ministry should still be funded today. Offerings from His people! God does not say, “Have a cake walk” or “Go out into the lost community and sell cookies or solicit money to build My house.” No, God says, “Take an offering from my people.” Therefore, an offering is taken to build the tabernacle. Based on just the amount of gold used in constructing the tabernacle and its furnishings, the



offering would have been in the tens of millions in today's dollars.

The procedure for obtaining the provisions is very simple. God says His people are to give from the *heart* (25:2). From the offering for the tabernacle until this day, the proper motive for giving back to God has always been from the *heart*. In 2 Corinthians 9:7, we find that we must decide how much to give, without regret or in response to pressure. Then, what does the last phrase of this verse tell us?

Where did the Israelites, who were slaves in Egypt, get all the valuable provisions they gave as offerings? The Lord had given them favor among the Egyptians. Therefore, when they left, the Egyptians gave them a huge fortune in gold, silver, and jewels (Ex 12:35-36).

The problem of God's house lacking needed provisions has never been because God's people don't have enough to give. Rather, it has always been a matter of the *heart*. Primarily, we forget what truth in Deuteronomy 8:18b?

Giving from the *heart* is a part of true worship. So, true worship requires understanding **the purposes of the tabernacle, the provisions for the tabernacle, and . . .**

The Pattern of the Tabernacle

The tabernacle is a replica, or copy, of something in heaven. God doesn't just tell Moses how to build the tabernacle; He shows him the original. Therefore, what does God tell Moses in Exodus 26:30?



For a basic understanding of the tabernacle, we need to take a quick tour of the grounds and building (see page 11). The tabernacle is enclosed by a white fence that is five cubits, or seven and a half feet, high. There is one gate, or door, on the east. Just inside the gate is a huge brass altar where animals are sacrificed and burned. As you approach the entrance to the tabernacle proper, there is a brass laver filled with water for the priests to wash their hands and feet.

After passing by the brazen altar and laver, we come to the tabernacle proper. It is divided into two sections. The first room is called the "Holy Place." Its walls are made of shittim wood and are covered with solid

gold. Three pieces of furniture are in this first room. On the north wall is the table of showbread (Ex 25:23-30). On the south wall is the *candlestick*, (lampstand), which is made of pure gold (37:24). Just before the veil, or curtain, that separates the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, is the altar of incense. God tells Moses to make it from shittim wood (30:1). Then, what does He tell Moses in Exodus 30:3?

Next is the heavy veil, or curtain, that hangs between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Inside the Holy of Holies is only one piece of furniture, the Ark of the Covenant (25:10-22), about which the movie “Raiders of the Lost Ark” was made. On top of the ark stand two cherubim angels facing each other. The ark is a wooden chest overlaid with pure gold. The lid is called the *mercy seat* and is a slab of pure gold.

Everything in the tabernacle is a replica of what God showed Moses on Mount Sinai. This is made clear by what Stephen says about the tabernacle just before he is stoned to death. What does he say (Acts 7:44b-c)?

What does Moses see that is to be the pattern for making the tabernacle? God’s throne room in heaven! It appears John also sees the original in the visions he has while banished by Rome to the Isle of Patmos. When he is caught up to heaven, John sees two things: the golden altar of incense and God’s throne (Rev. 8:3). The golden altar of incense he sees is the original for the replica in front of the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle.

Now, let’s look at a verse that causes chill bumps all over my body every time I read it. John sees God’s temple in heaven opened, and in the temple is *the ark of his testament* (Rev. 11:19a). Then, what does John write in Revelation 11:19b?

To understand **God’s model for true worship**, you must know **the purposes of the tabernacle**, **the provisions for the tabernacle**, and **the pattern of the tabernacle**.

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS

