

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church,
10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 20

EXODUS

CHAPTERS 25-27

INTRODUCTION

Moses was forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai. God had given him the Ten Commandments, the moral laws, which are universal. God also gave Moses judgements and laws that were related to the communal life of the Israelites as a nation. Still up in the mountain, God instructed Moses to build a tabernacle that He might dwell among His people. God not only instructed him to erect the tabernacle, He also gave him the blueprint of the tabernacle. The next three chapters, 25 to 27, describe the details of the various parts and furnishings of the tabernacle.

The pattern of the tabernacle, the materials and metals that were specified, even the different colours of the curtains, were chosen in order to convey a message to the people. The symbolic significance of every part of the tabernacle finds its spiritual application and fulfilment in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the tabernacle foreshadows the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This study of the tabernacle will excite us in that it will certainly enhance our praise and worship of the Lord our God.

OUTLINE

A. The Lord Instructed Moses To Build A Sanctuary So That He Might Dwell Among His People (25:1-9)

1. The Lord required a freewill offering from the children of Israel (25:1-7)
2. The purpose of the freewill offering was for the building of a sanctuary (25:8)
3. The Lord would give the pattern in which the tabernacle ought to be built (25:9)

B. The Ark And The Mercy Seat (25:10-22)

1. The Ark (25:10-16)
 - a. It would be made of shittim wood, measuring 2½ by 1½ by 1½ cubits (v.10)
 - b. It would be overlaid with pure gold within and without (v.11)
 - c. There were rings on the sides of the ark for the staves (vv.12-15)
 - d. The ark would contain the testimony of the Lord (v.16)
2. The Mercy Seat (25:17-22)

- a. It would be made of pure gold, measuring $2\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits (v.17)
- b. There would be two cherubims of gold at both ends of the mercy seat (vv.18-20)
- c. The mercy seat would be placed on top of the ark (v.21)
- d. The LORD would meet with them above the mercy seat between the cherubim (v.22)

C. The Table Of Bread (25:23-30)

- 1. It would be made of shittim wood, measuring 2 by 1 by $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits (25:23)
- 2. It would be overlaid with pure gold, and a crown of gold round it (25:24, 25)
- 3. There would be rings for two staves so that it could be carried (25:26-28)
- 4. The other utensils of dishes, spoons, and bowls would be made of pure gold (25:29)
- 5. The bread would be on the table always before the LORD (25:30)

D. The Lampstand (25:31-40)

- 1. It would be made of pure gold, its shaft, branches, bowls, knops and flowers (25:31)
- 2. There would be a centre shaft from which three branches extended upwards from two sides (25:32-36)

- 3. The seven lamps would be so made to give light (25:37)
- 4. The tongs and snuffdishes would be made of pure gold (25:38-40)

E. The Tabernacle And Its Coverings (26:1-37)

- 1. The Curtains of Fine Twined Linen (26:1-6)
 - a. There would be ten fine white linen curtains and only colours of blue, purple, and scarlet would be used with embroidery of cherubim (v.1)
 - b. The measurement of each curtain would be 28 by 4 cubits (v.2)
 - c. The ten curtains would be divided into two five-curtains a piece (vv.3-5)
 - d. The two five-curtains pieces would be held together by attaches made of gold to become one big piece covering the tabernacle (v.6)
- 2. The Curtains of Goats' Hair (26:7-13)
 - a. There would be eleven curtains covering the tabernacle on top of the fine linen covering (v.7)
 - b. The measurement of the curtain would be 30 by 4 cubits (v.8)
 - c. The eleven curtains would be divided into two lots of five and six, and then joined

together to make one large piece (vv.9-11)

- d. The overlapping two cubits of curtain would hang over the sides of the tabernacle (vv.12-13)

3. Two other curtains, one of rams' skin dyed red, and the other of badgers' skin would be made like the goats' hair curtains (26:14)

F. The Frames Of The Tabernacle (26:15-30)

1. There would be frames made of shittim wood standing up for the tabernacle (26:15)
2. The measurement of each frame would be 10 by 1½ cubits (26:16)
3. Twenty frames, held by tenons and sockets, would be on the south and the north sides (26:17-21)
4. Six frames would form the west side, plus two corner frames, making a total of eight frames (26:22-25)
5. The frames would be held upright together by bars, five bars on all the three sides (26:26-30)

G. The Veil And the Positions Of The Furniture (26:31-37)

1. The veil (26:31-32)
 - a. The veil would be made of fine twined linen with colours of blue, purple and scarlet, and with embroidery work of cherubim (v.31)

- b. The veil would hang from four pillars mad of shittim wood overlaid with gold, their hooks of gold and four sockets of silver (v.32)

2. The positions of the furniture (26:33-37)

- a. The veil divided the tabernacle into two compartments (26:33)

- b. The ark would be placed in the inner compartment, the most holy place (26:34)

- c. The table of bread would be placed in the north side of the holy place, and the lampstand exactly opposite on the other side (26:35)

- d. A hanging for the entrance of the tabernacle would be made from fine twined linen with colours of blue, purple, and scarlet wrought with embroidery (26:36)

- e. The entrance would hang from five pillars made of shittim wood overlaid with gold, their hooks gold, and their five sockets bronze (26:37)

H. The Brazen Altar (27:1-8)

1. An altar made of shittim wood measuring 5 by 5 by 3 cubits (27:1)
2. There would be horns at the four corners, and the altar would be overlaid with bronze (27:2)

3. There would be pans, shovels, basons, fleshhooks, firepans made of bronze (27:3)
4. There would be a grate of network (27:4-5)
 - a. The grate would be made of bronze with four rings in the four corners (v.4)
 - b. The grate would be placed in the brazen altar (v.5)
5. The grate could be carried with two staves inserted through rings on the sides of the altar (27:6-8)

I. The Courtyard Of The Tabernacle (27:9-19)

1. The south side (27:9, 10)
 - a. There would be hangings of fine twined linen which would be 100 cubits long (v.9)
 - b. The linen would be supported by twenty pillars with sockets made of bronze, and the hooks and fillets made of silver (v.10)
2. The north side would be the same as the south side (27:11)
3. The west side (27:12)
 - a. The west side with hangings would be 50 cubits long (v.12a)
 - b. They would be supported by ten pillars and their sockets (v.12b)
4. The east side (27:13-16)

- a. The east side would be 50 cubits (v.13)
- b. The hangings on each end would be 15 cubits supported by three pillars and their sockets (v.14, 15)
- c. The gate in the centre with hangings of blue, purple, scarlet, fine twined linen with embroidery work would be 20 cubits (v.16a)
- d. The hanging would be supported by four pillars with their sockets (16b)

J. Summary and Service (27:17-21)

1. The pillars round about the court would be filleted with silver, their hooks and sockets bronze (27:17)
2. The dimension of the courtyard would be 100 by 50 cubits and 5 cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets bronze (27:18)
3. All the vessels in all the service, and all the pins and those of the courtyard would be of bronze (27:19)
4. The children of Israel would bring pure olive oil for the lamp to burn (27:20)
5. Aaron and his sons would be required to serve the LORD in the holy place from evening to morning (27:21)

COMMENTARY

The Purpose of the Tabernacle

We have come to the section in Exodus in which God gave specific instructions to Moses to build a tabernacle that He might dwell among the people. God took forty days to spell out and explain concerning the building of the tabernacle and the rituals, and the priesthood. Chapters 25 to 31 provide the details and the specifications of the things connected with the tabernacle. Then in chapters 35 to 40, these instructions are almost exactly repeated when the people built the tabernacle and its furniture.

The LORD told Moses clearly to speak to the children of Israel that they make a freewill offering of materials to be used to build the tabernacle. Significant is the requirement that the gifts must be made willingly. It therefore rules out giving grudgingly or as a matter of duty or obligation. How gracious is the LORD God. He had saved them, protected and provided for them in their journey from Egypt to Sinai, and yet God asked gifts from His people who are to give, not of duty but out of a willing heart as an expression of their love and devotion to God. God could supernaturally provide all the materials for the building of the tabernacle. But He chose to do it by inviting the people to have a part in the building of the tabernacle.

The purpose of the tabernacle was that God might dwell among His people. The presence of God was

constantly felt by the people. God became the centre of their life, as we shall see later that the twelve tribes pitched their tents around the tabernacle, which was in the centre. The tabernacle became a place of worship in accordance to the way prescribed by God. It established the relationship between God and His people, a place of God revealing Himself and the people living out what God intended. The ultimate purpose of the tabernacle was to point to Jesus Christ, who would come to fulfil all the object lessons of the tabernacle.

The materials used were gold, silver and bronze (an alloy of copper and tin, not brass, which is an alloy of copper and zinc). The symbol of these metals are significant — royalty, service and judgement respectively. The colours are also symbolically meaningful — blue indicates heaven, purple royalty, scarlet blood, fine twined linen (white) purity. Goats' hair, rams' skin dyed red, and badgers' (dugong or sea cow) skins, and shittim wood all symbolically picture the humanity and passion of Christ. The oil and spices for making sweet incense, and the precious stones all describe the beauty of God's holiness, compassion and love.

The Furniture of the Tabernacle

In the Tabernacle, there were seven pieces of furniture altogether. Five of them are mentioned here, namely, in the order given: the Ark (25:10), the Mercy Seat (25:17), the Table of Bread (25:23), the Lampstand

(25:31), and the Brazen Altar (27:1). The two other pieces of furniture are introduced later. They are the Altar of Incense (30:1), and the Laver (30:18).

Observe that the Ark and the Mercy Seat are mentioned first. God explained that He would meet and commune with the people above the Mercy Seat between the cherubim. The spiritual significance of this order is that God came to man and provided man a way of approaching Him. It was the same in the Garden of Eden. When Adam sinned, he hid himself, and God came to look for him. In His loving kindness and tender mercies, God condescended to seek man. The Ark and the Mercy Seat which was fitted on top of the Ark, was placed in the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies (26:34).

The tabernacle proper was divided into two compartments by the veil. The outer part was called the Holy Place. The Table of Bread and the Lampstand were placed opposite to each other in this area — the Table on the north side, and the Lampstand on the south side (26:35). The priests only were allowed to eat the bread and must be eaten in the area. This indeed indicates the sustaining grace of God upon His people. The Lampstand provided light to the area. Symbolically, it speaks of the light of God's Word. We are reminded of what the Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples and the

multitude, "I am the Bread of life," and "I am the Light of the world."¹

The Tent

The tent or the tabernacle proper, as we know from above, was rectangular. The north and south sides had twenty boards each side held together, and the west side eight boards. So, the tent had three sides, north, south and west, and the measurement, 30 by 30 by 8 cubits (if one cubit equals 18 inches, then the measurement would be 45 by 45 by 12 feet)². Four curtains cover the tent. The first inner layer is the fine twined linen with embroidery of cherubims, with colours of blue, purple and scarlet. So from the inside of the tent, the design and colours could be seen. Then over this covering was the goats' hair curtain, followed by the rams' skin dyed red and finally the outer most covering was the badgers' skin³. As we have mentioned above, a veil made of fine twined linen

¹ John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

² Chapter 26:24 has been interpreted in various ways. It is best to take the two corner boards to have the same dimension of the other boards, that is 10 by 1½ cubits.

³ The Hebrew *tahas* is closely related to the Arabic *tukhas* or *duksash*, a name for a marine animal resembling the sea, more particularly the dugong or sea cow. This animal is often found among the coral rocks of the Red Sea (John J. Davis, p. 252).

with colours of blue, purple, and scarlet with embroidery work of cherubim hung from four pillars dividing the tent into two compartments — the Most Holy Place and the Holy Place.

The Brazen Altar

The brazen altar made of shittim wood overlaid with bronze, measuring five cubits square and three cubits high was the largest of the all the furniture. It was placed outside the tabernacle within the courtyard (see diagram). It was a place where the priests burnt the sacrifices brought by the people. It was a place that is symbolical of sacrifice and judgement.

The Courtyard

The courtyard was fenced by fine twined linen curtains (no embroidery) measuring 100 by 100 cubits on the north and south sides, and by 50 cubits on the west side. The curtains were held up by pillars. The height of the curtains was 5 cubits (27:18). The east side was special. On each side of the east side, the curtains measured only 15 cubits; so both sides totalled 30 cubits. This left an opening of 20 cubits which was called the gate. The gate was covered by curtains measuring 20 cubits with the same colours and embroidered work of cherubim. There was only one entrance into the courtyard of the tabernacle. As the height of the tent proper was higher than the curtains by 5 cubits, a person could see the top of the tent from the outside. But it was not a beautiful sight, because he saw the covering of dugong skin — without form, nor comeliness,

and beauty. Nothing much to attract the bystander. What a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only way to God. Outwardly, “he had no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him” (Isaiah 53:2).

SUMMARY

We stand amazed at the marvellous way in which God revealed Himself. It was God who came to seek man, as our Lord Jesus Christ declared that the Son of man came to seek and save those who are lost. God showed that He could be approached, but according to His prescribed way. There is only one way, as there was only one entrance into the Tabernacle. So, Christ is the only way to God. The fact that God commanded Moses to build a localised place for the worship of Him by the people, it is natural that today Christians gather together in a localised place to worship God corporately. It debunks the argument, often given by some Christians that one can worship God anywhere and it is not necessary to attend church. There is no Scriptural support for such thinking. On the contrary, it has always been the will of God that His people congregate together to worship, praise and adore Him. This in turn establishes fellowship among God's people, a vital activity of the life of a Christian.

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Exodus 25:1-22; Matthew 1:23; Revelation 21:1-4

TUESDAY: Exodus 25:23-40; John 6:33-35; 8:12

WEDNESDAY: Exodus 26:1-30; John 1:14, Ephesians 2:19-22

THURSDAY: Exodus 26:31-37; 27:1-8; 30:1-6, 18; Hebrews 9:11-15

FRIDAY: Exodus 27:9-21; Hebrews 9:1-10

Discussion Questions

1. How would the tabernacle and its furnishings be financed?

2. Why would an Israelite feel prompted to give materials for the building of the Tabernacle?

3. How would an offering be rejected?

4. What is the purpose of the tabernacle?

5. What is the symbolic significance of the Bread?

8. The tabernacle prefigured the true one in heaven. How does this fact enhance our understanding of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross?

6. What is the symbolic significance of the Lamp?

9. The veil separated the tabernacle proper into two compartments. What were these compartments? What were the furniture in these compartments?

7. Why should we have church sanctuaries today, if God does not dwell in a building now?

10. What difference do you see between the west side and the east side of the court?

11. How has this tabernacle plan enhance your worship of God in relation to His character, majesty, and deeds?

12. Do you see the outline of the cross formed by the positions of the ark, altar of incense, the table of bread, the candlestick, the laver, and the brazen altar? (See Plan of the Tabernacle Complex).
