

Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 3:59 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Exodus 26

"For we know that if our earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!" (2 Corinthians 5:1)

Remember last week, in Exodus 25, how Moses, after having spent 40 days and 40 nights with God on Mt. Sinai, brought back a "blueprint" of God's design, with detailed instructions, which the Sons of Israel were to follow "to a tee," in constructing a tabernacle, with all its furnishings, as a place where God would dwell with His people, and where the people could worship Him in accordance with a protocol only He could have conceived! It began with a call for the people to contribute, as they felt moved, to a vast array of supplies and materials needed to build the tabernacle, according to His plan (and which turned out to be more than enough)! The first article of furnishing mentioned for building--because of its importance--was an "ark of the covenant," to be placed in the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the tabernacle where God would appear for His people, and where an "atonement" for sin would take place once a year, on the Day of Atonement. The ark was to contain, among other things, the "testimony," or the two tablets of stone containing the Ten Commandments, and be covered by the "mercy seat," or lid, where the blood of a sacrifice was to be "poured out," and where God would appear in a cloud--in His "shekinah glory"--in between two overlooking cherubim, to make atonement for the sins of the people!

We also learned about two other furnishings for the tabernacle, which like everything else had to be made in strict conformance with the pattern shown to Moses on the mountain: the "table of showbread" and the "golden lampstand." Both were to be set in the Holy Place, just outside the Holy of Holies, and to require daily servicing by Aaron and his sons. The table of showbread, made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold, was to hold 12 loaves of bread, provided new every Sabbath, acknowledging how the 12 tribes of Israel were being sustained constantly under the watchful eye and care of the LORD. The golden lampstand, with its seven lamps, were to be trimmed and filled with oil every morning and burn continually "as a perpetual statute throughout their generations"!

But that was only the start of God's elaborate plan for the tabernacle, as we learned more about in last night's study of Exodus 26 concerning the "curtains," or covering of the tabernacle, and of the "boards" and basic framework that held it all together, as well as of the all-important "veil" that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, and then the "screen" for the doorway that led into the tabernacle itself (but only after another reminder that every part of the tabernacle had to be made in strict conformance to the plan Moses received from God on the mountain)!

So, you might wonder, what is an overall description of the contents and dimensions of the tabernacle, and its purpose? And why does Exodus devote so many words, and so much space, to exactly how the tabernacle was to be constructed? (Hint: It all may tell us something we need to know about God and His ways with His people!)

Well, to keep it as simple as possible, the tabernacle, overall, was to measure 10 "cubits" high, by 30 cubits long, and 10 cubits wide (or approximately 15 by 45 by 15 "feet," to put it more

discernible terms) and be divided into two distinct parts known as the Holy of Holies, and the Holy Place, separated by a "veil," through which only the priest could go, but only after all the proper preparations were made (which will be discussed in future lessons), and only on the Day of Atonement!

- The Holy of Holies was to be a 15-foot cube and house the "ark of the covenant," where God would appear in His "shekinah glory" between two overarching cherubim, gracing the altar, covered by the "mercy seat" on which the blood of the sacrifice would be shed, as the basis for the atonement!
- The Holy Place, adjacent to the Holy of Holies, was to be 15 feet wide, by 30 feet long, and 15 feet high, where the "table of showbread," the "golden lampstand" (known as the "Menorah"), and the "altar of incense" were to reside.
- Overlaying all this were to be four layers of "curtains" (as discussed in last night's lesson), resting on 48 "15-foot boards," standing upright and attached together with 96 "tenons" (or fasteners), anchored in 96 silver "sockets" and supported with bars of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, and rings of gold!
- The first of the four layers of covering was to be made of ten separate "curtains" totaling 252 square feet of "fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet material," with the image of cherubim woven into them, joined together with 100 blue loops and fifty golden clasps!
- Then a second layer of covering, made up of eleven curtains (and thus a bit larger), to be made of goats' hair, and joined together with 50 more loops and 50 bronze (not gold) clasps!
- Then a third layer of covering to be made with ram's skin, dyed red--and, finally, a fourth layer to be made of "porpoise skins"!
- Then the "veil" to be made of "fine twisted blue and purple and scarlet linen," with images of cherubim "embroidered" on it, to be hung on four pillars of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, and with hooks of gold, and sockets of silver!
- And, finally, a "screen" which served as the "front-door flap," at the entrance to the tabernacle--to be made of the same blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, supported with five pillars of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, with hoods of gold and sockets of bronze!

Whew! But we are not finished in trying to grasp the "blueprint" of God's design for the tabernacle! Outside the tabernacle, and surrounding it, was to be a courtyard where the "altar of burnt offering" and the "brazen laver of water" were to be located, where daily sacrifices were to be offered! All of which was to be enclosed by a rectangular "fence," 150 feet long, 75 feet wide (and, apparently, seven and a half feet high) to be made of fine "white" linen, supported by 56 pillars with sockets of bronze and hooks and rings of silver. The gate, on the east side, the only entrance into the courtyard, was to include a screen 30 feet wide and made of blue and purple and scarlet, and white, twisted linen and, like the rest of the tabernacle, require the work of a skilled craftsman!

Peter Enns, in his commentary on Exodus, sees the tabernacle "as nothing less than a return to a pre-Fall splendor, and so no wonder the writer of Exodus (and the writer of this summary) devotes so much space to its description"!

But how would it all be accomplished? Obviously, an overwhelming amount of supplies and materials would be required, but also the skill of many craftsmen! In Exodus 31:2-6, the LORD would tell Moses: "See, I have called Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of

Judah. I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for setting, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship. And behold, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill, that they may make all that I have commanded you!" Wow!

The God of all creation! The Designer of all things! The God of detail! The One who makes "everything beautiful in its time"! (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

The tabernacle pictures so many truths of Scripture, and applications for us today! Think of the cherubim, woven into the fabric of the coverings! John Sailhamer, writing for the Westminster Theological Journal, suggests it was intended to recall the theme of "paradise lost" by alluding to the cherubim who guarded the "tree of life," in Genesis 3:24--just as cherubim, in Exodus, guarded the ark of the covenant! Matthew Henry writes that it also reminded the Israelites that angels surrounded them!

But we know this is all just a "foreshadowing" of better things to come!

Matthew 27:51 talks about how the veil of the temple (after the tabernacle) would one day "be torn in two, from top to bottom, and the earth shaken, and rocks split," when Jesus, on the cross, would "cry out with a loud voice, and yield up His spirit"--giving us access directly to God! And so, Acts 7:48-50 says that, "...that the Most High does not dwell (any longer!) in houses made with human hands!"

The apostle Paul writes in Hebrews 10:19-23, "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our faith without wavering, for He who promised is faithful!"

And with the tabernacle plans, we are reminded too of Ephesians 4:16 and a "foreshadowing" of Christ as the "head of church, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love"!

Isn't it amazing that God had an eternal plan for the redemption of man, of which the tabernacle that we are learning about in Exodus is only a part!

And, men, just to think that this "God of all wonders" loves (even) us and has a "plan" for our lives! And that the "best is yet to come"! Eternal in the heavens!

Have a great week, men!

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