



Rice Memorial MBC

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Beginning of the Tabernacle

Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **November 24, 2013**

***Worship with us at 3201 Mary St until we rebuild our sanctuary at 802 W. 15th,
... We're just behind Kaufman's Lumber Company in Little Rock Arkansas...***

Exodus 40:16-21, 29-30, 34, 38

Introduction: This final chapter of Exodus records the erection and preliminary consecration of the Tabernacle, which henceforth would serve as the **visible presence** of God among His people. Amazingly, the construction and erection of this Tabernacle apparently occupied a period of only about **six months**; and its erection occurred on the first day of Nisan, or Abib, just exactly **a year** minus fifteen days from their coming out of Egypt. Think what a marvelous **two years** culminated for Moses upon this occasion. During that period, Moses had received the call from God to deliver Israel, confronted Pharaoh with God's commandment to "let my people go," executed according to God's commandments the Ten Plagues upon Egypt, led the nation across the Red Sea, came to Sinai and there received the Law, endured the rebellion of the people under Aaron in the matter of the Golden Calf, **interceded** again and again with God for the beloved nation, received the detailed instructions for the making of the Tabernacle, and had supervised its construction, and now established the Tabernacle itself as the center of the nation, leading the people in the worship of God and the keeping of the Covenant which, forever afterward, was to be the glory of Israel. When Moses had asked God for **a sign**, the Lord told him that he would "**come and worship God**" again in **this mountain** (Sinai); and in this chapter God fulfilled the promise, Moses himself being privileged to offer the first of the "daily sacrifices" in the sacred Tabernacle!

(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Exodus 40:1-3, And the LORD (Yahweh) spake unto Moses, saying, On the **first day** of the first month shalt thou set up the **Tabernacle** of the **tent** of the congregation. And thou shalt put therein the **ark** of the testimony, and cover the ark with the **vail**.

NOTE: It is generally supposed that the Israelites began the work of the tabernacle about the sixth month after they had left Egypt; and as the work was **finished** about the **end** of the **first year** of their exodus, (for it was set up the first day of the second year.) that therefore they had spent about **six months** in **making it**: so that the tabernacle was erected **one year** all but **fifteen** days after they had left Egypt. Such a building, with such a profusion of curious and costly workmanship, was never got up in so short a time. But it was the work of the Lord, and the people did service as unto the Lord; for **the people had a mind to work**.

(Source: The Adam Clarke Commentary classic.studylight.org/com/acc/)

Exodus 36:1-2, Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every **wise hearted man**, in whom the LORD put **wisdom** and **understanding** to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded.

And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart **stirred him up** to come unto the work to do it...

Exodus 40:16-19, Thus did Moses: according to All that the LORD (Yahweh) commanded him, so did he. And it came to pass in the **first month** in the **second year**, on the **first day** of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up. And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars. And he spread abroad the **tent** over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses.

NOTE: The design of the tabernacle was such that it could be set up and taken down rather quickly. Once the children of Israel left Mount Sinai, they followed the **pillar** of **cloud** and **fire**. Whenever these moved, they had to quickly pack up their own belongings and tents, take down the tabernacle, and follow the pillar. Whenever the **pillar stopped**, it stood over the place where the **tabernacle** was **to be set back up**. When the priests carrying the various parts of tabernacle arrived at that spot, it was reconstructed.

The first thing Moses did was put up the **framework**, which consisted of boards ten cubits long and one and one-half cubits wide standing side by side (Ex. 36:20-21). There were two sockets under each of them, and they were fastened to each other with two **TENONS** (vss. 22-24). (*TENON is defined, a projecting member left by cutting away the wood around it, and made to insert into a MORTISE [hollow place made in timber by the augur and chisel], and in this way secure together the parts of a frame. 1913 Webster's Dictionary*) The bars mentioned here were bars that held entire sides of the tabernacle together, with four shorter ones and the middle one going from end to end (vss. 31-33). The pillars were those upon which the hangings for the doors were placed.

The **tent** went over this structure and consisted of **ten** beautiful **curtains** fastened together in groups of five (Exodus 36:8-10). This was covered with eleven curtains made of **goats' hair** and another layer of curtains made of **rams' skins** dyed red (vss. 14-19). These layers made the tabernacle **weatherproof** and thus preserved the articles inside. The statements about Moses' undertaking of these functions finishes with "as the Lord commanded Moses" This statement was repeated after each step of the construction.) (Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series*)

Exodus 40:20-21, And he took and put the **testimony** into the **ark**, and set the **staves (bar for carrying)** on the ark, and put the **mercy seat** above upon the ark: And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the **vail** of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses.

NOTE: As soon as the building was erected, Moses put the **ark** of the **covenant** in its place inside the most holy place of the tabernacle (26:33-34). The "testimony" (40:20) refers to the **stone tablets** of the **Ten Commandments** that Moses had been given by God (25:16). These were placed inside the ark and, according to Hebrews 9:4, so were a pot of **manna** and **Aaron's rod** that had budded after the conflict with Korah and his followers (Num. 17).

Hebrews 9:1-4, Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the **Holiest of all**; Which had the golden censer, and the **ark** of the **covenant** overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had **manna**, and **Aaron's rod** that budded, and the tables of the covenant...

The ark of the covenant had been made with **rings** on its corners for the insertion of **poles** used by the priests to carry it (Exodus 37:3-5). These were put in place at this time and were thus always ready for use. God was very specific about carrying the ark in this

way. When it was carried on a cart in David's time, Uzzah lost his life for grabbing hold of it when it jostled (2 Sam. 6:2-7). On the second attempt to move it, David insisted it be done properly, and it became a joyous occasion (vss. 12-13).

God had also instructed Moses to have a **mercy seat** built to place on top of the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:17-22). It had cherubim on it, with their wings covering it, forming a place where God would meet with the high priest. This **mercy seat** was also put into place as part of Moses' setting-up process. Since the place of the ark was such a **sacred** spot, God later instructed Moses that only the high priest could enter there – and only ONCE a year when he made **atonement** for the children of Israel.

In order to ensure that nobody else entered the direct presence of God, a **veil** was hung to partition off the **most holy place** from **the holy place**. Other priests could enter the tabernacle, but this veil was a dividing curtain to keep them from going further.

(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series*)

Hebrews 9:6-12, Now when these things were thus ordained, the **priests** went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the **high priest** alone once every year, **not without blood**, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the **holiest of all** was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure (representative) for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the **conscience**; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

But **Christ** being come an **high priest** of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but **by his own blood** he entered in ONCE into the **holy place**, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Exodus 40:22-29, And he put the **table** in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the **vail**. And he set the **bread** in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. And he put the **candlestick** in the tent of the congregation, over against the **table**, on the side of the tabernacle southward. And he lighted the **lamps** before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he put the golden **altar** in the tent of the congregation before the vail: And he burnt **sweet incense** thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he set up the **hanging** at the door of the tabernacle. And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the **burnt offering** and the **meat offering**; as the LORD commanded Moses.

NOTE: Two large articles were placed outside the tabernacle. The tabernacle and these articles were inside a **courtyard** that measured one hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide, with the longer sides on the north and south, and with an **entryway** on the shorter side on the **east**. The linen sides of the court were five cubits high (about seven and one half feet) and hung on pillars (columns) with silver hooks (38:2-17), with twenty pillars on the long side and ten on the short.

"The whole arrangement of the outer court and in particular the placement of the altar of sacrifice and the laver speak pointedly of man's approach to God. The tabernacle is a fitting example of how God provided for man's **sin** and **guilt** in the Old Testament economy" (Davis). The first article encountered as one entered the courtyard was the large, **square altar** to be used by the people. It was built with acacia wood and covered with bronze (38:1-7).

This altar was usually known as the **altar** of **burnt offering** (Lev. 4:7, 10, 18). It was approximately seven and one half feet square and four and one-half feet high (assuming that a cubit was about 18 inches). It had a **grate** halfway up on the inside on which sacrificed **animals** were laid, and it had rings on its four corners for carrying. Acacia-wood

poles overlaid with bronze were used for moving this altar. This was the **first item** Moses put in place outside the tabernacle and within the courtyard. After Moses had put it in place, he offered a **burnt offering** and a **grain offering** according to how he had been instructed earlier.

(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator*, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series)

Exodus 40:30-33, And he set the **laver (washbowl)** between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. And Moses and Aaron and his sons **washed** their **hands** and their **feet** thereat: When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he reared up the **court** round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the **court gate**. So Moses finished the work.

NOTE: The other item that was important in the sacrificial system was the big **round laver**, or basin, in which the priests washed regularly. It was made from the bronze mirrors of the ladies who came regularly to the tabernacle (38:8). It was located between the altar of burnt offering and the tent tabernacle (30:18), and it was to be filled with water. The priest were to wash their hands and feet **every time** they entered the tabernacle or stepped up to the altar to offer a sacrifice.

This was so important that God said, "When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they **shall wash with water, that they die not**; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord" (Exodus 30:20)
(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator*, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series)

Exodus 40:34-35, Then a **cloud** covered the tent of the congregation, and the **glory** of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was **not able to enter** into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

NOTE: ...this cloud was the same with the pillar of cloud that went before the Israelites, as soon almost as they came out of Egypt; and led them through the Red sea, and conducted them to Mount Sinai; only it now appeared in a different form, **not erect** as a **pillar**, but more **expanded**, so as to cover the tabernacle without...

(Source: biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/)

NOTE: How this was manifested we cannot tell; it was probably by some light or **brightness** which was insufferable to the sight, for Moses himself could not enter in because of the cloud and the glory, Exodus 40:35. Precisely the same happened when Solomon had dedicated his temple; for it is said that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests **could not stand** to minister because of the cloud; for the **glory** of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord; 1 Kings 8:10, 11.

...And there is reason to believe that this tabernacle was pitched in the **centre** of the camp, all the twelve tribes pitching their different tents in a certain order around it.

(Source: *The Adam Clarke Commentary* classic.studylight.org/com/acc/)

Exodus 40:36-38, And when the **cloud** was **taken up** from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the **cloud** of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and **fire** was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

NOTE: ...(from Ex 13:21 explaining the cloud) It is generally thought that this miraculous guidance of God's people by means of the cloud and the pillar by day and night continued throughout the period of the **wilderness sojourn**. The true interpretation of them must hail these as "visible evidences of God's protective care." The Scriptures state that the **manna ceased** upon their entry into Canaan, and it is reasonable to suppose that the same occasion was that of the **removal** of the "**fiery, cloudy pillar**."

(Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament* classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)