

Exodus 39-40 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Outline For Exodus

- I. The Exodus • Chs. 1-13:16
- II. The Journey to Sinai • Chs. 13:17-40:38
 - A.-F.
 - G. *At Mt. Sinai • 20-40*
 - 1.-26.
 - 27. *35:4-40:39 – Israel's building project • the Tabernacle*
 - f. 36:8-38:31 – construction of the tabernacle ^{^^^}
 - 10) 38:21-31 – inventory of materials used

²¹ This is the inventory of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the Testimony, which was counted according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.

Moses ordered a careful accounting of the materials used in the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings.

He appointed Ithamar, the son of Aaron, to act as the accountant and to perform the audit.

Moses wanted to make sure that the work on the tabernacle was a holy work, and that the vast sum offered up by the people was not siphoned off by special interests or dishonest workers. So, careful records were kept. The offerings were inventoried and then there was an accounting of all the materials used in the manufacture of the tabernacle and its service.

²² Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD had commanded Moses. ²³ And with him was Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and designer, a weaver of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and of fine linen.

These two men are described in earlier verses as being the leaders in the work of the construction of the tabernacle.

Bezalel was the chief, Aholiab was his assistant.

While the design and pattern of the tabernacle was something given by God, the execution of the design would require a lot of interpretation – much as today, an architect's drawings require a lot of interpretation on the part of the general contractor as he gives direction to the subs who execute the construction.

Bezalel was anointed by God to take the plans given him by Moses, and turn them into reality.

He was the one who directed the workers in how to bring the tabernacle into reality.

At his side was Aholiab, who was specifically called and gifted to work out the *details of decoration* on the tabernacle and its furnishings.

Bezalel could have confidence in entrusting Aholiab and those he oversaw, that they would faithfully accomplish those specific tasks assigned to them.

²⁴ All the gold that was used in all the work of the holy *place*, that is, the gold of the offering, was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. ²⁵ And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation was one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: ²⁶ a bekah for each man (*that is*, half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone included in the numbering from twenty years old and above, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty *men*. ²⁷ And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket. ²⁸ Then from the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five *shekels* he made hooks for the pillars, overlaid their capitals, and made bands for them. ²⁹ The offering of bronze was seventy talents and two thousand four hundred shekels. ³⁰ And with it

he made the sockets for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, the bronze altar, the bronze grating for it, and all the utensils for the altar, ³¹ the sockets for the court all around, the bases for the court gate, all the pegs for the tabernacle, and all the pegs for the court all around.

The total weight of all these materials was about 7½ tons! ^[1] ^^^

Their value, at today's rates, would equal more than \$14 million. ^[2]

Critics have scoffed at the Exodus story at this point, saying that a bunch of ex-slaves would not have possessed this kind of wealth or these types and abundance of materials.

That the critics forget is that in Exodus 12:36 we're told when the children of Israel made ready to leave Egypt after the 10th plague, the Egyptians loaded them up with riches and wealth as a kind of back-wages for all the years of slavery they had served.

Indeed, it says the Hebrews virtually *plundered* the Egyptians, though what the Egyptians gave was willing on their part.

A good portion of that wealth was used in the construction of the tabernacle. ^^^

g. 39:1-31 – the priests' regalia

As we did with the construction of the tabernacle last Wednesday, we're not going to read this chapter verse by verse because it is a virtual duplicate to ch. 28 which we've already examined verse by verse.

In ch. 28, Moses was given the design and plans for the priests' garments. Here in ch. 39 we read about them being made.

1) 39:1-7 – the ephod

2) 39:8-21 – the breastplate

3) 39:22-26 – the robe

4) 39:27-31 – the tunics, turbans, sashes, the high priest's crown

h. 39:32-43 – the work completed

³² Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished. And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. ³³ And they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; ³⁴ the covering of ram skins dyed red, the covering of badger skins, and the veil of the covering; ³⁵ the ark of the Testimony with its poles, and the mercy seat; ³⁶ the table, all its utensils, and the showbread; ³⁷ the pure *gold* lampstand with its lamps (the lamps set in order), all its utensils, and the oil for light; ³⁸ the gold altar, the anointing oil, and the sweet incense; the screen for the tabernacle door; ³⁹ the bronze altar, its grate of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the laver with its base; ⁴⁰ the hangings of the court, its pillars and its sockets, the screen for the court gate, its cords, and its pegs; all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; ⁴¹ and the garments of ministry, to minister in the holy *place*: the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister as priests. ⁴² According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. ⁴³ Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses blessed them.

What's amazing about this is the speed with which they accomplished the work.

Exodus 19:1 tells us they arrived at Mt. Sinai in the 3rd month after the Exodus.

Exodus 40:2 tells us they set up the tabernacle on the 1st day of the 1st month of the second year.

Subtract the two periods of 40 days Moses spent on the mount, along with the intervening days between them and then his communication to the nation of all the words of the

Lord, and this means they accomplished the task of constructing the tabernacle in under 6 months.

Not bad for a nomadic people who took raw materials and constructed a magnificent and highly detailed sanctuary. ^^

i. 40:1-33 – the Tabernacle erected & its service installed

1) 40:1-15 – God’s instructions

¹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ² “On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. ³ You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and partition off the ark with the veil. ⁴ You shall bring in the table and arrange the things that are to be set in order on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and light its lamps. ⁵ You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. ⁶ Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. ⁷ And you shall set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. ⁸ You shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen at the court gate. ⁹ “And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy. ¹⁰ You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy. ¹¹ And you shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it.

The oil with which Moses would anoint the tabernacle and all its furnishings was a special oil described in ch. 30; it was to be used ONLY for this purpose, of anointing the tabernacle and for the lights of the golden lampstand.

Moses was to go around to all the parts of the tabernacle, from the outer fence, all the way into the holiest of all, spattering this holy oil on each and every part of the tabernacle.

The anointing oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

And just as the tabernacle is a living picture of the person and work of the Messiah, the oil speaks of the fact that the Messiah would be anointed with the Spirit and would fulfill His office through the power of the Spirit.

Actually, the very word “Messiah” means “anointed one.”

As we study deeper into the types and symbols of the Bible, we discover that not only is the Tabernacle a picture of Jesus Christ, by virtue of our faith in and identity with Him, the tabernacle comes to symbolize us.

Like the tabernacle, we may not be too attractive from the outside, but the presence of God dwells within.

And as the tabernacle was anointed with the holy oil, we’re to live under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, setting us apart from the world to the special purposes and use of God, shining the light of His truth.

¹² “Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. ¹³ You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. ¹⁴ And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. ¹⁵ You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.”

Once the tabernacle was set up and anointed, then it was time to inaugurate the service of the priests.

This would begin with Moses bringing them before the door to the central tabernacle, and washing them from the laver, putting their special garments on them, and then anointing them with the holy oil.

The writer to the Hebrews makes it clear that all of this was but a foreshadowing of the priesthood and

service of Jesus Christ who came to serve in the real temple – the one in heaven, of which the one on earth was merely a temporary model. (Hebrews 8) ^^^

The service He offered, foreshadowed by Aaron and his sons, was the real and ultimate work which forever atones for our sins and makes a way for us into the presence of God.

2) 40:16-33 – Moses' compliance

[Picture of the tabernacle]

16 Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did. 17 And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up. 18 So Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and raised up its pillars. 19 And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[Next picture]

20 He took the Testimony and put it into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. 21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 22 He put the table in the tabernacle of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil; 23 and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 24 He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; 25 and he lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 26 He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil; 27 and he burned sweet incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 28 He hung up the screen at the door of the tabernacle. 29 And he put the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 30 He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing; 31 and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet with water from it. 32 Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 33 And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

So, it's all set up; That which had been so long anticipated is now complete.

3) 40:34-38 – God's glorious presence comes

[Picture of tabernacle]

34 Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

The manifestation of God's presence, which was in the form of a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, moved from the edge of the camp to hover over the tabernacle.

Inside the tabernacle the Shekinah, the bright cloud of God's presence settled between the cherubim, above the mercy seat over the ark.

This glory was so strong, no one, including Moses could enter the tabernacle.

36 Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. 37 But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all

the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

Throughout the next 39 years, the children of Israel took their direction about when to travel and when to stay put based on the action of the cloud of God's presence.

When it was time to stay put, the pillar rested on top of the tabernacle.

But when it was time to move, the pillar would lift and move to the edge of the camp.

CONCLUSION

The life of faith is a life of following the Lord's leading.

It has seasons of staying put, and season of change when the Lord is calling us to journey with Him.

That journey doesn't necessarily mean changing one's geographical location.

The life of faith is more about a *journey of the soul*, from the fallenness and brokenness that marked our lives BC, to the place of wholeness and redemption God intends for *all* His sons and daughters to know.

The longer I've walked with the Lord, the more I've come to see that the life of faith tends to progress, not in a steady incline, but like a set of stairs.

We go for long periods of time where it doesn't seem like much is happening.

In fact, it seems almost like our walk has slowed its pace.

Our relationship with the Lord seems at times to almost become stale.

But then, we're faced some great challenge or some new opportunity, and we take a huge step up in our knowledge of and experience with God.

Such steps up are usually followed by another period of seeming inaction in terms of the things of the Spirit.

Actually, it is during these times that the Spirit is planting and watering the seeds of truth in us that will eventually burst forth in another step up.

Through it all, we need to stay sensitive to the voice of the Spirit, ready to move when He says it's time.

Just as the children of Israel would walk out their tent door and see the cloud of God's presence lifting from above the tabernacle and moving to the edge of the camp, signaling it was time to strike their tent and press on to a new place, so we must be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit telling us it's time to launch into new depths of our experience with God..

But when it's time to rest and put down some roots deeply into the quiet daily work of the Spirit, then we need to be faithful to do *that* and not always be looking for some new thing to do or place to go.

The life of faith is just that – a daily looking t the Lord for direction.

“Today Lord, are you calling me to move, or to stand still?”

[1] 1 talent = 75 lbs. / 1 shekel = 2/5's ounce. Gold = 2193 lbs., Silver = 7544 lbs., Bronze = 5310 lbs.

[2] Oct. 1, 2003 – Gold is \$385 /ounce; Silver is \$5.12/ounce and the estimate on bronze is \$4/lb.