

EXODUS

Lesson 25 - Chapter 25

Last week we ended by discussing the connection between the symbols of the tribes of Israel, and how these tribes were arranged into divisions and placed in a precise pecking order surrounding the Wilderness Tabernacle, with the strange spiritual creatures the Bible sometimes calls Living Beings who surround God's heavenly throne. And we saw that the 12 tribes of Israel were directed by God to be organized into 4 divisions of 3 tribes each, and one of the tribes of each division was designated as the leader of that division. Further, the 4 divisions were to occupy a certain area outside of the Tabernacle as defined by points on the compass: East, West, North, and South.

The symbols of the 4 leader tribes were a Lion, an Ox (or Bull), an Eagle, and a man.

When we examined Ezekiel and Revelation, lo and behold we're told that these Living Beings who guarded Yehoveh's heavenly throne, and went with God wherever He went, had 4 faces: a Lion, and Ox, an Eagle, and a man.

Therefore we see that the REASON Israel was to encamp the way they did in conjunction with the Wilderness Tabernacle was so that it followed after the eternal pattern of the Heavenly Throne Room.

And this is a wonderful example of the Reality of Duality, whereby every spiritual principle has a physical, earthly counterpart.....and vice versa.

Let's read Exodus chapter 25 and see the beginning instructions for the construction of the Wilderness Tabernacle: God's earthly dwelling place.

READ EXODUS CHAPTER 25 all

Notice something interesting: BEFORE the blueprint of the Tabernacle is given, we're first given the construction details of several of the pieces of sacred furniture and sacrificial instruments. So the instructions regarding the building of the Tabernacle begin, in essence, from the inside and work their way outward. Yehoveh's instructions begin with the holiest (the Ark), then next move to the holy (the Menorah, the Table of Shewbread, and the Altar of Incense), and finally move out of the sanctuary into the area of humanity, the courtyard, where the sacrificial altar is located. We'll examine all of this in detail.

In vs.1, God tells Moses that He wants Moses to collect the materials needed for the Tabernacle from the Israelite people but ONLY from those who are willing to give without being coerced. This is to be an offering, a contribution. Nothing is to be given for any other reason than the person WANTS to give it. Notice that there is no penalty, nor is there to be any peer pressure or guilt applied to the people of Israel to give. There is no grand speech by Moses or Yehoveh that has been left to us as a model, to start the Building Fund. The need is stated, and then the giving is either from the people's hearts or not at all. However, the Tabernacle is for the benefit of the entire community of Israel, so it is reasonably expected that all will contribute to one level or another.

In Hebrew thinking there is more than one kind of offering; this particular kind of offering is called a **terumah**, which is sometimes translated as a **heave offering**. It has the sense of being a contribution; that is, the giver is contributing to a need, or to a common cause. This strange sounding term, "heave offering", is actually descriptive of the WAY the offering was presented to God. By ritual tradition the offering was literally raised up above the shoulder by the priest and moved about in a motion like one was "heaving", underhanded, a bag of grain. And this kind of offering, this **terumah**, was NOT a **sacrifice** per se, because sacrifices were not only REQUIRED actions in order to remediate some violation of the law, or complete some type of celebration or covenant ritual, but most (though not all) sacrifices were burned up. Sacrifices REQUIRED the giving of an animal, or grain, or wine, or money, according to some legally prescribed amount and particular kind of sacrifice. The **terumah** had an element of freewill.

I could easily turn this into a lesson about our giving, or tithing.....but I think I'll resist and just let your Pastors, who are much better trained on such matters, to deal with that. Instead, I'll say this: I think we need to remember that all attempts by Church authorities to characterize our giving, our tithing, as kind of NT version of the OT sacrificial system is simply misguided and not at all Biblically supported. Sacrificing is sacrificing, and an offering is an offering; they are entirely different in purpose and nature. And Yeshua has already satisfied every requirement of the Torah's sacrificial system, once and for all, so our giving, or tithing, cannot be classified as a sacrifice. Rather the God-principle about our giving is set down for us right here in the first verse of Exodus 25: it is equivalent to the freewill **heave offering**.....the **terumah**. We either give for a common cause with a joyful heart, freely, out of gratitude for what Yehoveh has done for us (because we recognize the need and our duty to contribute) or we should not do it at all. But the type of giving the Church does is not in the realm of sacrifice whatsoever.....it's a privilege, a duty, and an act of the conscience.

Before we read about the construction and blueprint of the Tabernacle, which can admittedly get a little tedious, I would like to show you a half-hour video, which better illustrates the pattern of the Tabernacle and the materials used, its implements and its furniture, and where they were placed. I think once you have **that** picture in your mind, it will be more understandable as we read about it.

PLAY VIDEO: "THE TABERNACLE"

Produced by Entertainment for Eternity
www.visionvideo.com

AFTER VIDEO HAS BEEN SHOWN

Continuing with Chapter 25

I hope the video you saw put some of the pieces of the Tabernacle into place. Today, we're going to be looking at those individual pieces of furniture that are far more than decoration.

Please note as we proceed that the construction materials used for the Tabernacle are grouped into seven categories: metals, dyed yarns, fabrics, timber, oil, spices, and gemstones. As Nahum Sarna (a wonderful Torah scholar) has noted, there is a very interesting feature about some of the fabrics that will be used because at times these fabrics consist of a mixture of wool and linen. That may not mean much to you now, but it will as we study Leviticus. The reason is that such a fabric mixture is usually prohibited; in Hebrew that kind of mixture of two kinds of material to make a piece of cloth is called **sha'atnez**. Clothing, for example, is generally not to be made of material of this kind of mixed fibers. Yet we'll find that the veil that separates the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Sanctuary, the curtain at the entry into the Tent Sanctuary, even parts of the High Priest's ritual clothing are ALL **required** to be made of this same mixture (this **sha'atnez**) that is otherwise forbidden.

What we learn from this is that certain things are reserved for the most holy, as designated by Yehoveh; and its use outside of that context is not allowed. Therefore there is nothing inherently unholy or impure about mixed fabrics. That is, the weaving together of linen and wool doesn't create some kind of magical interaction such that the resulting fabric becomes something altogether different or perverse. This understanding is so key to correctly comprehending the principles behind everything from kosher versus impure foods, to the designation of clean versus unclean animals. Because it is a mistake to think that any food or animal has some type of inborn, systematic holiness while another food or animal has some type of inborn, systematic impurity in it. Rather, in general it has to do with God's sovereign determination and inscrutable decisions about what and how ritual and worship before Him is to occur; it's really about that simple.

Before we start examining the Tabernacle's furnishings I want to highlight verse 9 of chapter 25: ***"You are to make it according to everything I show you....the design of the Tabernacle and the design of the furnishings...."***

This was Yehoveh talking to Moses **during** Moses' 40 days on the top of Mt. Sinai. Moses, at this point in Chapter 25, has not yet come back down to the people. Now many versions will speak this verse as "making it according to the pattern I show you", and that is certainly accurate. But, the question is, of course, what pattern is it that God is showing Moses? Has Yehoveh rolled out a blueprint on a papyrus scroll and is showing Moses the finer details of an earthly tent? No.....Yehoveh is giving Moses a tour of God's heavenly dwelling place. Remember, tabernacle (in Hebrew, **Mishkan**) is just an expression MEANING dwelling place. The pattern Moses was to follow to build the Wilderness Tabernacle was God's **spiritual**

tabernacle, His throne room, His dwelling place (which all refer to the same thing) IN HEAVEN. Moses' vision of the spiritual Tabernacle was to be transformed into a working model, a copy, but developed in the physical realm. Now.....is this just nice sounding allegory or theory on my part, or is there more evidence that the heavenly was indeed the pattern being talked about here?

Listen to Hebrews 8:5 ***“But what they are serving is only a copy and a shadow of the heavenly original; for when Moses was about to erect the Tent (the Tabernacle), God warned him, ‘see to it that you make everything according to the pattern you were shown on the mountain’”.***

Hebrews 8 and 9 spends some time making comparisons between the heavenly and the earthly, using the Tabernacle and the sacrificial system to make its point. But these same chapters also point out a principle that can get easily flip-flopped, or just kind of by-passed in our minds, and it is this: the physical is, by nature, INFERIOR to the spiritual. That is, what exists in the spirit world is far superior in its capabilities and its purity than what is possible in the physical world. For instance, the Tabernacle and all its services while real and God ordained, are but copies.....inferior copies.....of the real, original Heavenly Tabernacle (which, of course, existed **before**, and then simultaneously with, the earthly Tabernacle). The Bible will use the term “shadows” to compare the earthly to the heavenly.....as in ***it was a SHADOW of things to come***....when describing many of the elements of the Tabernacle, the prophecies, and the Law. It's referring to the fact that COMPARED to the spiritual original, the physical copy simply can't match up, it can't provide the depth of reality that the real thing can. Leonardo DaVinci can paint a breathtaking picture of Mt. Everest perhaps as no other ever could; but it can never compare with the **real** Mt. Everest.....the painting is but a shadow of the real thing. The physical world is very limiting, because it is governed by the laws of physics and contained within a universe of space and time. The Spiritual operates OUTSIDE of those limitations and laws.

So **every** element of the Tabernacle.....it's rooms, its materials, its design, its furniture, the sacrificial system, EVERYTHING.....was patterned after the Heavenly original, and looked **forward** towards the time when, through Messiah, mankind would be able to experience the limitless spiritual reality of its meaning, instead of the severely limited physical copies.

Now let's look at some of the awesome connections and symbolism, of a general nature, about the Tabernacle. First, notice how it was laid out in the same way that the geographical area of Mt. Sinai was laid out. That is, the mountain and the Tabernacle were divided into 3 zones of varying degrees of holiness. The mountain was holy....all of it. There was a stone fence, a boundary marker, at the base of the mountain that separated the holy mountain from the valley floor below; the holy area from the area the people could congregate. The entirety of Mt. Sinai equated to the Tabernacle's Sanctuary. And, the Sanctuary consisted of two connected rooms: the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies.

The summit of Mt. Sinai was where the Spirit of God rested, up there in the cloud that burned like a raging fire. And, only ONE person was allowed to come into that area, and ONLY when summoned by Yehoveh: Moses. The summit was the equivalent of the Holy of Holies, whereby

only the High Priest could enter.....no one else....and then only one day a year, a specific day ordained by God (Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement).

The mountain's slope was equivalent to the Holy Place in the Tent Sanctuary. The slope of Mt. Sinai was where God called Moses, the 70 Elders (people's representatives), plus Aaron and his two sons, to come and have the covenant feast, the covenant meal, before Him. They had to come over the barrier line that separated the holy from everything else.... that stone fence which, up to now, the people could not cross. But, because of the sacrifice on the altar, which sealed the covenant, and the blood of that sacrificed animal which was sprinkled on the people and therefore ceremonially atoned for, and covered, their sin, God now allowed these 74 people, who represented all Israel (Moses, Aaron, Nadav, Avihu, and 70 Elders) to come up to the Holy Mountain.....however not to the summit, not to the Holy of Holies; only to the mountain slope, the Holy Place, a zone of slightly less holiness.

The valley floor side of the rock fence barrier was where the Hebrew people could congregate; it was the zone of humanity, but **only** for the set-apart people; only for people who are redeemed. It's also where God instructed Moses to build a stone Altar on which the sacrifices to seal the Mosaic Covenant were to be made. This valley floor area was equivalent to the Outer Court of the Tabernacle where the sacrificial bronze Altar was to be built, and where the redeemed people of God could come to offer their sacrifices.

So we see this "sameness" of pattern in every place that God dwells: His Heavenly tabernacle was the model for every one of His earthly dwelling places starting with the Garden of Eden, then Mt. Sinai, then the Wilderness Tabernacle, and then it's replacement the Temple.

Let me go off on a bit of a tangent to show you another fascinating connection: 400 years earlier, Yehoveh brought the infant tribe of Israel from Canaan **into** Egypt in order to survive a famine; Israel went on to live and multiply greatly into a huge nation there. When Joseph, favored son of Jacob, was the governor of Egypt and Jacob moved his entire clan to Egypt at Joseph's invitation to begin anew, do you recall how many people made up the entire clan of Israel? Counting Joseph and his family, precisely 74.....the exact same number of Israelites that God called to come up to His Holy Mountain to consecrate another new beginning for Israel, this time as a full-fledged set-apart nation for Him. Now be aware: there were definitely MORE than 74 Israelites that journeyed from Canaan down into Egypt. Exactly how many came we don't know. But we do know that some time before Israel moved to Egypt there was at least one instance in which a sizeable number of people were added to Jacob's nation when, at Shechem, Jacob's sons led a raid of revenge on that city's inhabitants (in revenge for the King's son raping Dinah). Those sons killed all the males inside Shechem and took all the women and children as slaves. Since this was just standard operating procedure for all Middle Eastern cultures of that day, it is likely that other similar incidents occurred (perhaps not on quite as grand scale) in which individuals were captured in order to increase the size of the fledgling Israelite nation. The 74 Israelites spoken of as coming to Egypt represented the entire nation that **entered** Egypt, just as the 74 Israelites that God called to come up to His mountain represented the Israelite nation that **left** Egypt.

Moses erected 12 standing stones, 12 monuments, at the base of Mt. Sinai to represent the

12 tribes of Israel before God. Accordingly, God instructed that there be a table in the Tabernacle with 12 loaves of Showbread on it at all times, representing the 12 tribes of Israel before Him inside the Tabernacle. Inside the 2 separate rooms of the Sanctuary, the Holy Place and Holy of Holies, all the fixtures were made of Gold, which symbolizes holiness and purity. Outside of the Sanctuary, in the Outer Court, all the fixtures were made of Bronze and less valuable metals.

Now, let me mention one more thing: as you saw from that video, and as you have seen and will see from the Scriptures, the Tabernacle contained NO images of Yehoveh; the religion of Yehoveh was to be an image-less religion. The 2nd of the 10 Commandments made it VERY clear that God wanted NO images of His Person to be made. The religion of the Hebrews was the first, and to the best of my knowledge along with its offshoot, Christianity, remains the only religion in which it's god says NO images of Him are to be made. We need to think long and hard about this and our penchant for images and symbols.

Next week we'll examine the very first item God instructed to be made from the contributions, the **terumah**, of the people: the Ark of the Covenant.