

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS

BIBLE TEXT: Exodus 25:8; 26:1-37; 27:9-21; 40:1-38

LESSON 70 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 25:8 ⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

Exodus 26:1-37 ¹ Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle *with* ten curtains *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: *with* cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.

² The length of one curtain *shall be* eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure.

³ The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and *other* five curtains *shall be* coupled one to another.

⁴ And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the second.

⁵ Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that *is* in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another.

⁶ And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle.

⁷ And thou shalt make curtains *of* goats' *hair* to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make.

⁸ The length of one curtain *shall be* thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains *shall be all of* one measure.

⁹ And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle.

¹⁰ And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain *that is* outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second.

¹¹ And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one.

¹² And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle.

¹³ And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it.

¹⁴ And thou shalt make a covering for the tent *of* rams' skins dyed red, and a covering above *of*

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Instructions Given for the Tabernacle

An important part of the Law that God gave Moses while he was in the mount was instructions in detail for the building of a house of worship to be used by the Children of Israel while they were in the wilderness.

God is holy, and He will not meet with unholy people in an unholy place. Therefore He told Moses to build the Tabernacle very carefully according to the instructions He would give him, and consecrate and hallow it so God could meet the people there. He also told Moses what the Israelites must do to purify themselves when they came to the Tabernacle to worship.

The World a Setting for God's Plan

People who do not believe the Word of God argue about how our universe and the inhabitants of the world came into existence; and thousands of books have been written stating man's theories of our beginnings. But the fact of the creation of the world for a place for man to live his natural life is of small importance compared with God's plan of salvation to prepare *us* for eternal life.

The whole story of the Creation is given in two chapters of the Bible; but when we come to the study of the Tabernacle we find six chapters devoted to instructions for its building, and six more that tell us that thus was it made. And the entire book of Leviticus explains the order of worship and the manner of sacrifices to be made by the priests.

A Picture of Redemption's Plan

Why was the Tabernacle, seemingly only a tent in the wilderness, of such great importance? Was it only a gorgeous church for the use of one nation of the world? Emphatically no! The Tabernacle was a pattern of God's plan of redemption. If any of the Israelites wanted to come to God they must come through the Tabernacle, through the sacrifices made upon the altars. Just *scwe* cannot approach God in His holiness unless we come through Jesus, our Mediator.

The plan of redemption was "from the foundation of the world," but it is mysterious and hard for sinful people to understand. It is even a mystery that the angels "desire to look into" (I Peter 1:12). So God gave the Israelites a physical picture of the way to eternal life.

We said that the Tabernacle was a part of the Law, and Paul tells us that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). As we look carefully at the picture of the Tabernacle we can see Jesus and His plan whereby we can be saved.

Holy Men of Old

There were some men in the early days who could understand the mystery of godliness, who had faith enough to believe that Jesus was going to come and shed His Blood for the forgiveness of sin; and they lived holy lives. Enoch was holy, for he walked with God. No one can walk with God

badgers' skins.

¹⁵ And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood standing up.

¹⁶ Ten cubits *shall be* the length of a board, and a cubit and a half *shall be* the breadth of one board.

¹⁷ Two tenons *shall there be* in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle.

¹⁸ And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward.

¹⁹ And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons.

²⁰ And for the second side of the tabernacle on the north side *there shall be* twenty boards:

²¹ And their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

²² And for the sides of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards.

²³ And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides.

²⁴ And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners.

²⁵ And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

²⁶ And thou shalt make bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle,

²⁷ And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the two sides westward.

²⁸ And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end.

²⁹ And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold.

³⁰ And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount.

³¹ And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made:

³² And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks *shall be of gold*, upon the four sockets of silver.

³³ And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.

³⁴ And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place.

³⁵ And thou shalt set the table without the vail,

without being holy. Noah was "perfect in his generations," and perfection comes with holiness through the Blood of Jesus. And Abraham believed in Jesus, because the Lord Himself said that Abraham saw "my day" and was glad.

Holiness of God; Sinfulness of Man

But God wanted to make it easier for us to understand how holy He is and how sinful we are, and just what we must do to be reconciled to Him; so He gave the Children of Israel the Tabernacle and its form of worship as an illustration of His plan of salvation.

God warned Moses many times to make the Tabernacle just exactly according to the pattern He had shown him. There is only one way that man can be saved; and we must be very careful that we come God's way, or in the day of judgment we will be turned into hell with the nations that forget God. (In lesson 72 we shall study justification as typified in the Tabernacle worship.)

Built of Precious Things

Let us first consider the grandeur and beauty of the Tabernacle. The people brought freely of their gold and precious stones until there was more than enough, and Moses had to ask them to bring no more. They had enough gold to cover on the outside and the inside all the upright boards that made the walls. Five poles, overlaid with gold, passed lengthwise of the building on each side, through rings of gold, to fasten the boards together. Within were the solid gold candlesticks (worth about \$30,000 in our money), the table of shewbread, which was overlaid with gold, and the golden altar of incense. In the Holiest of All was the Ark, also overlaid with gold, and with a solid gold lid which formed the mercy seat. At either end of the Ark were the solid gold cherubims, facing each other and looking down upon the mercy seat. Can you imagine the beauty of this holy Tabernacle?

There was even more to its grandeur. Over the upright boards overlaid with gold, which formed the walls, was placed a covering of fine linen with cherubims of red, blue, purple, and gold threads artfully woven into it. This curtain formed the ceiling, and came down the sides and the back almost to the ground. Over this curtain was a covering of goats' hair; and over that a covering made of rams' skins dyed red. To protect the whole from the weather, over that was a covering of badgers' skins which hid all its beauty from the people outside. Can you see Jesus in this? Isaiah said of Him: "His visage was so marred more than any man" (Isaiah 52:14), and "he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isaiah 53:2). The world can see no beauty in Jesus; but when we enter into the Savior through salvation, become new creatures in Christ, then we see the beauty which was typified by the interior of this holy dwelling place of God.

The Tabernacle was about 45 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 15 feet high. It was divided into two parts, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. All of it was holy, and only the sanctified priests could enter. (We shall learn in lesson 73 how we may enter into the Holy Place.)

The Outer Court

There was an enclosed court around the Tabernacle, about 150 by 75 feet, which was considered a part of the

and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side.

³⁶ And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework.

³⁷ And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars *of* shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, *and* their hooks *shall be of* gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.

Exodus 27:9-21 ⁹ And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward *there shall be* hangings for the court *of* fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side:

¹⁰ And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets *shall be of* brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *shall be of* silver.

¹¹ And likewise for the north side in length *there shall be* hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets *of* brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *of* silver.

¹² And *for* the breadth of the court on the west side *shall be* hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten.

¹³ And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward *shall be* fifty cubits.

¹⁴ The hangings of one side *of the gate shall be* fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three.

¹⁵ And on the other side *shall be* hangings fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three.

¹⁶ And for the gate of the court *shall be* an hanging of twenty cubits, *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: *and* their pillars *shall be* four, and their sockets four.

¹⁷ All the pillars round about the court *shall be* filleted with silver; their hooks *shall be of* silver, and their sockets *of* brass.

¹⁸ The length of the court *shall be* an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits *of* fine twined linen, and their sockets *of* brass.

¹⁹ All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, *shall be of* brass.

²⁰ And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.

²¹ In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which *is* before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

Exodus 40:1-38 ¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Tabernacle. It was here that the people came to worship. The brazen altar (about which we shall study in lesson 72) was in this court. Here the animals for the many sacrifices were killed, and some of them burned. There was also a laver made of brass in which the priests must wash their hands and feet before they could enter into the Holy Place. The court was enclosed with white linen hung from brass poles, and there was only one entrance — on the east end. There is only one "door" into salvation. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). (As we study the Tabernacle, let us watch carefully for every likeness to Jesus.)

About six months were spent in the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings. Two men, Bezaleel and Aholiab, were given special wisdom by God in the clever workmanship of wood, brass, gold, precious stones, and needlework. Such rich materials went into the building of God that it has been estimated to have cost \$1,500,000, without the labor.

God's Presence

But there was more than a display of gold, silver, and precious stones. When the work was completed the vail had been hung setting apart the Most Holy Place, and the Ark containing the Ten Commandments had been placed within; the golden altar of incense, the table of shewbread and the golden candlestick had been set in the Holy Place, and a curtain hung at its entrance; the brazen altar and the laver where the priests were to wash were ready for service in the outer court, which was surrounded by the white linen curtains; and the priests had been consecrated for their service — then the Spirit of God came down and His presence filled the church in the wilderness. Everything had been made according to the pattern God had showed Moses in the mount, and had been sanctified with blood, so God's holy Presence could come and abide in the Tabernacle. The glory was so great that even Moses could not go into the Holy Place.

Cloud Resting over Tabernacle

The cloud that had led the Children of Israel from Egypt to Sinai now rested upon the Tabernacle which was pitched in the center of the camp. As long as the cloud remained, Israel camped; when it removed, the Tabernacle was reverently taken apart by the Levites, the furniture carefully covered, and the whole carried according to the instructions **of** God (Numbers 3). When the cloud would stop, all Israel would rest again. When the Tabernacle had been set up in the midst of the camp, the cloud would descend upon it and remain, day and night, until God wanted the Children of Israel to go forward. During their entire forty years in the wilderness the Lord made known His Presence in this manner.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Where did Moses get the plans for building the Tabernacle?
- 2 What does the Tabernacle typify?
- 3 How did Moses get the materials from which the Tabernacle was made?
- 4 Name the materials from which the Tabernacle and its furnishings were made.
- 5 What was in the outer court? What was in the Holy

² On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

³ And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail.

⁴ And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof.

⁵ And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle.

⁶ And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

⁷ And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein.

⁸ And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate.

⁹ And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that *is* therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy.

¹⁰ And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy.

¹¹ And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it.

¹² And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water.

¹³ And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

¹⁴ And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats:

¹⁵ And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

¹⁶ Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses.

²⁰ And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:

²¹ 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.

²² And he put the table in the tent of the

Place? In the Most Holy?

6 Why was the Tabernacle built?

7 In what ways have we learned that it compared with Jesus?

congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail.

²³ And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²⁴ And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward.

²⁵ And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

²⁶ And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the vail:

²⁷ And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses.

²⁸ And he set up the hanging *at* the door of the tabernacle.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash *withal*.

³¹ And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat:

³² When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses.

³³ 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.

³⁴ Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys:

³⁷ But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.

³⁸ 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.