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A STUDY OF THE WHOLE BIBLE

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BUILDING THE TABERNACLE (25:1-31:18)

Introduction

Here God instructs Israel how to build the tabernacle and consecrate the priests, providing the structure and servants needed for him to dwell with his people. After rescuing his people and communicating His covenant law to them, in these chapters God instructs Israel how to receive His holy presence in their midst. The tabernacle and all its furnishings provide the space for God's special presence to dwell with his people, and the craftsmen and priests serve at the tabernacle by building it and ministering in it.

Gospel Glimpses

PRIESTLY SACRIFICES. The consecration of the priests involves multiple sacrifices. Three times Aaron and his sons must lay their hands on a sacrifice, symbolically transferring their guilt to the animal (Exodus 29:10,15,19). The first two of these sacrifices are a sin offering (29:14) and a burnt offering (29:18), both of which are later described as atoning for sin (Leviticus 4:20; 1:3-4, respectively). Only after these sacrifices are made are the priests considered holy (Exodus 29:21). The priests are later instructed to offer daily sacrifices on the altar, once in the morning and once in the evening (Exodus 29:38-39). This need for the priests to make atonement for themselves and then perpetually offer sacrifices for the people shows the inherent limitation of their ministry and points forward to Jesus' sacrificial work on the cross. Unlike these Old Testament priests, Jesus needs neither to make atonement for himself nor to offer himself perpetually for his people — his once-for-all sacrificial death brings full and final salvation for all those who trust him.

GOD THE HEAVENLY KING. In these chapters the tabernacle is presented as a mobile palace, with God portrayed as the heavenly king. The ark serves as God's footstool (I Chronicles 28:2), above which his heavenly throne symbolically sits (Isaiah 66:1). The blue and purple yarns of the curtains (Exodus 26:1) and veil (Exodus 26:31) represent heaven and royalty, respectively, and the cherubim that are above the ark (Exodus 25:18) and worked into the tapestries (Exodus 26:1, 31) depict the tabernacle as a heavenly structure. This portrayal of God as the heavenly king forms the background to the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus, who both begin their ministries by saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2; 4:17). That is, Jesus, whose "kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), has come to save his people and bring them into his heavenly kingdom (Luke 23:42-43).

TWELVE STONES/TRIBES. The 12 stones on Aaron's breastpiece represent the 12 tribes of Israel (Exodus 28:17-21). Just as God's people consist of 12 tribes in the Old Testament, stemming from the 12 sons of Israel (Exodus 1:1-7), so do God's people in the New Testament era stem from the 12 apostles of Christ (Ephesians 2:19-20). In John's final vision of the New Jerusalem, the gates of the eternal city have the names of the 12 tribes of Israel inscribed (Revelation 21:12), while the foundations of the city wall have the names of the 12 apostles (Revelation 21:14). These foundations are also adorned with 12 stones that correspond to the 12 stones of the priestly breastpiece (Revelation 21:19-20). Therefore, just as Aaron represented God's people as he entered God's presence in the tabernacle, so do the gates and foundations of the New Jerusalem show that all of God's people — both old covenant and new covenant — will dwell in his presence forever.

A NEW EDEN. In various ways the tabernacle is presented as a new Eden. Since the tabernacle faces east (Exodus 27:13-16; Numbers 3:38), the cherubim woven into the veil of the Most Holy Place (Exodus 26:31) recall the cherubim stationed on the east side of the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). The lampstand (Exodus 25:31-40) represents the tree of life (Genesis 2:9), and the terms used to describe Adam "working" and "keeping" the garden (Genesis 2:15) are used together elsewhere to describe the Levites' service at the tabernacle (Numbers 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:7). Even the three-part structure of the tabernacle (Most Holy Place, Holy Place, outer court) corresponds to the three sections of creation (garden, land of Eden, remainder of creation). Creation imagery is later present in Ezekiel's vision of a restored temple, which like Eden faces east (Ezekiel 47:1), has water flowing out from it (Ezekiel 47:1; Genesis 2:10), and is full of trees (Ezekiel 47:7; Genesis 2:9). These themes are picked up finally in John's vision of the New Jerusalem, which similarly has water flowing out from it (Revelation 22:1) and is surrounded by the tree of life (Revelation 22:2).

Theological Soundings

WORSHIP. Virtually every aspect of these chapters relates to the theme of worship. The tabernacle is the central location of Israelite worship (Exodus 26); the various items within the tabernacle are all used in worship (chapters 25, 27, 30); the priests are those who minister on behalf of the people during worship (chapters 28-29); and the Sabbath was a day when certain special worship-related activities occurred (Exodus 31; see Leviticus 24:8; Numbers 28:9-10; I Chronicles 9:32; II Chronicles 23:8). The detailed instructions throughout these chapters show that God desires his people to worship him according to his specifications. However, other passages reveal that God is not pleased with worship that is formally correct if one's lifestyle does not reflect a heart of faith (Isaiah 1:11-17; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8). Conversely, Scripture presents God as graciously willing to accept worship that is externally incorrect if one's heart is set on seeking him (II Chronicles 30:18-20).

ATONEMENT. These chapters contain the first instructions in Scripture concerning atonement. The sin offering is first mentioned here (Exodus 29:14, 36; 30:10), which according to Leviticus is a means by which a person who sins can be atoned for (Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35). Significantly, these verses in Leviticus all state that when atonement is made for someone, forgiveness follows. Since the New Testament describes Jesus' death as a sin offering (Hebrews 13:11-12), it follows that those for whom he died and made atonement receive God's forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14).

Please answer the following questions:

Exodus 25

1. Who was Moses to receive offerings from? (v. 2)
2. What were the offerings to consist of? (vv. 3-7)
3. What were all these offerings for? (v. 8)
4. How were they going to know how to build the tabernacle? (v. 9)
5. Of what was the chest made? What were its dimensions? (v. 10)
6. How was gold to be used in making the chest? (vv. 11-13)
7. Please describe the atonement cover and the cherubim. (vv. 17-20)
8. Where was the cover placed? (v. 21)
9. What was put inside the ark? (v. 21)
10. Where would God meet with them and for what reason? (v. 22)

11. Of what would was the table made? What were its dimensions? (v. 23)

12. How was gold used in making the table? (vv. 24-26)

13. What dishes were made and of what? (v. 29)

14. What was to be put on the table? (v. 30)

15. What was to be hammered on the lamp stand? (v. 31)

16. What was to be made one piece with the lamp stand? (v. 31)

17. How many branches did the lamp stand have? (v. 32)

18. Where and how many cups were on the lamp stand and branches? (vv. 33-36)

19. How much gold was to be used for the lamp stands and its accessories? (vv. 39)

Exodus 26

1. What material was the 10 curtains made of in verse one? (v. 1)
2. What was to be worked into the curtains? (v. 1)
3. What was the size of the curtains, according to verse two? (v. 2)
4. How many curtains were joined together? (v. 3)
5. What color were the loops to be? (v. 4)
6. How many loops were made in verse five? (v. 5)
7. Of what were the 50 clasps made and for what purpose? (v. 6)
8. Of what material were the curtains for the tent? (v. 7)
9. How many and what size were the tent curtains? (v. 8)
10. What was the extra curtain used for? (v. 9)

11. What material was used for the clasps for the tent? (v. 11)

12. What was to be done with the half curtain? (v. 12)

13. What was to be done with the extra cubit on the tent curtains? (v. 13)

14. Describe the tent covering in verse fourteen. (v. 14)

15. Of what wood and measurements were the frames of the tabernacle? (vv. 15-16)

16. How were the frame projections set? (v. 17)

17. How many frames were on the south side? (v. 18)

18. What was to go under the frames? (v. 19)

19. What about the north side? (v. 20)

20. How many frames on the west end? How many for the corners? (v. 22)

21. What are the total frames and bases for the ends? (v. 25)

22. What were the crossbars made of and how many? (vv. 26-28)

23. Where did Moses get the plan for the tabernacle? (v. 30)

24. Describe the curtain in verse thirty-one. (v. 31)

25. How was it to be hung, according to this verse? (v. 32)

26. What was placed behind the curtain? (v. 33)

27. What was the purpose of the curtain? (v. 33)

28. Where was the table and lamp stand placed? (v. 35)

29. Describe the curtain that was the entrance to the tent. (vv. 36-37)

30. What was the difference between the bases for this curtain and the one for the separation of the Holy Place and Most Holy Place? (v. 37)

Exodus 27

1. What was the size of the altar, according to verse one? (v. 1)
2. What was made of one piece with the altar? (v. 2)
3. What was the altar made of in these verses? (vv. 1-2)
4. What utensils were made of bronze for the altar? (v. 3)
5. Where was the bronze grating put? (v. 5)
6. What unusual construction plan was given concerning the altar? (v. 8)
7. What was each side of the courtyard to contain? (vv. 9-11)
8. In proportion to the sides how big was the west end? (v. 12)
9. How much space would be between the two sets of 15 cu. long curtains on the east side?
(vv 12-14)
10. How was this entrance covered? (v. 16)

11. How high were the curtains surrounding the courtyard to be? (v. 18)

12. Besides those things mentioned, anything else used in service of the tabernacle was to be made of what metal? (v. 19)

13. What kind of oil was used for light? (v. 20)

14. How long were the lamps kept burning and where were they? (v. 21)

Exodus 28

1. Who was to serve as priests, according to verse one? (v. 1)

2. What were Aaron's sacred garments to do? (v. 2)

3. What were the priestly garments? (v. 4)

4. How was the ephod to fasten? (v. 7)

5. What kind of stones were engraved and with what? (v. 9)

6. What method of engraving was used in this verse? (v. 11)
7. Where were the stones mounted? (v. 12)
8. What was attached to the settings? (v. 14)
9. What was the breast piece for? (v. 15)
10. What was its size, according to verse sixteen? (v. 16)
11. What was mounted on the breast piece and in what order? (v. 17)
12. How was the breast piece attached to the ephod? (v. 22-28)
13. When was Aaron to wear the breast piece and why? (v. 29)
14. What besides the gems were put in the breast piece over Aaron's heart? (v. 30)
15. What were the Urim and Thummim? (v. 30)
16. What and how was the priestly robe to be made of? (v. 31)

17. What was around the hem of the robe? (v. 33)

18. What purpose did the bells serve? (v. 35)

19. With what words was the gold plate to be engraved? (v. 36)

20. Where was the gold plate put? (vv. 37-38)

21. What was the purpose of the plate? (v. 38)

22. What was to be done to Aaron and his sons after the garments were put on them? (v. 41)

23. What material and size were the undergarments of? (v. 42)

24. When did the undergarments have to be worn and why? (v. 43)

Exodus 29

1. What animals were to be used in the consecration? (v. 1)

2. What other "food items" were to be used? (v. 2)

3. Where did this ceremony take place? (v. 4)
4. How was Aaron anointed in verse seven? (v. 7)
5. What was done with the bull's blood? (v. 12)
6. What was done with the first ram's blood? (v. 16)
7. What was done with the second ram's blood? (v. 20)
8. What was done with the fat, inner parts, covering of the liver, and kidneys with their fat from the bull? (v. 13)
9. What was burned outside the camp and what was it? (v. 14)
10. What was done with the meat of the first ram and what was it? (vv. 17-18)
11. What was used as a wave offering? (vv. 22-24)
12. What was done with the wave offering after it was waved? (v. 25)

13. What wave offering was taken as the priests' share? (v. 26)

14. What else did Aaron and his sons receive as their share? (v. 27)

15. Aaron and his sons received their shares from what Israelite offering? (v. 28)

16. How long were the sacred garments to be worn? (v. 30)

17. Where were Aaron and his sons to eat the ram of ordination? (v. 32)

18. Why would no one else eat this meal? (v. 33)

19. If any meat or bread was left till morning, what was to be done to it? (v. 34)

20. Why was the altar to have atonement made for it and be consecrated? (v. 37)

21. What was to be sacrificed each day and for what reason? (v. 36)

22. What was to be offered daily? (v. 38)

23. What was offered with the lambs? (v. 40)

24. What was the purpose of all these things? (v. 46)

Exodus 30

1. What was the size of the altar of incense? (v. 2)

2. Where was the altar to be put? (v. 6)

3. When was Aaron to burn incense? (vv. 7-8)

4. What was not to be offered on this altar? (v. 9)

5. How often was this altar to be atoned and how? (v. 10)

6. When was a ransom to be paid and for what? (v. 12)

7. How much was to be paid and by whom? (v. 13)

8. What was this money used for? (v. 16)

9. What was the bronze basin for? Who was to use it? (vv. 18-19)

10. What parts of the body were to be washed at this basin? (v. 19)

11. When were they to wash, according to verse twenty? (v. 20)

12. What ingredients were in the anointing oil? (vv. 23-24)

13. What was the anointing oil used to anoint? (v. 26)

14. What would happen to anyone who broke these regulations? (v. 33)

15. What were the ingredients in the incense? (v. 34)

16. Where was this incense put and in what form? (v. 36)

Exodus 31

1. Who was Bezalel, according to verse two? (v. 2)

2. What abilities had God endowed Bezalel with? (vv. 3-5)

3. Who was to be Bezalel's helper? (v. 31:6)

4. List the things these two men and their helpers would be responsible for making. (vv. 7-11)

5. Why was it important that the Israelites observe the Sabbath? (vv. 12-14)

6. What was to be done to anyone who desecrated the Sabbath? Worked on the Sabbath? (vv. 14-15)

7. How did God tie the Sabbath in with his work? (Exodus 31:17)

8. What did God give Moses, according to verse eighteen of this book? (Exodus 31:18)