

# EXODUS TABERNACLE SUMMARY

## Exodus 23 - 40

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All references are to the *New Living Translation* of Scripture.

This summary may be expanded by the reader by reading the references in the footnotes. The lesson is based on the drawings.

The Lord heard the groans of His enslaved people in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> He raised up Moses to represent Him as he freed Israel.<sup>2</sup> Following ten plagues on the Egyptian nation, Moses led Israel safely out of Egypt.<sup>3</sup> The Lord provided the emerging nation ten rules to live by.<sup>4</sup> Then He guided His people into building a portable structure so their worship would be focused in one place and He would live among them<sup>5</sup> as they moved from place to place.

Jesus lived among His people also<sup>6</sup> and had no certain dwelling place.<sup>7</sup> Now He lives within His people through the Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

The last part of Exodus contains the instructions for that tent. We will present an overview of it in this lesson. The Tabernacle is the shadow and Christ and the church are the substance.

All drawings are artist's conceptions. No one today knows for certain what the tabernacle and its furniture looked like. The Lord filled the project manager with His Spirit so construction would be precise.<sup>9</sup> The activities within the Tabernacle are explained in detail in the Book of Leviticus.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 2:24.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 3:10.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 12:33.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 20:1-17.

<sup>5</sup> Exodus 25:8.

<sup>6</sup> John 1:14

<sup>7</sup> Luke 9:58

<sup>8</sup> Acts 2:38.

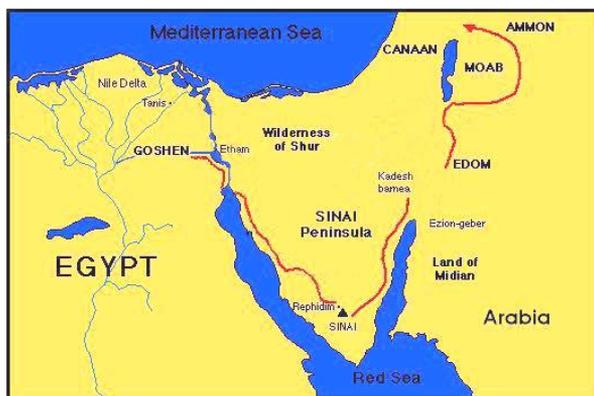
<sup>9</sup> Exodus 31:2-4

<sup>10</sup> Leviticus 1:1 and following.

*The Glory of the Lord  
filled the tabernacle.*

*Exodus 40:34*

**THE LOCATION** where the instructions were given to Israel was near Mt. Sinai and written by Moses.<sup>11</sup> Notice “Sinai” at the bottom center of the map.



**EQUIPMENT FOR WORSHIP -- THE TABERNACLE.**<sup>12</sup>  
*An overview:*



**FUNDING THE TABERNACLE.** The one-time cost of the elaborate tent would be paid by those who had a heart for it.<sup>13</sup> Special project funding within the church follows a similar rule.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Numbers 9:1.

<sup>12</sup> Exodus 26:1.

<sup>13</sup> Exodus 25:2

<sup>14</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:7

**THE TABERNACLE STRUCTURE** consisted of a framework of acacia wood.<sup>15</sup>

This is a very hard wood, far harder than oak. Acacia trees were common in the area where Israel was encamped.

Here is a photo of an acacia tree in the United States:



**THE TABERNACLE COVERING** consisted of four layers of material.



- A linen curtain 42 feet and 6 feet + 6 feet wide<sup>16</sup> embroidered with cherubim.
- A layer of goat-hair cloth the same size as the cherubim curtain.<sup>17</sup>
- A layer of tanned ram skin.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Exodus 26:15.

<sup>16</sup> Exodus 26:1-3.

<sup>17</sup> Exodus 26:7

<sup>18</sup> Exodus 26:14

- A layer of goat skin leather.<sup>19</sup>

The interior of the Tabernacle was well insulated from the daytime heat and the nighttime cold of the desert.

**THE FURNITURE IN THE TABERNACLE.** Some placement can be seen in this artist's drawing: The room to the left is the Holy of Holies and the larger room is the Holy Place. The Ark of the Covenant was the only item in the Holy of Holies.<sup>20</sup>



There were *seven* items of furniture for the Tabernacle.

(1&2) **THE ARK OF THE COVENANT** in the Holy of Holies with the **MERCY SEAT** of two cherubim on top.



<sup>19</sup> Exodus 26:14

<sup>20</sup> Exodus 26:33.

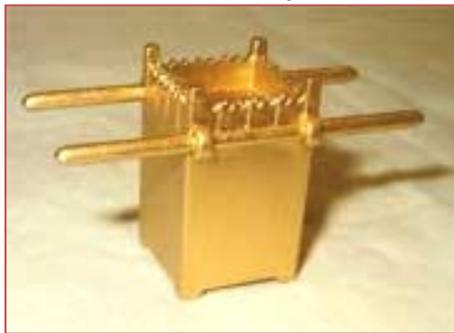
The Ark of the Covenant measured 45 inches long, 27 inches wide and 27 inches high.<sup>21</sup> It was constructed with acacia wood and overlaid inside and out with gold.<sup>22</sup>

The main golden box housed the Ten Commandments, two quarts<sup>23</sup> of the manna that Israel ate each day and Aaron's rod.<sup>24</sup> On top was the Mercy Seat where the High Priest met the Lord once each year.<sup>25</sup> By contrast today, Jesus is a permanent High Priest having made one sacrifice that lasts forever.<sup>26</sup>

The Mercy Seat on top of the Ark was a place of atonement where sins of Israel were forgiven.<sup>27</sup> In the church age, the sins of the entire world are atoned for by the death of Jesus.<sup>28</sup> The Mercy Seat is alluded to several times in the New Testament in connection with what Christ did for us. The word "propitiation" is used in many translations.<sup>29</sup>

Inside of the Ark were the tablets containing the Ten Commandments.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, the commandments of God reside in the church today according to the Apostle Peter.<sup>31</sup>

### (3.) THE ALTAR OF INCENSE in the Holy Place.



<sup>21</sup> Exodus 25:10.

<sup>22</sup> Exodus 25:10-11

<sup>23</sup> Exodus 16:32.

<sup>24</sup> Hebrews 9:4.

<sup>25</sup> Hebrews 9:7.

<sup>26</sup> Hebrews 7:27-28.

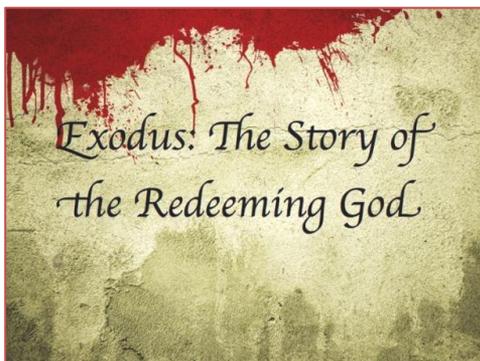
<sup>27</sup> Exodus 25:17.

<sup>28</sup> 1 John 2:2.

<sup>29</sup> 1 John 2:2 is a sample.

<sup>30</sup> Exodus 25:21.

<sup>31</sup> 2 Peter 3:15-16.



The Altar of Incense was 18 inches square and stood 36 inches high.<sup>32</sup> This may have been intended for the Holy of Holies<sup>33</sup>, but was actually located in the Holy Place.<sup>34</sup> Each morning and evening the priest on duty was to burn incense on it.<sup>35</sup> In our era, the incense represents the prayers of the saints.<sup>36</sup> This is as close to heaven as a saint on earth can come.

#### (4.) THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD



The Table of Showbread was 36 inches long, 18 inches wide and 27 inches high.<sup>37</sup> It contained twelve loaves of unleavened bread that were changed every Sabbath Day by the priests.<sup>38</sup> This has similarities to the church where the Lord's Supper is observed each Lord' Day. Paul speaks of the abuses of the Lord's Supper and this allows us to see that it was taken regularly.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Exodus 30:2.

<sup>33</sup> Hebrews 9:4.

<sup>34</sup> Exodus 30:6.

<sup>35</sup> Exodus 30:7-8.

<sup>36</sup> Revelation 5:8.

<sup>37</sup> Exodus 25:23.

<sup>38</sup> Leviticus 24:8.

<sup>39</sup> I Corinthians 11:20-22.

(5.) **THE LAMPSTAND** in the Holy Place.



This 7-headed gold lampstand was the only source of light in the Holy Place. It was to be fashioned from **pure gold**, not gold overlay.<sup>40</sup> In the New Testament, when John received his Revelation from God on Patmos, immediately he saw a seven-part lampstand.<sup>41</sup> He soon learned that the lampstand represented the seven churches.<sup>42</sup>

(6.) **THE BRAZEN ALTAR** outside of the Main tent.

The brazen altar was 7½ feet square and 4½ feet high. An altar is a furnace where fire is burning to accept an animal sacrifice to God. Why was an altar needed?



Because a blood atonement for sin has always been required before men can obtain fellowship with God. *Sin requires the*

<sup>40</sup> Exodus 25:36.

<sup>41</sup> Revelation 1:12.

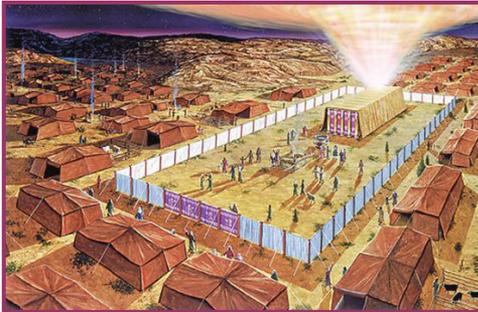
<sup>42</sup> Revelation 1:20.

*payment of a life.*<sup>43</sup> The altar symbolized the death of Jesus centuries later.<sup>44</sup> When a ram was offered on the altar, it was a pleasing aroma to God.<sup>45</sup> The same is said about the offering of Jesus on the cross.<sup>46</sup>

(7.) **THE LAVER** for the priests to wash before entering the tent. The dimensions are not given but the materials came from the bronze mirrors of the ladies.<sup>47</sup>



**THE OUTER CURTAIN** (shown as white)



<sup>43</sup> Hebrews 9:22.

<sup>44</sup> Hebrews 9:23-24.

<sup>45</sup> Exodus 29:18

<sup>46</sup> Ephesians 5:2.

<sup>47</sup> Exodus 38:8.

The courtyard was 150 feet by 75 feet and the outer curtain was 7½ feet high.<sup>48</sup> Some believe that it was white but for sure it was linen. There would be a remarkable contrast with the drab desert and the clean look of the Tabernacle.

Note that the Bride of Christ is clothed in white in Revelation.<sup>49</sup>

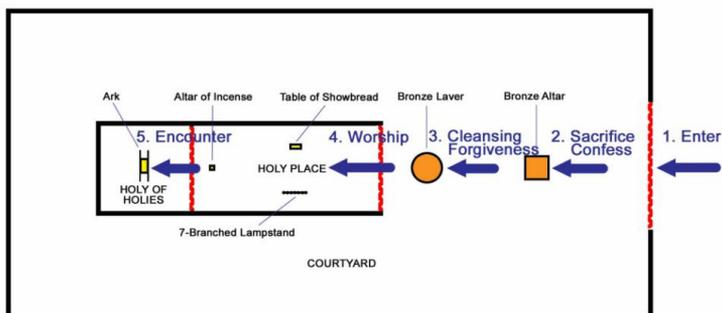
## ENTRANCE to the Tabernacle area.

There was only *one* entrance to the Tabernacle -- no back door. In like fashion, the church -- the Kingdom of God -- has only one entrance and that is through Jesus.<sup>50</sup>

## GETTING TO THE TABERNACLE.

The Twelve Tribes of Israel were always camped on the four sides of the Tabernacle so that the approach to God was in the center of the nation. The Tabernacle was always placed with the entrance facing east.<sup>51</sup> Since there was only one door, it was necessary for everyone coming to the Tabernacle to walk through the area designated for the tribe of Judah.<sup>52</sup> Jesus of Nazareth descended from the line of Judah.<sup>53</sup> Here the way to God was through Judah. Jacob had implied this as he passed out the family blessings.<sup>54</sup> In Revelation, John quotes one of the heavenly elders as calling Jesus “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.”<sup>55</sup>

## Flow of Worship



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<sup>48</sup> Exodus 27:18.

<sup>49</sup> Revelation 19:7-8.

<sup>50</sup> John 14:4-6.

<sup>51</sup> Exodus 27:13.

<sup>52</sup> Numbers 2:2-3.

<sup>53</sup> Hebrews 7:14.

<sup>54</sup> Genesis 49:10.

<sup>55</sup> Revelation 5:5.

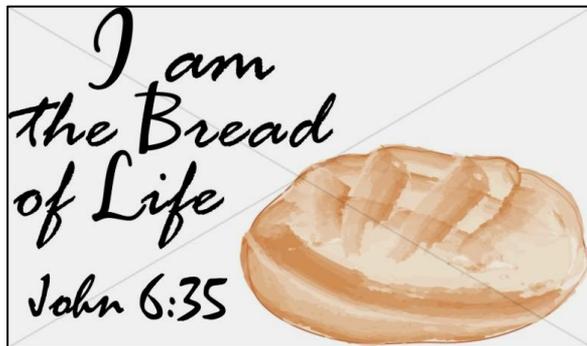
All Hebrews were expected to take steps 1, 2, & 3. They needed a priest to represent them in the Holy Place (step 4) and of course only the High Priest could take step 5 and that was once each year.<sup>56</sup> In the church age every member is a priest<sup>57</sup> and can access the Holy Place without a special priest.

## FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT GOD WAS AMONG HIS PEOPLE.

A **Pillar of Cloud** stood over the Tabernacle.<sup>58</sup> It was a demonstration of the glory of the Lord. This was visible for all to see. The artist included the cloud in his or her drawing on page 9. At night, the cloud changed to a pillar of fire.<sup>59</sup> The Cloud also signaled when Israel should pack and move to a new location.<sup>60</sup> This phenomena continued until Israel entered the Promised Land.

**The Manna** was also evidence that God was with His People. It appeared each morning and had to be collected six days each week. It was a gift each day from God.<sup>61</sup> They received this food from the Lord all of the forty years they moved about in the wilderness.<sup>62</sup>

Jesus said that He was the true Bread from Heaven.<sup>63</sup>



<sup>56</sup> Hebrews 9:7.

<sup>57</sup> 1 Peter 2:5-9.

<sup>58</sup> Exodus 40:34.

<sup>59</sup> Exodus 40:38.

<sup>60</sup> Exodus 40:36.

<sup>61</sup> Exodus 16:29.

<sup>62</sup> Exodus 16:35.

<sup>63</sup> John 6:31-33.