

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

11-4-20

Exodus 25

Offerings for the Tabernacle - Verses 1-9

¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. ³ These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; ⁴ blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ⁵ ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; ⁶ olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; ⁷ and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. ⁸ "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. ⁹ Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

25:1 Chapters 25 through 31 record God's directions for building the tabernacle. Chapters 35 through 39 tell how these instructions were carried out. But what can all these ancient, complicated construction details show us today? First, the high quality of the precious materials making up the tabernacle shows God's greatness and transcendence. Second, the curtain surrounding the Most Holy Place shows God's moral perfection as symbolized by his separation from the common and unclean. Third, the portable nature of the tabernacle shows God's desire to be with his people as they traveled. Fourth, the tabernacle, its furnishings, and the service performed there provide a picture of the atonement that would one day come through Jesus Christ.

25:2-9 We would do well to learn from the Israelites here. From Exodus 35:21-29 we can see that they gave so faithfully and generously they had to be restrained from giving any more. This is how God wants us to give. Do not give because you feel guilty or because you see others giving or you feel uncomfortable if you don't give. Give generously in response to the great love and grace and blessings God has poured out on you. We should be happy that we have a chance to do something in return for God.

The Ark of the Covenant - Verses 10-16

¹⁰ "Have them make an ark of acacia wood—two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. ¹¹ Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it. ¹² Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. ¹³ Then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. ¹⁴ Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry it. ¹⁵ The poles are to remain in the rings of this ark; they are not to be removed. ¹⁶ Then put in the ark the tablets of the covenant law, which I will give you.

25:10 Much of the tabernacle and its furniture was made of acacia wood. Acacia trees flourish in barren regions and were common in Old Testament times. The wood is brownish-orange and very hard and rot resistant, making it an excellent material for furniture. Acacia wood is still used in furniture-making today. A cubit is about 18 inches or 45 centimeters in length.

The Ark of the Covenant - Verses 17-22

¹⁷ "Make an atonement cover of pure gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. ¹⁸ And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. ¹⁹ Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. ²⁰ The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover. ²¹ Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the tablets of the covenant law that I will give you. ²² There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the covenant law, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.

25:17 The cover of the ark of the covenant was called the atonement cover. This is where, between the two golden cherubim (mighty angels), the presence of God would dwell in a cloud above their outstretched wings. The atonement cover was where the highest and most perfect act of atonement would be made when the high priest would enter the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement to atone for the sins of all the people (30:10).

25:19-22 The ark was a symbol for God's presence with the Israelites. The Cherubim are often denoted associated with God's majestic glory and presence (Ez 10:1-22, 1 Samuel 4:4, Isaiah 37:16). The Ark was to be placed in the Holy of Holies, where the High Priest would visit once per year and then still the wings of the Cherubim were to symbolically cover the presence of God. God used this Ark to demonstrate His divine power at times such as for example when crossing the Jordan river or destroying the Philistine idols. It was to go before the people when traveling, as a symbol that God was their leader and they were to follow wherever He led.

25:19-22 Because the Ark was holy, no one was to directly touch it. Violators of this command would die. The Ark was to store the Ten Commandments, as well as a jar of manna, Aaron's staff, and the bronze snake. These were all physical reminders of God's law, His miracles, and His provision.

The Table of Showbread - Verses 23-30

²³ "Make a table of acacia wood—two cubits long, a cubit wide and a cubit and a half high. ²⁴ Overlay it with pure gold and make a gold molding around it. ²⁵ Also make around it a rim a handbreadth wide and put a gold molding on the rim. ²⁶ Make four gold rings for the table and fasten them to the four corners, where the four legs are. ²⁷ The rings are to be close to the rim to hold the poles used in carrying the table. ²⁸ Make the poles of acacia wood, overlay them with gold and carry the table with them. ²⁹ And make its plates and dishes of pure gold, as well as its pitchers and bowls for the pouring out of offerings. ³⁰ Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times.

25:23-29 Table of Showbread. This was a table for bread to be put out on. The priests on duty were to eat this bread in the Holy Place each Sabbath (Lv 24:5-9). What was the purpose of this bread? This bread was a visible symbol of God's continued provision for His people. There were twelve loaves to symbolize the twelve tribes. God didn't leave anyone out or forget anyone. A priest could see these loaves (which were put out rain or shine no matter what happened) and remember that would take care of them.

25:30 There are also certainly Messianic implications here as with much of the tabernacle. We know that the Old Testament Covenant has many foreshadows of the perfect New Covenant which was to come and be implemented by the Messiah. The bread appears to be one of these foreshadows, since Jesus was the bread which came out of heaven (John 6). Jesus provides physical sustenance, but more important is the spiritual bread of life. If we come to Him, we will never go hungry. At that time the priests ate it on behalf of the people, but from the time of Jesus everyone can come to Him and eat the bread He offers on their own individually. Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life."

The Golden Lampstand - Verses 31-40

³¹ "Make a lampstand of pure gold. Hammer out its base and shaft, and make its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms of one piece with them. ³² Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand—three on one side and three on the other. ³³ Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on one branch, three on the next branch, and the same for all six branches extending from the lampstand. ³⁴ And on the lampstand there are to be four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms. ³⁵ One bud shall be under the first pair of branches extending from the lampstand, a second bud under the second pair, and a third bud under the third pair—six branches in all. ³⁶ The buds and branches shall all be of one piece with the lampstand, hammered out of pure gold. ³⁷ "Then make its seven lamps and set them up on it so that they light the space in front of it. ³⁸ Its wick trimmers and trays are to be of pure gold. ³⁹ A talent of pure gold is to be used for the lampstand and all these accessories. ⁴⁰ See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.

25:31-39 This lampstand had a very practical use. It was to give the priests light to conduct their work inside the tabernacle! Yet even the simplest and most practical of objects was to be ornately designed, beautiful, and make use of the very best materials that man possesses. This is a reminder that God deserves man's absolute best in everything, even in seemingly small details.

25:40 Everything was to be made according to God's pattern (40). God had a specific plan and design that was to be followed. It was to be done in a clear and orderly way. 1 Corinthians 14:33. This too has Messianic foreshadows. Jesus said He is the Light of the World. The lampstand served as a physical light for the priests. It was never to be extinguished, but was to burn 24/7. Symbolically, it could demonstrate that God would use the priests and the Israelites as a light to the world, to show all the people the truth and attract all people to Himself. The Israelites ended up to be poor messengers of this truth, but Jesus came as the true and perfect light to the whole world.