

Reformation Fellowship Notes • September 10, 2017
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Handout #26
Exodus 25:1 to 27:19

I. Introduction

- A. Covenant had been concluded.
- B. Moses goes up onto the mountain to receive the stone tablets.
- C. Moses receives instructions for the construction of a portable shrine.
- D. The rest of Exodus is dominated by the tabernacle.
 - 1. Structure of remaining chapters
 - a) Plan for tabernacle
 - (1) From inside to outside
 - b) Incident with the Golden Calf
 - c) Construction of the tabernacle
 - (1) From outside to inside

“In order to understand the significance and purpose of the Tabernacle, we must realize that the children of Israel, after they had been privileged to witness the Revelation of God on Mount Sinai, were about to journey from there and thus drew away from the site of the theophany, So long as they were encamped in the place, they were conscious of God’s nearness; but once they set out on their journey, it seemed to them as though the link had been broken, unless there were in their midst a tangible symbol of God’s presence among them. It was the function of the Tabernacle (literally, ‘Dwelling’) to serve as such a symbol. Not without reason, therefore, does this section come immediately after the section that describes the making of the Covenant at Mount Sinai. The nexus between Israel and the Tabernacle is a perpetual extension of the bond that was forged at Sinai between the people and their God. The children of Israel, dwelling in tribal order at every encampment, are able to see, from every side, the Tabernacle standing in the midst of the camp, and the visible presence of the Sanctuary proves to them that just as the glory of the Lord dwelt on Mount Sinai, so he dwells in their midst wherever they wander in the wilderness.” (Cassuto, p. 319)

II. Exodus 25:1-9

- A. Moses is instructed to take contributions for the construction of the shrine.
 - 1. Totally voluntary
 - 2. Materials
 - a) Metals
 - (1) gold
 - (2) silver
 - (3) bronze
 - b) Fabric
 - (1) wool dyed deep violet (blue?)

- (2) wool dyed dark red
 - (3) wool dyed scarlet red
 - (4) fine linen (bright white)
 - (5) goat hair (black)
 - c) Animal hides
 - (1) rams' skins dyed red
 - (2) porpoise skins
 - d) Miscellaneous
 - (1) acacia wood
 - (2) oil
 - (3) spices
 - (4) onyx and precious stones
3. Where would they have gotten these materials?
- a) They received jewelry from the Egyptians as they were leaving.
 - b) Porpoise skins from Red Sea
 - c) Goat hair and rams' skins from herds that they have with them
 - d) Acacia wood was locally available.
 - e) The rest through trade
- B. Purpose for the shrine
- 1. "that I may dwell among them"

III. Exodus 25:10-22

- A. It is not possible to determine exactly how the Tabernacle was constructed.
- 1. We do not have a complete and unambiguous description.

"Unfortunately, notwithstanding the wealth of particulars recorded in the Torah, the Tabernacle cannot with confidence be reconstructed solely on the basis of the biblical data. The reasons for this are that many essential items are omitted from the prescriptions; several technical terms are still imperfectly understood; there are a number of other obscurities; and the account of the actual execution of the work sometimes differs in detail from the original directive." (Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, p. 191)

- B. Furniture items listed in order of holiness
- C. Construction of the ark of the covenant
- 1. Consists of two parts
 - a) ark
 - b) cover
 - 2. Ark
 - a) box
 - (1) W 1 ½ x H 1 ½ x L 2 ½

- b) Out of acacia wood
 - c) Covered with gold plating
 - (1) Pure gold (associated with the highest degree of holiness)
 - d) Gold molding around chest
 - e) Rings attached to four feet
 - f) Poles
 - (1) Not to be removed
3. Cover
 - a) Mercy seat
 - b) Pure Gold
 - c) Cherubim
 - (1) At each end of Mercy seat
 - (2) Facing each other
 - (3) Wings spread upward
 4. Mercy seat is the throne.
 - a) This is the place from which God will meet and speak with Israel.
 - b) Testimony placed inside.
 5. Ark is the footstool.
 - a) Contains tablets of testimony.
 - b) Agreements made between kings were placed at the feet of gods to assure compliance.

“The practice of depositing legal documents in a sacred place was quite widespread in the ancient Near East. It symbolically underscored the importance of the document and projected the idea that the presiding deity witnessed and guarded it and oversaw its implementation.” (Sarna, p. 160)

- c) In later books, God’s throne is described as a chariot.
- d) Isaiah 66:1—Heavens are God’s throne and the earth his footstool.

D. Continuation of the Sinai experience

1. God will speak to people from the Ark.
2. Ark contains the tablets that are a transcript of what God spoke to the people at Sinai.

IV. Exodus 25:23-30

- A. In pagan temples at the time, there was a table.
 1. The best of foods was laid out on the table,
 2. It was thought that the gods ate the food,
- B. Table of Showbread
 1. A table made of acacia wood
 2. Covered with pure gold

3. W 1 x H 1 ½ x L 2
 4. Border and rim
 5. Rings and poles to carry it
 6. Dishes, pans, jars, bowls
- C. Place to set the bread of Presence at all times
1. Dishes were left empty,
- D. This is symbolic of the meal that God ate with the Israelites to conclude their covenant,
1. This is symbolic of the close relationship between YHWH and his people,
 2. Priests ate the bread at the end of the week,

V. Exodus 25:31-40

- A. Golden Lampstand
1. Made of pure gold
 2. Hammered gold
 3. All made of one piece of metal
 4. Seven lamps in all
 5. Each branch topped with an almond-blossom shaped cup.
 - a) Almond trees are the first to bloom in Israel.
- B. A lamp was placed on the top of each branch.
- C. Other utensils (snuffers, trays)
- D. Symbolism
1. Seven—completeness
 2. Light—life
 3. Tree—tree of life

“Finally, the lights constitute the most powerful symbol of all, for light intimates both life itself and the presence of the Giver of all life. This is the interpretation given in Shabbat 22b: The light of the menorah is testimony that the Divine Presence resides in the midst of Israel. Hence, in the prophet Zechariah’s vision of the menorah, its light represents the invincible power of the spirit over brute force: ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit—said the Lord of hosts’ (Zech. 4:6).” (Sarna, p. 165)

VI. Exodus 26:1-6

- A. Linen curtains
1. Ten curtains

- a) Made of fine linen
 - (1) dyed blue, purple, and scarlet
 - b) 4 cubits x 28 cubits (about 6' x 42')
 - (1) width of typical loom at that time
 - c) Decorated with cherubim
 - d) Loops (fifty per side)
 - e) Joined together with golden clasps
 - (1) This results in two pieces of cloth 20 cubits x 28 cubits
2. This forms the inner tent (mishkan).

VII. Exodus 26:7-14

A. Goat's hair curtains

- 1. Eleven curtains
 - a) Made of black goat's hair
 - b) 4 cubits x 30 cubits (about 6' x 45')
 - c) Loops
 - d) Joined together with bronze clasps
- 2. This forms the covering of the tent.

B. Hide covering

- 1. Dolphin and rams' hide covering
 - a) Dyed red
 - b) Covered only the top and a little down the sides (probably)

VIII. Exodus 26:15-30

A. The main chambers of the tabernacle were lined with acacia wood planks.

- 1. Planks were probably fairly thin, about 27 inches wide,
- 2. Joined together with tenons
- 3. Stood up in a socket made of silver
- 4. Planks covered with gold
- 5. Gold covered bars locked the planks together,
- 6. Holy of holies was a cube, 10 cubits on a side

IX. Exodus 26:31-37

A. Veil

- 1. Separated Holy Place from Holy of Holies
- 2. Blue, purple, scarlet (wool?); fine linen
- 3. Hoshev workmanship; cherubim
- 4. Four pillars

5. Silver sockets
- B. Contents of chambers
 1. Holy of holies
 - a) Contained the ark and mercy seat
 - (1) Two different pieces of furniture
 2. Holy place
 - a) Table on north side (to the right)
 - b) Lamp on south side (to the left)
 - c) Altar of incense has not yet been mentioned.
- C. Curtain
 1. Like veil except:
 - a) No cherubim
 - b) Five pillars
 - c) Bronze sockets

X. Exodus 27:1-8

- A. Altar
 1. Acacia frame covered with bronze
 2. About 8 feet on a side
 3. About 5 feet high
 4. Four horns (one on each corner)
 5. Bronze utensils
 - a) Pails
 - b) Shovels
 - c) Basins
 - d) Forks
 - e) Firepans
 - f) Grate
 6. Poles covered with bronze

XI. Exodus 27:9-19

- A. Court of the tabernacle
 1. North and South sides
 - a) 100 cubits long
 - b) 20 pillars
 - (1) bronze sockets
 - (2) silver hooks
 - (3) height of 5 cubits
 - c) Fabric: fine twisted linen
 - (1) Fabric stretched between pillars

2. West side
 - a) 50 cubits wide
 - b) 10 pillars
 - c) Screen has the same form as the north and south side.
3. East side has the entrance gate.
 - a) On each side of the gate:
 - (1) 15 cubits of curtain
 - (2) 3 pillars
 - b) Gate is 20 cubits.
 - (1) 4 pillars with sockets
 - (2) Fabric is the same as the entrance to the tent
 - (a) But no cherubim figures
4. All utensils and pegs are bronze.

XII. Conclusion

- A. "That I may dwell among them"
 1. God knew that the people wanted God right in among them.
 2. He made provision that he could do just that.
- B. "And there I will meet with you"
 1. God would speak to the people from there.
 2. "I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel."
 - (1) He would clarify what it is that he requires of them.
- C. How was this an indicator of God's presence?
 1. Occasionally there was an obvious sign of God's presence.
 - a) Shekina glory
 2. Usually there was no such indicator.
 - a) They could see the screen around the court.
 - (1) It was nice but not extra special.
 3. The most beautiful and ornate was the Holy of Holies.
 - a) But the people never saw this.
 4. It is what God told them to build.
 - a) It contains reminders of Sinai.
 - (1) But the people have to take it on faith that the reminders are there.