

Blueprints? For What?

Taken From Exodus 25—31

Foundation

Stop and pray before beginning today's lesson. Ask God to be the teacher of your heart and to help you understand more about Him.



Do you ever secretly wonder if there's more than one way to God?

"Instruct the Israelites to bring Me gold, bronze, silver, precious gems, and fine linen as an offering," the Lord told Moses.

These were the riches the Egyptians gave to the Israelites as they departed Egypt—riches God provided for a reason.

"Accept offerings from those whose hearts have prompted them to give," God continued. "Tell them to use these items to make a holy place for Me, and I will live among them. My tabernacle is to be exactly like the pattern I will give you," He added, listing the exact supplies they were to use.

Moses spent forty days and nights on Mount Sinai meeting with God and receiving all His instructions. He carefully noted each item that was to fill the tabernacle, for through this place God would reveal more of Himself and would give the Hebrews a word-picture that would stand as a blueprint for all time.

"Make a chest out of acacia wood—the strongest wood that grows in the Sinai Peninsula," God instructed, "and then cover it inside and out with

pure gold. The lid is also to be made of pure gold, with two angels facing each other at either end and spreading their wings across the cover to protect it.”

The word tabernacle means “to abide.” The fact that it could be disassembled and moved reminded the Hebrews that God couldn’t be contained within four walls or in one location.

The first item God described to Moses was the most important. It would be called the ark of the covenant (the container for God’s agreement with Israel).

Choosing to use something from their culture that the Hebrew people could understand, God initiated a relationship with them by using a covenant agreement. A covenant defined the terms of how a lesser party could live in relationship with a greater party. Only the greater party could draw up the terms, and the lesser party could only accept or reject those terms. Each was to keep a short, easy-to-read summary of the agreement in his most holy, sacred place. For the

Hebrews, that place would be the ark of the covenant. Little did Moses know the ark would also be *God’s* spot as well!

“It is here, between the two cherubim on the ark’s cover that I will dwell and meet with you,” God announced. This relationship with His people would be founded upon His faithfulness to His covenant.

“Next, make a table of the same type of wood, and cover it with pure gold,” God told Moses.

On this table the priest would stack twelve loaves of bread—one loaf for each of the tribes of Israel—as a reminder of God’s provision. Each week the priest would replace the old loaves with fresh ones. Not far from the table and also in the Holy Place (where only the priest could go) a golden lampstand with six branches was to be placed. The lamps were to burn at all times and never go out, providing the only light in the Holy Place.

A huge veil and an altar of incense were to block the entrance to the Holy of Holies. Inside this room were the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat where God dwelt between the two gold cherubim. Just outside the Holy of Holies was a vessel made of bronze where the priest could wash and become ceremonially

clean. In front of that was an altar where animals were to be sacrificed as a reminder of the covenant and the penalty of sin.

Moses wrote down everything the Lord said, right down to the specific measurements and exact descriptions. He knew that God had a purpose and a plan for His people. Coming to worship God, the almighty Creator of the universe, would have to be on God's terms, not mankind's.

Moses had no idea as he set up the tabernacle that each piece of furniture represented the promised Messiah and pointed to His coming, which would be fulfilled in the New Testament. God's provision of the perfect Sacrifice, once for all, was already being foretold. His plan and blueprints were in place. The only way to God was by following God's way, and He was pointing the way through His tabernacle.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, described the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. It was so thick (four inches) that horses pulling in opposite directions couldn't tear it apart! Amazingly, the moment Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple tore from top to bottom (See Matt.27:51).

Footwork

Look up Exodus 25:8-9 in your Bible. Who was speaking here? Pay close attention to verse 9. Why do you think that was so important?

The blueprint of the tabernacle has many parallels to Jesus' life!

Check it out:

God's Tabernacle Blueprint

Bread on the table
The golden lampstand
High priest representing people
Brass water basin to wash in
Animals without defect, sacrificed
on the altar
The veil, keeping people from God

God's Fulfillment in Jesus

The "Bread of Life"
The "Light of the World"
The "Great High Priest"
We are "washed" through God's Word
Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God,
sacrificed on the cross
The torn veil, making God accessible to
all through Jesus



The tabernacle isn't an outdated blueprint for the way we must approach God; it's a fulfilled one. When Jesus—the Lamb of God and God's provision for the perfect sacrifice that would end all sacrifices—died on the cross, the veil in the temple miraculously tore, not from the bottom up, but from the top down, by God's own hand (see Matt. 27:51). The tabernacle, which was just a blueprint, was no longer needed because what it pointed to had come. Even today, the only way we can come to God is through what He has provided. We must follow His plan, not ours. There is no other way. Whose blueprints do you follow—your own or God's?