

Episode: Promised Land Series No. 07

Narrator: Bezalel

Primary Scriptures: Exodus 25-31, 35-40

Story Summary: The tabernacle, its furnishings, and its worship order; priestly garments

Location: Mount Sinai

Time: c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses

c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus

c. 1445 BC. The Ten Commandments

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Exodus 25:8, 25:22; 31:2-3; 35:21-22; 36:6-7; 39:42-43

About one-third of the book of Exodus features incredibly detailed instructions about the Tabernacle and its worship services. God intended for his house of worship to be perfectly designed and made for many years of service in the desert.

Keep in mind that the instructions for the Tabernacle were given *before* the Israelites behaved in such a way that God made them wander in the desert for forty years! Perhaps if the Israelites had made better choices, the Tabernacle would have been their place of worship in Canaan instead of the desert.

The Bible records a fascinating level of detail that God gives about the Tabernacle. He was clearly not going to settle for anything less than perfect. Still, there was so much more to specify that he specially gifted people to be craftsmen so he could instill in them the exact knowledge they needed.¹ As an example, read the instructions about the ark of the covenant in Exodus 25:10-22. On first blush, they seem pretty detailed. Now conceive of how detailed the work really was. Every brush stroke, hammer tap, or awl scratch. Perfect. Perfect. More exact and detailed than any piece of art or jewelry ever made. Now, visualize that every single square inch of the Tabernacle was made with the same amount of care and love.

The whole coverage of the tabernacle area was about the same size as one-quarter of a football field from the goal line to the 50 yard-line, from the center of the field to the sideline. The tabernacle tent itself was only 5 yards by 15 yards...for many people, that's about 7 steps by 20 steps.

It's easy to think of the Tabernacle as something that existed a long time ago, and had a purpose for a relatively short period of time. However, God sure spent a lot of time and resources on it. Perhaps, it was something else, too. Like, a copy of heaven? (Hebrews 8:3-5)

¹ Exodus 31:1-11

Discussion Questions:

1. Name some reasons why you should know about the Tabernacle.
2. According to Exodus 25:1-8, who was supposed to give offerings to build the Tabernacle, what was the purpose of the Tabernacle, and how were the Israelites to build it?
3. Where did God intend to meet with Moses?
4. What was the purpose of the ring and poles for certain of the items of the Tabernacle?
5. Why were the priests to have special garments?
6. What were the purpose of the bells on Aaron's garments?

1. It is a copy of heaven (Hebrews 8:3-5); it reflects the perfection that God desires from anything or any place he inhabits; it shows that God specially prepares people to accomplish particular tasks; the plundering of the Egyptians illustrates how God prepares for some things way in advance. 2. From those whose hearts prompted them to give; so God could dwell in it among the Israelites; and, they were to build it EXACTLY according to the pattern God gave them. 3. At the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:22) 4. So nobody would touch the sacred things. 5. To give them dignity and honor, and to allow them to serve as priests (Exodus 28:2-3) 6. To protect his life (Exodus 28:35)

Application Questions:

1. According to Exodus 25:2, the Tabernacle was to be built from the offering of those whose hearts prompted them to give. How would you know your heart has prompted you to give to the Lord's work? When was the last time it happened?
2. God made it hard and exacting to worship him in the Tabernacle. Why did he do that instead of making it simple and convenient? Do you prefer your worship at church to be convenient, pleasant, and easy or difficult and costly?
3. According to Exodus 31:1-5, God made sure that certain people were specially skilled to accomplish the work he wanted done. How has God specially skilled or talented you? Name something you could do that only you are in a position to do.

Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Exodus 25:9, the Israelites were supposed to build the Tabernacle exactly like the pattern God gave them. What are some of the benefits of doing things exactly as you have been instructed? Is being a perfectionist a good thing or a bad thing? Did God give us exact instructions on how to live a life that honors him? Why or why not?
2. The whole purpose of the Tabernacle was so that God could live among his people. Do you tend to think that God wants to love you and be around you because of who he is, or because you behave well and deserve it? Why would the God who created the Universe want to be with you? (note: he does want that!)
3. Name some things you can do or people you can influence because God has specially talented or gifted you, or given you unique experiences? Name some things you could do to become more useful for God.