

BREAD OF LIFE TORAH STUDIES

"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger ..." John 6:35

EXODUS 25-27

Chapter 24 finished with the words: *So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.* We know that there God will give him the Ten Commandments inscribed with His own hand, but before that happens we are given five chapters of very detailed instructions regarding the Tabernacle, or *Mishkan*,¹ a portable Sanctuary that would serve as the visible home of the invisible God. The Torah does not follow strict chronological order, but nevertheless, there is a purpose for its layout. In this case, it is said that, out of love of Israel God wanted "the remedy to precede the illness"; i.e. the divine plan laid out in the tabernacle came before the sin of idolatry with the Golden Calf.

25:1-2 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: *Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that gives it **willingly with his heart** ye shall take my offering.*

The most common Hebrew word for tabernacle is *mishkan*, which literally means, dwelling place. There is a sense of permanent abiding contained in this word. God has always longed to dwell with his human creation. Nearly 2,500 years after the creation of the world, this grand ideal at last begins to be realized. The Divine majesty will now be enthroned on earth amongst a small insignificant people that He has chosen to be His very own people, and His representatives on earth.

*"The Torah does not say "that I may dwell in it (the Sanctuary), but that I may dwell among them, literally "in them". God asked each person to build a sanctuary in his heart, to prepare himself to be a Tabernacle for God and to be a dwelling place for His splendour – to build an altar, there to uplift his soul, and be ready to sacrifice his desires at every instant for God."*²

The many and varied freewill offerings from the hearts of the people (v. 3-7) are to be a vital contribution to the sanctuary: **Q. How does this speak to us today?** (1 Cor.6:19; 1Pet. 2:5)

v. 8-9 *"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings ...*

Moses was not only told, but he was shown the pattern of the Tabernacle on the mountain—the earthly tabernacle will be patterned exactly on the Heavenly Tabernacle. It is to represent a miniature model of the spiritual universe. The Greater Tabernacle – the more perfect Tabernacle – cannot be understood outside the earthly Tabernacle. Judaism is about how to take deep ideas and make them real in human lives—symbolizing them in a vivid and concrete way.³ Hebrews 8:5 and 9:1-24 both make clear statements that the tabernacle in the wilderness was a figure or picture of the Messiah, and of a greater and more perfect tabernacle.

Details regarding the tabernacle will take up 50 chapters in the Torah, which testifies to the utmost importance of this structure and its purpose. In John 5:46 Jesus said: *"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.* If Moses wrote about Yeshua, and so much of what

¹ Altogether details concerning the Mishkan will consume 50 chapters in the Torah, which exemplifies the utmost importance of this structure.

² Rabbi Elie Munk, *The Call of the Torah*. Shemos, p367.

³ Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Covenant & Conversation*, Exodus p.204.

Moses wrote was about the Tabernacle, then the Tabernacle must be about Him. **This structure was designed for a very real purpose—it was a perfect picture of the coming Messiah.** (This could be part of the meaning behind the words of Yeshua', "... thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ...".)

The specific layout of the tabernacle and its courtyard is significant because it illustrates God's prescribed way for man to approach Him. He will instruct them beginning from the Most Holy Place outward—all that is holy and righteous is to begin in the Most Holy Place. He will begin where He has always desired to begin, and that is from the very heart of the *mishkan*, or tabernacle. Hidden within the symbolism of the tabernacle is the entire story of salvation. Our bodies are also tabernacles and our becoming tabernacles for a dwelling place for God always begins in our spirits, our Holy of Holies.

The Tabernacle is to be divided into three distinct areas—the Most Holy Place, the Holy Place, and the Outer Court. We will see that the Most Holy Place defines the heart of man, the Holy Place the mind or soulful area, and the court, the body. In the Most Holy Place there is only one article. There is really only room for one item to be there, and only one person is permitted to enter it – the High Priest – and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

Holy of Holies

The Ark - Ex. 25:10-22

They shall make an ark... *"they" refers to entire nation of Israel.* There is an inconsistency in the Hebrew wording of the construction of the tabernacle ornaments. In each case the verb used is "you" (sing.)—*you shall cover...you shall make...you shall pour...etc.* Verse 10, above, is one exception – ***"they shall make..."*** Everyone was to have a share in it. **Q. Why is this?**

"Ark" – *Aron* in Hebrew – is in the feminine gender, and not by coincidence. The Word of God is pictured as a child in a womb, to be protected, kept, and nurtured. From God's point of view this entire structure is constructed around His word. His word was, is, and will always be, the center of His will for man. This is the very reason that Yeshua is first introduced to us by John as the "Word of God". The incarnate Word, Yeshua, will be housed for nine months in a feminine container called Miriam/Mary.

The ark will be constructed of two principle materials, wood and gold. Throughout the Tabernacle, wood typifies His humanity and gold His deity:

- SHITTIM/ACACIA WOOD – This is not an attractive tree such as a mighty oak or a giant redwood. It is a tree often found in desert places; its wood is very hard and indestructible, having gnarled trunks, and twisted, thorny branches. It draws nourishment from deep in the earth, so survives very well in dry ground, typifying the incorruptible body of Jesus' perfect humanity. *Is. 53:2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.*
- GOLD - *You shall cover it with pure gold* – Gold designates kingship, royalty & metaphorically speaks of the golden splendor of the heavens. A crown of gold around – "crown of Kingship"
- MERCY SEAT – *kaphar*, means to "cover over", from a root meaning atonement, reconciliation. It is made of solid gold and is placed from above. It represents the throne of God & hence His real presence. Measurements are given for length and breadth, but not the thickness. Unnamed dimensions suggest something that is infinite. That is certainly true of God's grace and mercy.
- 4 RINGS AND TWO STAVES – makes the Ark portable – not bound to one place. This implies that the Ark, containing the Torah, must be ready to be moved at any moment, so that it will accompany Israel throughout all of its wanderings.
- TWO CHERUBIM — 25:20 *"...you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat*

with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat. This verse reads as though the cherubim were truly present. Cherubim appear only twice in the Torah, first in the Garden of Eden, where they barred the way to the Tree of Life. Here they are placed above the ark that contained the Torah – described in Proverbs (3:18) as “a tree of life to those who take hold of her.” The outstretched wings formed a canopy over the cover; wings represents the heavenly majesty that surrounds God; Cherubim are considered guardians of God’s sacred holiness—their faces are turned toward the mercy seat;

25:21-22 *Into the Ark place the two Testimonial tablets which I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim ...*

Q. What message are we given in the various elements which form the Ark?

Holy Place

Table of Shewbread (*Shulcan*) - 25:23-30

The very first thing that YHVH chooses to reveal to us from His design about the Holy Place is the table of shewbread. The table is made of exactly the same materials as the Ark—acacia wood covered with gold; poles & rings, the same as the Ark, will make it portable. One difference is the rim around the top. Around the Ark it was a gold crown border, whereas here the wording is different and designates a border of protection to enclose what is within it, and since it encloses twelve loaves representing the twelve tribes, it speaks of the Lord’s protecting hand around His people.

25:30 *And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.* (We will look at the bread and what it represents in a later study.)

Q. What do the significant similarities of the Table with the Ark signify?

Q. The Shewbread (12 loaves) is to be set on the table always (v.30). What might this depict?

Menorah - 25:31-40

Ex. 25:31-32 *“You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and flowers shall be of one piece.*

³² *And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side.*

We now come to the exquisite menorah, all hammered out of one piece of piece of pure gold. No dimensions are given, reminding us that His deity knows no bounds. The inner sanctuaries were very dark. No natural light entered this place—the light of the menorah will provide the only illumination.

v.37 *“You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it (“towards its face”).*

The six branches extend out from the shaft and are one with the shaft. Six is the number of man, and seven speaks of spiritual completion. It is no coincidence that believers in the Messiah, whether Jew or Gentile are referred to as branches in Romans 11, and that these branches are all one with the central shaft or tree, and called the body of the Messiah. In Revelation 1:20 Yeshua uses this lampstand to refer to the seven churches. The lesson being that the Church must become the light of the world—a reflection of the Word of God. “Clearly Yeshua was pointing to the menorah, when He said that we were to let our light shine so that men may see our good works and glorify our Father. This is exactly what the menorah did in the Holy Place. It shone directly on the table of shewbread, the life sustaining word of God...”⁴

⁴ Brad Scott, <http://www.wildbranch.org/teachings/lessons/lesson31.html> (a recommended resource)

Great detail is given for the pattern of the lampstand—the bowls shall be made like almond blossoms on one branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower... and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand. (v.33) This is not merely to make it look beautiful. The root meaning of the Hebrew word *shaqad*, “almond,” is to awake, watch, be alert; figuratively it means to watch over, fix one’s attention on anything.⁵ The almond tree is the first to arouse and awake from the sleep of winter.

1 Thess. 5:6 *Ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others, but **let us watch** and be soberminded.*

Jesus’ advice in the Parable of the ten virgins is “Watch therefore...” — keep your lamps trimmed and filled with oil – which dovetails beautifully with this perspective.

Q. What are we to be watchful over?

The Jewish sages have always considered the seven-branched Menorah as “the symbol of the light of the spirit in contrast to brute physical and material strength. This is the meaning of the angel’s reply: ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.’... The light shining forth from the Menorah represents the victory of the spirit over material forces, and this spirit draws its inspiration from God. ... the six outer lamps are turned toward the middle lamp.”⁶

Indeed, Yeshua is “the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.” (John 1:9)

Q. How does the lampstand foreshadow Christ and His Church? Is the Church living up to this image? Am I living up to this image?

CHAPTER 26

The Curtains and Coverings -26:1-14

26:1 *Moreover you shall make the tabernacle of ten curtains of fine woven linen, and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them.*

This curtain was known simply as *Mishkan/Tabernacle*, implying that the Cover represented the function of the entire structure of the same name. It was made of fine woven linen, symbolizing righteousness. One special feature of this curtain was the cherubim, guardians of God’s holiness, worked into the design. The cherubim would have been a warning to all who entered to proceed with caution. They were indeed treading on holy ground. There are three colors, blue, purple and scarlet, skillfully worked into the curtains. Whenever these three colors appear in the Bible, they are always in the same order. First there is blue, then purple, and finally scarlet.

BLUE - The color blue is a picture of YHVH’s perfect holiness—the Heavenly One. When we look toward heaven we see blue. It is the color that He commanded His people to dye the tassels on the end of their garments to remind them of His commandments.

SCARLET - Scarlet/red is a picture of man.⁷ Of course, ultimately it points to “the man, Christ Jesus,” who shed his blood for mankind. We see the ‘scarlet thread of redemption’ running throughout the scriptures.

Standing between blue (God) and red (man), is purple, which is a composite of blue and scarlet. In every occurrence of these three colors, the color purple, is between the two.

PURPLE - Purple is colour of Kings—it symbolizes royalty, majesty. As we know, Yeshua was fully God and fully man—(fully ‘blue’ and fully ‘red’.) The first and only time Jesus is explicitly called “King” is when Pilate nails a sign above his head while he hangs on the cross (Mark 15:26). When the soldiers

⁵ Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon

⁶ Rabbi Elie Munk, *The Call of the Torah*, Shemos, p377.

⁷ The Hebrew word for “man” means “ruddy”, “to be red” (“dam” means blood in Hebrew).

mocked Jesus, they put a purple robe & crown of thorns on him. It was in rising from death, that He truly became King—and He will return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Ex. 26:6 *And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle.* This linen covering is said to be "one" with the *mishkan*, which is not said of the outer coverings. There will be 10 of these curtains: *Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and the other five curtains shall be coupled to one another.*(v.3) Each set of curtains is edged with 50 blue loops. *And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle.*

The Hebrew word translated "couple" (*châbar*) means to unite, join, bind together. When reading through verses 3-6 we are struck by the prevalence of the numbers 5 and 50. It is almost universally accepted by Jewish and Gentile scholars alike, that the number five speaks of grace, therefore 50 is grace completed.

Goat's Hair Curtain – 26:7-13

26:7 *You shall also make curtains of goats' hair, to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven curtains.* Goats' hair first of all typifies the sin of man, human failure, and confusion.⁸ It also typifies Christ as our Sin Offering, as depicted particularly in the Day of Atonement ritual.

Q. Why eleven curtains – five plus six?⁹

Q Why did it completely cover the linen curtain?

Ram skins dyed red (v.14) cover the goat's hair tent (v.14). No dimensions are given. Rams' skins¹⁰ denote Christ as our suffering High Priest. They had to be dyed red, clearly symbolizing the blood of Christ, without which there is no remission of sin (Heb. 9:22). We are also directed to the ram caught in the thicket when Abraham offered his son on the altar, which is also a picture of the crucified Christ.

Badger (*tachash*) skins (v.14) – a covering of badger skins covers the ram skins. This word has greatly perplexed interpreters, because it is an unknown animal. The only mention of this word outside of this context is in Ezek. 16:10 *"I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin;* Whatever animal this skin belongs to, we can assume it was tough, water repellent and weather resistant, protecting the exquisite interior which the outside world never saw.

Boards, Sockets and Bars - Ex. 26:15-29

Boards, sockets and bars form the outer perimeter of the tabernacle. The boards, also made of acacia wood, stand upright – they are bound one to another and sit in sockets of silver (Silver = redemption); bars go through gold rings around the perimeter to keep the boards in place. The boards and bars are overlaid with gold. The lengths and numbers of these boards are all significant, but we will not go into that detail here.

We are reminded that In Him, we are "fitly joined together..." (Eph. 4:16).

v.30 *"And you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain."*

The Veil

26:31 *"You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim.*

This is the single veil which will divide the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. You will see that it is made of the same components as the previous curtains which covered the whole inner sanctuary. This beautiful veil, also embroidered with cherubim, hung on four pillars of wood (4 speaks of the

⁸ See Gen. 27:11; 1 Sam. 19:12-17; separation of goats & sheep in Mt. 25.

⁹ Five - grace; six - man.

¹⁰ The word for ram is 'ayil (אֵיִל) which is the verbal root for the word 'elohiym, the word for 'God'.

earth) overlaid with gold, and standing in sockets of silver, symbolizing redemption through Christ. The hooks of gold upon which the veil hung, suggests constant support from heaven.

This veil later found its place in the Temple and we remember that at the time that Yeshua died it was torn in two, from top to bottom (Mk. 15:38; Lk. 23:45). In the letter to the Hebrews we are told that this veil represents the body of Messiah (Heb. 10:19-20). In the Talmud the Temple veil is spoken of as the 'tunic of God'. Its ripping at the time of the death of Messiah could also speak of the tradition of tearing one's clothes as a sign of mourning. God tore His 'tunic' when Yeshua died.¹¹

Screen for the Door

Exo 26:36 "You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle, woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. "And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold; their hooks shall be gold, and you shall cast five sockets of bronze for them. (bronze speaks of judgement).

This screen is for the gate or entrance way—the only way into the Tabernacle.

Three entrance ways

We have now seen three curtains described: the Tabernacle covering; the Veil ; and the Screen for the outer door. All three are white linen, and bore the four prominent colours that portray the various attributes of our Lord: Together, they form "a threefold united emphasis that Jesus is truly the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no man comes to the Father but by Him" (John 14:6). Each has its own unique emphasis as well: Only the tabernacle cover mentions fine linen first (26:1); the screen for the outer door has no cherubim worked into it. The number of pillars, and the brass/silver/gold accoutrements, etc., also differ.

CHAPTER 27

The Altar - 27:1-8

We now come to the altar on which all the sacrifices will be offered. Again, this is made of acacia wood, typifying the humanity of Christ; five cubits square, reminding us of His Grace; the horns on the four corner probably symbolize the power of the blood for all mankind¹²; the wood and horns are overlaid with bronze, typifying judgment; the grate on the which the offerings will be burnt is a network of solid bronze; poles and rings also make this altar portable.

Verses 9-19 lay out details for the construction of the outer court—again replete with detail.

Ex. 27:20-21 "And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which is before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. It shall be a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.

As we have seen, the instructions for the Tabernacle contain extraordinary detail, all combined to make one complete whole. Every detail— measurements, fabrics, colours, metals etc.— significant.

Let us finish by reflecting on this verse from Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

In Him the whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together into a dwelling place for God in His Spirit. (Eph. 2:21-22)

¹¹ Recommended reading: <https://wideeyedwonderings.com/2018/03/15/the-day-god-tore-his-clothes/#comment-96>

¹² References to the horns: Ps. 118:27; Ezek. 43:20.