

# Beginning of the Tabernacle

Exodus 40:16-30,34,38  
SS Lesson for 11/24/2013

**Devotional Scripture:** Heb 8:1-5

## OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

#### OVERVIEW AND APPROACH TO LESSON

*Key Verse: Exodus 40:38*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

*Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator*

*Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson*

#### LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### CONSTRUCTING THE TABERNACLE (EXODUS 40:16-19)

##### *Obedience to God's way (16)*

Do things God's way because man's way is futile, but God's way is for all (1 Cor 3:21-23)

Do things God's way because we have an obligation to do so (Rom 8:12-14)

Do things God's way to become slaves to righteousness (Rom 6:16)

Do things God's way because God is able (Dan 3:16-18)

Do things God's way because man's way could lead to death (Prov 14:12)

Do things God's way because only God's way is straight (Prov 3:5-6)

##### *Doing in God's time (17)*

Doing in God's time because God controls man's time (Ps 31:15)

Doing in God's time because God controls kings and their time of rule (Dan 2:21)

Doing in God's time because God controls nations times (Acts 17:26)

Doing in God's time because God controls man's sitting down and rising up (Ps 139:2-3)

Doing in God's time because man's days are determined (Job 14:5)

Doing in God's time because God controls the time and results of plans (Prov 19:21)

Doing in God's time because God controls the beginning and end of time (Isa 46:10)

Doing in God's time because God controls the time and character of our activities (Rom 9:21)

Doing in God's time because God controls the time of our works (2 Tim 2:20-21)

##### *Raising the tabernacle using God's power (18-19)*

God's power enables us to all things (Phil 4:13)

God's power enables us to be strong in our weaknesses (2 Cor 12:9-10)

God's power enables us in our inner beings (Eph 3:16)

God's power enables us to be competent (2 Cor 3:5)

God's power that provides the foundation of our faith (1 Cor 2:5)

God's power manifested in His Kingdom (1 Cor 4:20)

#### FINISHING THE TABERNACLE (EXODUS 40:20-30)

##### *Finishing the Ark (20-21)*

Ark of the Covenant (from The New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

The Testimony (20)

The Testimony is the Tablets of the 10 Commandments (Exod 31:18)

The Testimony was to be in the Ark (Exod 25:16)

Commentary about the Testimony from Barnes Notes

The Veil - Curtain (21)

The Veil curtain (Exod 26:31-33)

The Veil that was torn when Jesus died on the Cross (Matt 27:50-51)

##### *Finishing the tent of meeting (22-28)*

Commentary from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

Commentary from Bob Deffinbaugh (From the series: Exodus: The Birth of the Nation)

The Table - Commentary from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary (22)

The bread (23)

The bread of God's Presence (Exod 25:30)

The bread for the priests only (Matt 12:4)

The bread contents (Lev 24:5)

The Lampstand (24-25)

Definition from Easton's Bible Dictionary

The lampstand specifications (Exod 25:31-40)

The lampstand meaning in Revelation (Rev 1:20)

*Finishing the courtyard (29-30)*

The Altar - Definition from Easton's Bible Dictionary (26-29)

The Laver - Definition from Easton's Bible Dictionary (30)

GOD'S PRESENCE AT THE TABERNACLE (EXODUS 40:34,38)

*God's presence through His Glory (34)*

God's glory is reflected in the Heavens (Psalm 8:1)

God's glory is clearly seen and understood by what He has made (Rom 1:19-20)

God's glory is an armor light (Romans 13:12)

God's glory is over all the earth (Ps 57:5)

God's glory is in His sanctuary (Ps 96:6)

God's glory is great (Ps 138:5)

*God's presence through fire (38)*

Fire for guidance (Ps 78:14)

Fire as a refuge (Isa 4:5-6)

Fire to control man's wars (Ps 46:9)

Fire that devours (Ps 50:3)

Fire as a revealer (1 Cor 3:13)

Fire that comes from God's Spirit (1 Thess 5:19)

Fire as a refiner (1 Peter 1:7)

## **CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS**

CONCLUDING THOUGHT FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

CONCLUSION FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR

# Introduction

## Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson examines the **Beginning of the Tabernacle**. The **study's aim** is to understand the significance of obeying God and the way He responds. The **study's application** is to live our lives so as to be a living tabernacle, holy to the Lord.

### Key Verse: Exodus 40:38

*38 For the cloud of the Lord was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

God's promise ("I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God," 29:45) was fulfilled as the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. The cloud, symbolic of the Lord's presence, had filled the temporary tent outside the camp only on occasions (33:7-11). Now, however, it came to fill the tabernacle. In fact even Moses, who had seen something of God's glory (33:18-23), was now unable to enter the tabernacle. The cloud that had guided the Israelites when they set out from Succoth (13:20-22) now dwelt among them to lead them to the land of promise (40:36-38). As the cloud lifted the people would travel. If it stayed over the tabernacle but was not lifted from above it, the nation did not travel. The sovereign God of heaven had taken a people in slavery, delivered them in power, made a covenant with them, and established them into a theocracy, a nation under God on earth. The sign of the covenant was the Sabbath, and its regulations (stipulations) were the Law which included the Ten Commandments and various civil and ceremonial ordinances. The book ends on a strong positive note: God was with the nation, and He was guiding them on to the Promised Land.

### Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

The key verse text describes the Israelites' travels in Canaan and God's presence going with them. It also mentions the tabernacle, the place in which God manifested His presence when the Israelites set up camp. There are a couple of key phrases in this text that convey some important truths regarding God and His relationship with His people. Notice that the presence of the Lord in the cloud and the fire was "in the sight of all the house of Israel." Every man, woman, and child among the Hebrews had a constant view of God's presence. They could not claim that their God was absent or had forgotten them. Where or how God displays His presence has drastically changed over the course of history. In the times of Exodus, God showed up in extraordinary ways. However, communication with God was very limited, and only certain people were given the honor and distinction of directly communicating with God and being in His direct presence. This limited number of people included the high priest and Moses. In fact, the Bible records that "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exod. 33:11). Amazingly enough, close intimate communication with God is possible for Christians today. What a great privilege! When Christ died on the cross, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Mark 15:38). Jesus' death allowed God's children to have direct access to His presence and to commune with Him. Through the death of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, the presence of God no longer dwells in a tabernacle or a temple; rather, it is in our hearts. First Corinthians 3:16 asks, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" As you live out your identity as a Christian through obedience to God and His Word, His presence in you will be made manifest to a watching world. While the presence of God may not be noticed in a cloud or by fire as in ancient times, it will be noticed in a changed life. As the love of God is lived out in our lives, we become witnesses of His grace and mercy. Notice also how the key verse text says that God was with the Israelites "throughout all their journeys." He was faithfully with the Israelites every step of the way to which He had called them. Our God is still just as true and dedicated in the twenty-first century. He holds constant vigil over our souls and never forgets our needs. Isaiah 40:28 presents a healthy reminder of this amazing attribute of God: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding." While we may grow weary trying to live out

this new life to which God has called us, He does not. As a loving Heavenly Father, He is always with you. As you go about your day, consider how amazing it is to have the presence of God abiding in you. What a blessing that God is always with you! May such thoughts compel us to new heights of gratefulness and humility.

### Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The outline of the lesson was adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

Verse	Phrase	Commentary
17	And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up	Constructing the Tabernacle
21	And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the Lord had commanded Moses	Finishing the Tabernacle
34	Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle	God's Presence at the Tabernacle

### Lesson Introduction and Background

#### From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Ancient Israel's tabernacle can be thought of as a portable temple. Exodus 40 is a conclusion to all the instructions regarding the tabernacle proper (Exodus 25-31) and how it was built (Exodus 35-39). We may call these multi-chapter sections "the two narratives of the tabernacle." Exodus 40:1-11 parallels the instruction narrative of Exodus 25-31, while Exodus 40:16-33 parallels the construction narrative of Exodus 35-39. Exodus 40:12-15 is not exactly a parallel; it deals with Aaron (Moses' brother) and his sons, about whom details are given in Exodus 28, 29 and Leviticus 8:1-13. The golden calf story of Exodus 32-34 has been placed between the two narratives of the tabernacle. Knowing the reason for this deliberate placement helps us appreciate more fully the tabernacle's purpose. Moses' delay on the mountain (Exodus 32:1) resulted in the Israelites becoming anxious, so they expressed to Aaron a desire to have a visible representation of deity ("gods"). Previously, the people had been very afraid even to listen to God lest they die, and they had implored Moses to intercede (see Exodus 20:18-20; Deuteronomy 5:23-27). What the people demanded of Aaron was a material, visible entity to substitute for Moses' intercession between them and the presence of the invisible God. Exodus 32-34 represents false worship as God was, in effect, put back into nature in the form of a calf. By contrast, the tabernacle and its furnishings represented true worship where God's presence was rightly displayed.

### Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

#### **Constructing the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:16-19)**

16 Thus Moses did; according to all that the Lord had commanded him, so he did.

17 And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up.

18 So Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and raised up its pillars.

19 And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

### **Obedience to God's way (16)**

*Do things God's way because man's way is futile, but God's way is for all (1 Cor 3:21-23)*

21 So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future — all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

*Do things God's way because we have an obligation to do so (Rom 8:12-14)*

12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

*Do things God's way to become slaves to righteousness (Rom 6:16)*

16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

*Do things God's way because God is able (Dan 3:16-18)*

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

*Do things God's way because man's way could lead to death (Prov 14:12)*

12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

*Do things God's way because only God's way is straight (Prov 3:5-6)*

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

### **Doing in God's time (17)**

*Doing in God's time because God controls man's time (Ps 31:15)*

15 My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.

*Doing in God's time because God controls kings and their time of rule (Dan 2:21)*

21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

*Doing in God's time because God controls nations times (Acts 17:26)*

26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

*Doing in God's time because God controls man's sitting down and rising up (Ps 139:2-3)*

2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

*Doing in God's time because man's days are determined (Job 14:5)*

5 Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

*Doing in God's time because God controls the time and results of plans (Prov 19:21)*

21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

*Doing in God's time because God controls the beginning and end of time (Isa 46:10)*

10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

*Doing in God's time because God controls the time and character of our activities (Rom 9:21)*

21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

*Doing in God's time because God controls the time of our works (2 Tim 2:20-21)*

20 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. 21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

### **Raising the tabernacle using God's power (18-19)**

*God's power enables us to all things (Phil 4:13)*

13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

*God's power enables us to be strong in our weaknesses (2 Cor 12:9-10)*

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

*God's power enables us in our inner beings (Eph 3:16)*

16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

*God's power enables us to be competent (2 Cor 3:5)*

5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

*God's power that provides the foundation of our faith (1 Cor 2:5)*

5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

*God's power manifested in His Kingdom (1 Cor 4:20)*

20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

### ***Finishing the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:20-30)***

20 He took the Testimony and put it into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark.

21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

22 He put the table in the tabernacle of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil;

23 and he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

24 He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle;

25 and he lit the lamps before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

26 He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil;

27 and he burned sweet incense on it, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

28 He hung up the screen at the door of the tabernacle.

29 And he put the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

30 He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing;

### **Finishing the Ark (20-21)**

#### *Ark of the Covenant (from The New Unger's Bible Dictionary)*

The common name for a "chest" or "coffer". It was called the "ark of the covenant" (Num 10:33; Deut 31:26; Heb 9:4; etc.), because in it were deposited the two tablets of stone upon which were written the Ten Commandments, the terms of God's covenant with Israel; "the ark of the testimony" (Ex 25:16,22), the commandments being God's testimony respecting His own holiness, and the people's sin; "the ark of God" (1 Sam 3:3; 4:11), as the throne of the divine presence. For full description, see Tabernacle. The history of the Ark is in accordance with its intensely moral character. As the symbol of the Lord's presence, it was borne by the priests in advance of the host (Num 10:33; Deut 1:33; see also Ps 132:8). At its presence the waters of the Jordan separated; only when it was carried to the farther shore did the waters resume their usual course (Josh 3:11-17; 4:7,11,18). The Ark was carried about Jericho at the time of its downfall (6:4-12). Very naturally, the neighboring nations, ignorant of spiritual worship, looked upon the Ark as the god of Israel (1 Sam 4:6-7), a delusion that may have been strengthened by the figures of the cherubim upon it. The Ark remained at Shiloh until the time of Eli, when it was carried along with the army, in the hope that it would secure victory for the Israelites against the Philistines. The latter were not only victorious but also captured the Ark (1 Sam 4:3-11); but they were glad to return it after seven months (5:7). It was taken to Kiriath-jearim (7:2), where it remained until the time of David. Its removal to Jerusalem was delayed three months by the death of Uzzah while carelessly handling it. Meanwhile it rested in the house of Obed-edom, from which it was taken, with greatest rejoicing, to Mt. Zion (2 Sam 6:1-19). When the Temple was completed, the Ark was deposited in the sanctuary (1 Kings 8:6-9). In 2 Chron 35:3 the Levites were directed to restore it to the Holy Place. It may have been moved to make room for the "carved image" that Manasseh placed "in the house of God" (33:7), or possibly on account of the purification and repairs of the Temple by Josiah. When the Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians the Ark was probably removed or destroyed (2 Esd 10:21-22). Sacred chests were in use among other peoples of antiquity, and served as receptacles for the idol, or the symbol of the idol, and for sacred relics.

#### *The Testimony (20)*

##### *The Testimony is the Tablets of the 10 Commandments (Exod 31:18)*

18 When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

##### *The Testimony was to be in the Ark (Exod 25:16)*

16 Then put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you.

*Commentary about the Testimony from Barnes Notes*

The testimony - the tables of stone with the Ten Commandments engraved on them (Ex 25:16; 31:18). Nothing else is said to have been put into the ark. These were found there by themselves in the time of Solomon (1 Kings 8:9; 2 Chron 5:10). The pot of manna was "laid up before the testimony" (Ex 16:34); Aaron's rod was also placed "before the testimony" (Num 17:10); and the book of the law was put at "the side of the ark" (Deut 31:26). The expression "before the testimony" appears to mean the space immediately in front of the ark. Most interpreters hold that the pot of manna and Aaron's rod were at first placed between the ark and the veil, and afterward within the ark (Heb 9:4). It is very probable that the pot and the rod had been put into the ark before it was taken by the Philistines, but that they were not sent back with the ark and the tables. 1 Sam 4:11; 6:11.

*The Veil - Curtain (21)*

*The Veil curtain (Exod 26:31-33)*

31 "Make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim worked into it by a skilled craftsman. 32 Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases. 33 Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the Testimony behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

*The Veil that was torn when Jesus died on the Cross (Matt 27:50-51)*

50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.

**Finishing the tent of meeting (22-28)**

*Commentary from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*

The tent which Moses pitched outside the camp before the TABERNACLE was built (Ex 33:7). After the tabernacle itself was built, it also was often called by this name (Ex 38:8), signifying the meeting of God with His people. The phrase is also translated tabernacle of the congregation (Ex 27:21, KJV) and tent of meeting (RSV). Most of the references to the tabernacle of meeting occur in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

*Commentary from Bob Deffinbaugh (From the series: Exodus: The Birth of the Nation)*

The "tent of meeting" was located "outside the camp," "a good distance from the camp" (Exod 33:7). I believe that the principle reason for this was to fulfill God's words to Moses, that He would not go up with Israel to Canaan "in the midst of them" (Exod 33:3). When God's presence was manifested at the tent of meeting, it was always outside the camp. When an Israelite would seek God, he or she would do so "outside the camp." This tent symbolized the remoteness of God, due to Israel's idolatry, yet also provided a nearness to God that was more intimate than anything the people had yet experienced. When any Israelite wanted to seek God, he would have to remove himself from the midst of his people, separate himself from their sinfulness, to seek God on His own holy ground.

*The Table - Commentary from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary (22)*

An article of furniture used for ritual, eating, and money changing. The tabernacle had a table of acacia wood overlaid with gold on which the showbread was placed (Ex 25:23; Num 3:31; Heb 9:2). A table of gold was in the Temple (1 Kings 7:48). Tables for the burnt offering were furnishings of Ezekiel's temple (Ezek 40:39-43). There was also a table before the sanctuary (Ezek 41:22; 44:16). The prophet Malachi spoke of the altar as the Lord's table (Mal 1:7,12). In the New Testament period, people reclined at the table (Luke 7:37) during meals. "Serving tables" (Acts 6:2) referred to looking after the material needs of the poor. The tables on which the moneychangers exchanged money were overthrown by Jesus when He cleansed the Temple (Matt 21:12; Mark 11:15; John 2:15). In a symbolic way, the word table is sometimes



used to describe abundant provision. The psalmist declared of God, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (Ps 23:5).

#### *The bread (23)*

##### *The bread of God's Presence (Exod 25:30)*

30 Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times.

##### *The bread for the priests only (Matt 12:4)*

4 He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread — which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests.

##### *The bread contents (Lev 24:5)*

5 "Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves of bread, using two-tenths of an ephah for each loaf.

#### *The Lampstand (24-25)*

##### *Definition from Easton's Bible Dictionary*

That part of the candle-sticks of the tabernacle and the temple which bore the light (Ex 25:37; 1 Kings 7:49; 2 Chron 4:20; 13:11; Zech 4:2). Their form is not described. Olive oil was generally burned in them (Ex 27:20).

##### *The lampstand specifications (Exod 25:31-40)*

31 "Make a lampstand of pure gold and hammer it out, base and shaft; its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms shall be of one piece with it. 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.

##### *The lampstand meaning in Revelation (Rev 1:20)*

20 The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

## **Finishing the courtyard (29-30)**

#### *The Altar - Definition from Easton's Bible Dictionary (26-29)*

From a word meaning "to slay", any structure of earth (Ex 20:24) or unwrought stone (20:25) on which sacrifices were offered. Altars were generally erected in conspicuous places (Gen 22:9; Ezek 6:3; 2 Kings 23:12; 16:4; 23:8; Acts 14:13). The word is used in Heb 13:10 for the sacrifice offered upon it — the sacrifice Christ offered. The first altar we read of is that erected by Noah (Gen 8:20). Altars were erected by Abraham (Gen 12:7; 13:4; 22:9), by Isaac (Gen 26:25), by Jacob (33:20; 35:1,3), and by Moses (Ex 17:15, "Jehovah-nissi"). In the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, two altars were erected. (1.) The altar of burnt offering (Ex 30:28), called also the "brass altar" (Ex 39:39) and "the table of the Lord" (Mal 1:7). This altar, as erected in the tabernacle, is described in Ex 27:1-8. It was a hollow square, 5 cubits in length and in breadth, and 3 cubits in height. It was made of shittim wood, and was overlaid with plates of brass. Its corners were ornamented with "horns" (Ex 29:12; Lev 4:18). In Ex 27:3 the various utensils appertaining to the altar are enumerated. They were made of brass. (Comp. 1 Sam 2:13,14; Lev 16:12; Num 16:6,7.) In Solomon's temple the altar was of larger dimensions (2 Chron 4:1. Comp. 1 Kings 8:22,64; 9:25), and was

made wholly of brass, covering a structure of stone or earth. This altar was renewed by Asa (2 Chron 15:8). It was removed by Ahaz (2 Kings 16:14), and "cleansed" by Hezekiah, in the latter part of whose reign it was rebuilt. It was finally broken up and carried away by the Babylonians (Jer 52:17).

*The Laver - Definition from Easton's Bible Dictionary (30)*

A "basin" for boiling in, a "pan" for cooking (1 Sam 2:14), a "fire-pan" or hearth (Zech 12:6), the sacred wash-bowl of the tabernacle and temple (Ex 30:18,28; 31:9; 35:16; 38:8; 39:39; 40:7,11,30, etc.), a basin for the water used by the priests in their ablutions. That which was originally used in the tabernacle was of brass (rather copper), made from the metal mirrors the women brought out of Egypt (Ex 38:8). It contained water wherewith the priests washed their hands and feet when they entered the tabernacle (40:32). It stood in the court between the altar and the door of the tabernacle (30:19,21). In the temple there were ten lavers used for the sacrifices, and the molten sea for the ablutions of the priests (2 Chron 4:6). The position and uses of these are described 1 Kings 7:23-39; 2 Chron 4:6. The "molten sea" was made of copper, taken from Tibhath and Chun, cities of Hadarezer, king of Zobah (1 Chron 18:8; 1 Kings 7:23-26). No lavers are mentioned in the second temple.

For image of Tabernacle see URL: [http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what\\_is\\_the\\_tabernacle](http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what_is_the_tabernacle)

**God's Presence at the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34,38)**

34 Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

38 For the cloud of the Lord was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

**God's presence through His Glory (34)**

*God's glory is reflected in the Heavens (Psalm 8:1)*

8 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

*God's glory is clearly seen and understood by what He has made (Rom 1:19-20)*

19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

*God's glory is an armor light (Romans 13:12)*

12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

*God's glory is over all the earth (Ps 57:5)*

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.

*God's glory is in His sanctuary (Ps 96:6)*

6 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

*God's glory is great (Ps 138:5)*

5 May they sing of the ways of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord is great.

**God's presence through fire (38)**

*Fire for guidance (Ps 78:14)*

14 He guided them with the cloud by day and with light from the fire all night.

*Fire as a refuge (Isa 4:5-6)*

5 Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. 6 It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

*Fire to control man's wars (Ps 46:9)*

9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire.

*Fire that devours (Ps 50:3)*

3 Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages.

*Fire as a revealer (1 Cor 3:13)*

13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

*Fire that comes from God's Spirit (1 Thess 5:19)*

19 Do not put out the Spirit's fire;

*Fire as a refiner (1 Peter 1:7)*

7 These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### **Concluding Thought From Bob Deffinbaugh**

*From the series: Exodus: The Birth of the Nation*

The Tabernacle Is Assembled and Raised (40:17-33)

Consider the following observations, which enable us to capture the thrust of these verses:

(1) There is a mood of excitement and anticipation here. A period of nearly 6 months must have been required for the Israelites to collect the materials and to fashion and construct them into the various components of the tabernacle.<sup>143</sup> Now, after a long period of rising expectation, the tabernacle is about to be erected for the first time. Have you ever wanted something very badly, looking in the stores and in the catalogues, seeking to find the best product at the most reasonable price? Finally the day arrives when you order it. Then you wait for it to be delivered. When the package arrives, you immediately open it. What you find is a great quantity of individual parts, which you are to assemble. You get a list of the parts, a set of directions, which tell you how to assemble the parts, and then a user's manual, telling you how to use the product. The Book of Exodus has given the Israelites a list of the various components for the tabernacle. Verses 1-8 are the assembly instructions for the tabernacle. Imagine that you were Moses, or one of the Israelites. As you finish making one of the component parts of the tabernacle, you bring it to Moses. I would imagine that there was a kind of "tent-warehouse" in which all of the tabernacle parts were kept. As you brought your completed part to Moses, you could see all of the other parts that had been finished and were in storage, waiting for the initial raising of the tent and arranging of the furnishings. The more pieces that have been completed, the greater the anticipation of the first time all of them will be put together. Everyone wondered what it would look like and how it would work. The excitement of seeing this tabernacle "come together" and work must have been great. This mood must have prevailed in the camp. Waiting for the appointed day must have been harder than waiting for Christmas to come, so that you can open your gifts.

(2) A precise timing is indicated. Verse 2, along with verse 17 informs us that there was a particular day determined by God when the momentous occasion of erecting the tabernacle was to occur. This day was

indicated by God as the first day of the first month of the second year. This means that the tabernacle was constructed on Israel's first anniversary as a free nation (Exod. 12:2), and approximately 9 months from the time of her arrival at Mt. Sinai. It would also appear that the tent was erected on this one day, since the materials were all made and ready before this time (cf. 39:32-43).

(3) Moses seems to have a provisional role here, a priestly role, which continues until Aaron and his sons are anointed and installed as the official priesthood of Israel. Moses offered incense (v. 27) and burnt and grain offerings (v. 29), and washed himself (v. 31), like Aaron and his sons.

(4) The text emphatically reports exacting obedience with regard to the carrying out of God's instructions. Two things signal this emphasis. First, verse 16 informs us that Moses carried out God's instructions, but then verses 17-33 go on to describe his obedience in detail. This detailed repetition of Moses' meticulous obedience must have been done to underscore the importance of the precise compliance of Moses to the commandments of God. Second, seven times in verses 17-33 we are told that Moses did exactly as God commanded him (vss. 19, 21, 23, 25-26, 29, 32).

#### The Glory of God Descends Upon the Tabernacle (40:34-38)

In these five verses we come to the end of the Book of Exodus. There are several features of this paragraph of which we should take note:

(1) These verses are the conclusion, the climax, and the "high water mark" of the Book of Exodus. The best has truly been saved till last here. The glory of God descending upon the tabernacle is the realization of Israel's highest hopes, of Moses' most noble and impassioned petition.

(2) The account is very brief. While this paragraph serves as the climax and conclusion to the Book of Exodus, we should realize that it is a very brief account. There is a longer, more detailed account of the same event in Numbers 9:15-23, but this does not suit Moses' purpose here. There is no effort to embellish the account, in fact the matter is almost understated. If any author wished to wax eloquent, this event would have provided the material to do so. It is my conviction that the glory of this event is to be viewed as but a signal to the glory of the tabernacle, and ultimately the glory associated with the sacrificial system which it facilitated. Thus, the Book of Leviticus plays out this glory in much fuller detail.

(3) The descent of God's glory upon the tabernacle is the fulfillment of God's previous promises to Israel and to Moses (Exod. 3:8; Exod. 3:12; Exod. 29:43-46; cf. 33:7-11).

(4) The cloud was a visible manifestation of the glory of the Lord. The cloud, in its various appearances, is identified with the presence and the glory of God (cf. 13:21; 14:19, 24; 16:7, 10).

(5) The glory of God revealed in the tabernacle was greater than any glory previously revealed to Israel. The glory of God in the tabernacle was so awesome that even Moses could not enter the tabernacle.<sup>144</sup> It should be remembered that Moses apparently had seen more of God's glory than any man alive. He had seen the glory of God in the burning bush (Exod. 3). He had seen God's glory in the plagues and the exodus of Israel. He alone had seen the glory of God from inside the cloud atop Mt. Sinai (Exod. 19, 24). At his request, he had seen even more of God's glory when he was privileged to view the "backside of God" (Exod. 33:17-34:9). But the glory of God in the tabernacle was greater than that which Moses (or any other Israelite for that matter) could behold. Thus, the glory of God which now abides in the presence of the Israelites is the greatest glory known to man to this point in time.

(6) There is both a "sameness" and a "newness" to what happens here. The cloud of God's glory is not new. In verse 34 it is called the cloud, indicating that it is the same cloud mentioned previously.<sup>145</sup> We find it first mentioned in chapter 13 (Exod. 13:20-22). In chapter 14, the cloud went from before Israel to behind them, to separate them from the Egyptians (v. 19). From the midst of the cloud God brought confusion to the Egyptians (v. 24), which led ultimately to their destruction. In chapter 16 (vss. 7, 10) it was associated with God's provision of manna and meat for the grumbling Israelites. In chapter 19, the cloud was manifested atop Mt. Sinai (vss. 9, 16-18), as well as in chapter 24 (cf. vss. 15-18). Since the cloud was present with the Israelites from the time they left Egypt, and never departed from them, there is a sense in which nothing new occurs here in chapter 40. It is, so to speak, the same cloud as before. There is a "newness," about this appearance of the cloud, which is indicated by three facts. The first difference lies in the fact that the cloud, and thus God's glorious presence, is now nearer to the Israelites than ever before. What was once distant (either before or behind the nation, or far away, atop Mt. Sinai) is now in the very midst of the camp. The second fact is even more significant. The appearance of the glory of God in the tabernacle took place after Israel's great sin (the golden calf), which is reported in chapter 32. Finally, the glory of God settled on the tabernacle to abide there, not just as a momentary manifestation of God.

(7) The cloud had a very practical function—that of guiding the Israelites on their way to the promised land of Canaan. Verses 34 and 35 describe the phenomenon of the descent of the cloud, while verses 36-38 describe the function of the cloud. By this cloud God led the Israelites, informing them as to when they should make or break camp, as well as leading them in the proper route. While the guiding function of the cloud is not a new one, it is an assurance to the Israelites that they will get to the promised land of Canaan, for God Himself was going before them.

*From URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/consecration-tabernacle-and-presence-god-exodus-40>*

### **Conclusion from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Sin in the Garden of Eden resulted in humanity's losing the privilege of living in God's presence. But God has acted to reverse that situation. Freed from Egyptian bondage, Israel had God's presence in her midst by means of the tabernacle. Instead of cherubim turning away God's children by means of a sharp sword to guard the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24), the Israelites had images of cherubim marking the place of God's presence. Perhaps the candlestick stood for the tree of life as it illuminated the holy place. The manifestation of God's presence was experienced anew when Solomon dedicated the temple (see 1 Kings 8:1-9:9; 2 Chronicles 7). That temple was destroyed in 586 BC because of sin. Rebuilt by the returned exiles, the temple was later enhanced by Herod the Great. Standing in its courts, Jesus declared himself to be the true temple (John 2:19-21; compare Mark 14:58). The apostle John declared "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling [literally, "tabernacled"] among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). That was Jesus. God made his presence known again on the Day of Pentecost. The result was the new temple described in 2 Corinthians 6:16 (see also 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 2:19-22). Christ is the eternal high priest and the perfect sacrifice in an everlasting tabernacle (Hebrews 8:1-10:18). Today all Christians have access to the most holy place (Hebrews 10:19-22). In the new Jerusalem there will be no temple, for "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Revelation 21:22). Our future is to live in God's immediate presence forever!

### **Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. Biblical obedience requires full commitment to whatever God commands (Exod. 40:16; Deut. 29:29; Josh. 1:8)
2. Everything that God commands has a purpose (Exod. 40:17-19)
3. In the service of God, the details do matter (vss. 20-21)
4. God-pleasing worship is always founded on purity and sacrifice (Exod. 40:29-30; cf. Heb, 10:1-10)
5. The knowledge of God's presence serves as both a comfort and a warning (Exod. 40:34)
6. In every generation, God directs His people (Exod. 40:38; II Tim. 3:16-17)