

Parashah 19

T'rumah

תרומה

“Contribution”

Exodus 25:1 – 27:19

Torah Together



This *Torah* portion describes the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings. The degree of detail in this description may seem somewhat tedious, but if one carefully reads these passages, their accuracy is surprising. These items can be completely constructed with these written descriptions alone, a testimony to the supernatural origins of the Scripture.

1. Offerings for the Tabernacle - 25:1-9

a) The Hebrew word translated as ‘tabernacle’ is ‘*mishkan*,’ meaning dwelling place. What was the purpose of the *mishkan*? Why would God desire such a thing?

God said the purpose of the mishkan was so that He could dwell among the people (verse 8). God desires fellowship with His people, to be a part of their lives, because He loves them.

b) What materials were used to construct the tabernacle and its furnishings? Who provided these materials? What was their reason for providing them?

The materials are listed in verses 3-7. The Israelites offered them to God, each man as his heart prompted him. (God works in people’s hearts.)

c) What serves as God’s *mishkan* today?

Today, God dwells in believers; we are His mishkan. Ephesians 2:22 says that we believers are being built together to become a dwelling place in which God lives by his Spirit. (The church: not a building, but the body of believers.)

Scripture Link:

The Hebrews were **slaves** of the Egyptians. How do you think they came to have gold, silver and bronze as well as blue, purple and scarlet yarn, all very expensive items? See **Exodus 12:35-36** for the answer.

Scripture Link:

In **Ephesians 2:19-22**, the Apostle Paul explains how believers in the Messiah *Yeshua* are members of God’s household. What role do we play in the formation of God’s holy temple?

Scripture Link:

The stone tablets that Moses brought down from Mount Sinai contained the covenant between God and his people. In **Jeremiah 31:31-34**, the prophet speaks about the covenant that God will have with his people in the future. Where will this new covenant be written?

Atonement

The Hebrew for both the words *kippur* and *kapporet* come from a root that means “to cover or hide.” By extension, it can also mean to “cover or pay for sin.” God has mercifully allowed us to “pay for” or “make atonement for” our sin. Can you see the connection between *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement and the *Kapporet*, or Mercy Seat?

2. The Ark - 25:10-22

a) The Hebrew word translated as ‘ark’ is ‘*aron*,’ which means cupboard or chest. Why do you think God gave such precise dimensions for the ark? What was to be put into the ark? What corresponds to the ark in the lives of believers today?

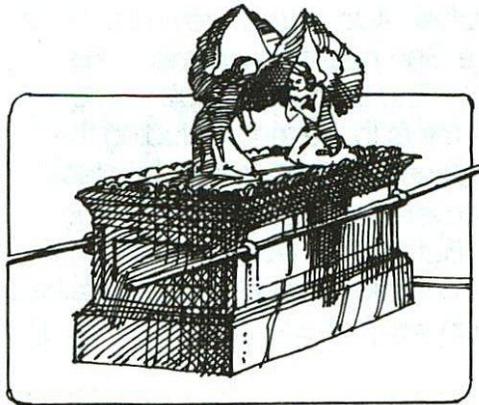
God is a God of detail and precision, as revealed by these plans. The “Testimony” was to be placed in the ark, i.e., the stone tablets with the 10 commandments, or God’s word to the Israelites, the Torah. Today, our heart serves as the ark and the “Testimony” (God’s word) is to be stored there also.

b) Describe the cover (or lid) for the ark. The Hebrew word for this cover is ‘*kapporet*’. Do you know of any other names for this cover?

The solid gold cover had two cherubim sculpted on it kneeling, facing each other, with their outstretched wings touching. This cover was also called the “Mercy Seat” or the “Atonement Cover.” (Kapporet and Kippor (as in Yom Kippor) both derive from the root meaning ‘atonement’.)

c) According to verse 22, what happened above this cover? Does God do this today?

God said, “I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.” Today God meets with us in our hearts and gives us His commands through the Holy Spirit.



“There . . . I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.”

Exodus 25:22

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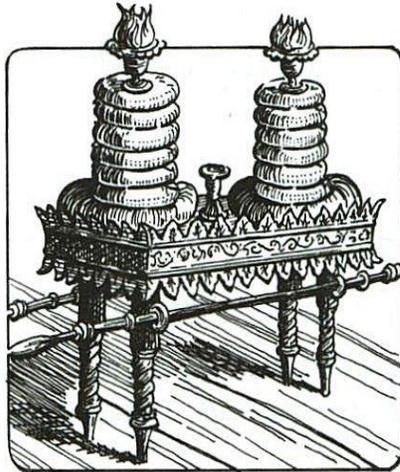
3. The Table - 25:23-30

a) Describe the table that was to be constructed. What utensils were to be placed on the table? According to verse 30, what was to be on the table at all times?

The table was slightly smaller than the ark, covered in gold. It had “plates and dishesas well as pitchers and bowls for the pouring out of offerings.” “The bread of the Presence” was to be on the table at all times. There were 12 loaves, one for each tribe of Israel, changed weekly.

b) The Hebrew words translated as 'showbread,' or 'bread of the Presence,' can be literally translated as 'bread of His face.' What do you think the symbolic purpose was for the Israelites? How might this apply today?

Possibly symbolic of the presence of each tribe before God, it reminded them of God's provision of food for them. Bread is also symbolic of God's word, which was to be present in each tribe's daily life. For us today, it may remind us of God's provision for our lives each day, as well as the fact that "we do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from God" (Matthew 4:4).



Scripture Link:

In **Matthew 4:4**, when *Yeshua* was undergoing temptation by satan, he resisted his physical hunger by quoting from **Deuteronomy 8:3** – “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from God.” In the Bible, bread is often symbolic of God's word, which we are to “feed on” daily. So, among other things, the showbread can be considered symbolic of God's word.

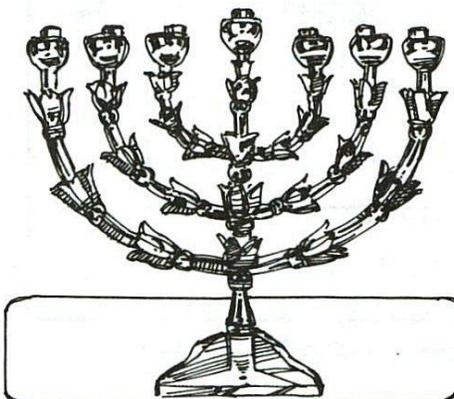
4. The Lampstand - 25:31-40

a) Describe this third major furnishing for the 'Mishkan.' How much did a 'talent' of pure gold weigh? Where did the precise description for this piece come from?

The lamp stand was a six-branched candelabra, probably a precursor to today's menorah, made of approximately 75 pounds of gold. Verse 40 says that it is to be made “according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain.” In Hebrew, this lamp stand is called the Menorah.

b) What functions did this object perform, both real and symbolic? What do you think it represents in the life of the believer today?

Aside from providing needed light in the tabernacle, the lampstand was probably symbolic of God's guiding light provided to the Israelites. Today it represents God's guiding light, the Holy Spirit, in the heart of the believer.



Light in the Tabernacle

With no windows and heavy curtains, the Tabernacle was very dark inside. The only source of light was the *Menorah* which was to remain perpetually lit. Thus it provided the only light in the Tabernacle which guided the priests as they performed their assigned duties. As believers in *Yeshua*, God's Holy Spirit acts as the “light” in our lives, enabling us to carry out our duties for God.

The Physical Tabernacle

Although God designed his Tabernacle to be portable, it was certainly not a flimsy structure. The enclosed space was formed by 48 large gold-covered acacia wood planks (each approximately 15 feet long by 2 feet wide) which interlocked to form three walls. These walls were then covered by three large curtains providing a weather-safe interior. This was in addition to the furnishings for the Tabernacle and the poles, bars, and curtains that surrounded the courtyard in which the Tabernacle was placed.

This entire structure was torn down, moved, and set up numerous times during the next forty years. In the book of Numbers, we will study how this was done and how often it was done. The Tabernacle moved with the Israelites as they entered Canaan and remained with them until Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem some 400-500 years later.

5. The Tabernacle - 26:1-36

a) The tabernacle is described in detail from the inside out. If you were standing inside the tabernacle looking at the walls, what would you see? What was the next layer? What was on the outside? How big was the enclosed space?

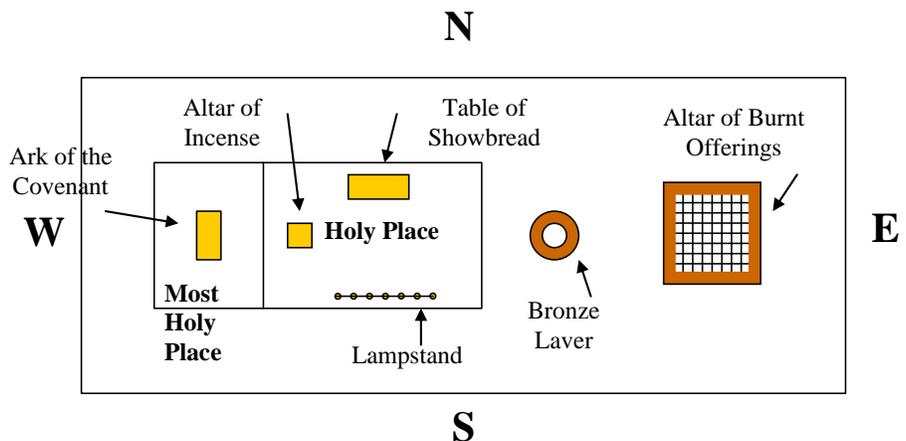
First you'd see tapestries of cherubim embroidered in blue, purple, and scarlet. Next is a layer of goat's hair curtains. The next layer is red-dyed ram skins and the outside layer is made from hides of sea cows. The enclosed space was ~15 x 45 x 15 ft high. (The Most Holy Place was ~15 x 15 x 15 ft.).

b) Verses 31-35 give details about the inside of the tabernacle. What separated the space into two parts? What were the two spaces called? Why do you think this separation was necessary? What significant thing happened to this separator at Yeshua's death (see **Matthew 27:51**)? Why was this significant?

The separator between the Most Holy Place (which contained the ark) and the Holy Place was a tapestry curtain with cherubim worked into it. At the moment of Yeshua's death, this curtain was ripped from top to bottom signifying that there was no longer anything to separate man from God.

c) Describe the layout of the interior of the tabernacle. (The final piece for the interior of the tabernacle, the altar of incense, is described later.)

The entrance to the tabernacle faces east. Standing just inside it, one would see the table of showbread on the right (north wall) and the lampstand on the left (south wall). Directly in front is the curtain separating this Holy Place from the Most Holy Place in which stands the ark of the covenant.



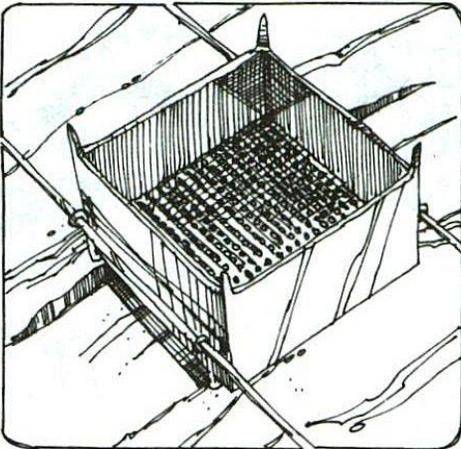
d) Given that God now 'tabernacles' in the heart of the believer, what symbolism can you find in the detailed plans of the tabernacle and its furnishings?

Possible symbolism might be 1) the Ark represents God the Father as well as the atonement provided by His Son, 2) the Table of Showbread represents the Messiah whose body was broken, as well as the Torah, the bread of life, and 3) the Menorah represents God's guiding light, the Holy Spirit. The final piece is the Altar of Incense (not described until chapter 30) which represents believers (us) in the midst of God, the incense representing our prayers.

6. The Altar of Burnt Offering - 27:1-8

How was the altar of burnt offering to be constructed? What were its dimensions? (We learn more of this altar later.)

The altar of burnt offering was ~7.5 ft x 7.5 ft made of acacia wood covered with bronze. It was hollow with a grate on which the burnt offering was placed.



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A Giant Barbecue?

Note that the Altar of Burnt Offering was a hollow box with a bronze grate inside (**Exodus 27:3-4**). It also had bronze tools to tend to the fire, fuel, meat and ash. It seems to resemble a large barbecue in today's world. Indeed, this is a good analogy, for the animal sacrifices were cooked (and sometimes totally consumed) by the fire in the Altar. It's even recorded that God finds the aroma of the cooking meat "a soothing aroma." (See **Genesis 8:21**, **Exodus 29:18, 41**, and others)

7. The Courtyard - 27:9-19

a) The tabernacle was to sit inside a courtyard. How was this courtyard to be constructed? What was its size?

The courtyard was ~150 ft long by 75 ft wide, composed of linen curtains supported by posts. The curtains were ~7.5 ft high. The entrance, on the east side, had two short wing walls (~ 22.5 ft) one on each side. In the center was an embroidered curtain ~30 ft long.

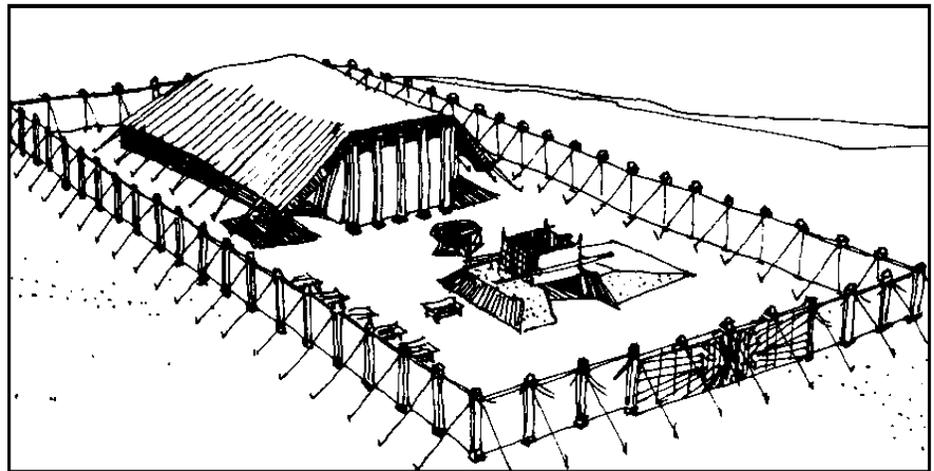
b) What was the function of the courtyard? Does this suggest any symbolic meaning to you?

The courtyard was the place where burnt offerings were made and where the priests cleansed themselves before entering the mishkan. Perhaps it is representative of those activities in our lives that are in the middle ground between everyday life and our relationship with God, e.g., meeting together and worshiping through praise and singing.

Approaching God

The Tabernacle or "Mishkan" of God was where He "dwelt among his people." The holiness of God requires that certain things be done before one could approach Him. Foremost on the list is cleansing from sin as God cannot have fellowship with evil. This is accomplished through animal sacrifice as defined in detail in **Leviticus**. The area of the courtyard, with its brazen altar for animal sacrifice and the laver for ceremonial cleansing, was where this work was done.

The Tabernacle or 'Mishkan' of God



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Tabernacle Replica at Timna, Israel



In Israel's southern Negev desert region (near the city of Eilat), sits Timna National Park, site of King Solomon's ancient copper mines. In addition to some beautiful scenery, there is also a full-scale replica of the Tabernacle. This model has been constructed and is maintained by local believers who live in the area. While the materials are not authentic, the size and construction are accurate and visiting the site helps gain a better understanding of the size and complexity of the structure.

For more information on this display, search for "Timna Park Tabernacle" on the Internet.

Digging deeper

1. The construction of the Temple in Jerusalem under the reign of Solomon is described in detail in **I Kings, chapters 6 - 8**. Compare this Temple with the *mishkan* described in this Torah portion. What differences seem most striking to you?

Solomon's Temple was of a much different design than the tabernacle in the desert. However, it was still focused on the Most Holy Place which contained the Ark of the Covenant. It is interesting to realize that the same ark, which was constructed in the desert under Moses' direction, 420 years later, came to rest in this magnificent Temple

***Common understanding of the symbolism of the Tabernacle:
Ark → God the Father; Table of Showbread → Messiah (Bread of Life, body broken); Menorah → Holy Spirit (light); Altar of Incense → Believers (in the midst of God, Incense → prayers).***

2. **Hebrews 10:19-22** speaks of the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. What insight do you gain from this passage concerning the symbolism of this curtain?

This passage assures us that we can pass through this "curtain" and come into God's presence because of the sacrifice made by Yeshua. We no longer have the need for priests since Yeshua is our High Priest before God.

Interesting side note: In the Tabernacle, the Altar of Incense is before the veil, near the Ark. In Hebrews 9, the Altar of Incense is behind the veil, with the Ark. Could this be because at Yeshua's death, the veil was rent, from top to bottom, and now we can come directly into His presence? (Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38, Luke 23:45)

For further study, see

Haftarah : 1 Kings 5:26 – 6:13

Brit Hadashah : Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:23-24; 10:1