

March 10

Scriptures: Read Exodus 25

Key Verse: “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” (Exodus 25:8)

Overview

The Bible gives much detailed information about the tabernacle and everything involved in the Israelite form of worship. We read about it in the books of Exodus, all of Leviticus, part of Numbers and it is even explained in the New Testament in some chapters of Hebrews. Why is this so important that it takes up a large portion of the inspired Word?

(1) It had a divine origin and was instructed and commanded by God Himself (25:9). (2) In it we see the great, unlimited, sovereign God speaking in simple details with man on his comparatively very low level of understanding. God also came at man's own level in Jesus Christ. He reached out to mankind because of His love. (3) Many of the articles within symbolize the Lord Jesus who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). The New Testament infers that His dwelling was as a tabernacle in our midst (John 2:19; Hebrews 9:11). (4) All that was connected with the tabernacle is described in the New Testament as a “copy and shadow of the heavenly things” (Hebrews 8:5; cf. 9:23; 10:1). (5) The relation is clearly seen when the veil in the Temple was torn at the time of Jesus' death on the cross (Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 10:19, 20; John 14:6). (6) We see with the light of the New Testament that through the tabernacle God revealed Himself to His people showing His holiness, glory, attributes and His relationship with them, just as believers today find these through Jesus Christ.

With the Lord's abundant grace, He asked the Israelites to build His dwelling place from that which He had created. He could have done it Himself, but 'God always uses the human vessel through whom He is to be glorified. He was pleased to have them build a place where they were encouraged to reverently go to repent of their sins, and become strengthened in their faith. With the New Covenant, we find that the Lord is present when just two or three are gathered in His name (Matt. 18:20). It is important for there to be a reverent gathering of fellow believers together: a place where one can be encouraged and built up in faith, a place where one can repent and make a public confession to follow God. The building of churches and other structures which glorify the Lord and lead people to Him is very important and needs the wholehearted support of the community of believers. God Himself encouraged the Israelites to give freewill offerings toward the building of the tabernacle; not giving because it was obligatory, but voluntarily out of a willing heart (25:2). We later learn that the Israelites gave generously much of which they received from the Egyptians at the time of their exodus (Ex. 12:35), and possibly the spoil taken from the defeated Amalekites. They not only gave, but all did their part and willingly pitched in to help in the construction (ch. 35).

The Lord first instructed Moses concerning the ark of the covenant which represented Jesus Christ. It was the most important piece of furniture in the Tabernacle, for it was where the atonement for their sins was made by the High Priest once a year (Leviticus 16). The mercy seat, upon which the blood was sprinkled, was on the top of the ark, between the cherubim which seem to be guards of the holiness of God. Jesus Christ is pictured in both the blood and the mercy seat which represents the means by which mankind comes to God, for from it the Lord Jesus intercedes for us.

On the table of showbread there was always to be a supply of twelve loaves which were to be consumed by the priests reverently before the Lord (Leviticus 24:2-9). This symbolized fellowship with God and reminded the Israelites of the necessity of continual communion with Him through the constantly renewed supply. We receive this communion with the Lord when we daily partake of His Holy Word and, with prayer, have fellowship with Jesus and spiritual renewal.

The seven-branched lamp stand of pure gold was the only light within the tabernacle, just as Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). The lamp stand symbolized the light or testimony that God's people were to have to the world. Today it is our responsibility as God's people to share His light with the world. In Israel, the almond tree is the first to come alive and blossom after the cold months, so the decorations of almond blossoms on the lamp stand represent the new life through this Light. The lamp stand's light source came from a lighted wick in the purest olive oil. The oil represents the Holy Spirit; when He is in us, He causes the light of Jesus to shine brightly through us drawing others unto Him.

Prayer

Lord, Your Holy Spirit indwells us and we are Your tabernacle in this age. Light up our lives and shine brightly through us today.