

God's Tabernacle Design: Its Utilization Begins

Exodus 40

Outline

- 1-16 | The Tabernacle is to be erected and Aaron and his sons are consecrated as priests
- 17-33 | The Consecration Service at the beginning of the 2nd year after the exodus
- 34-38 | The Glory of the Lord fills the Tabernacle as a cloud by day and the fire by night

Reflections

As noted previously, there are three basic phases to any construction project: planning and procurement, construction, and utilization. This chapter begins the utilization phase with regard to God's Tabernacle. Just as God had specific plans with regard to the design and construction of the tabernacle. So too, He has plans with regard to how the tabernacle and the priests is to be consecrated and utilized.

All of the events of chapter 12 to chapter 39 of Exodus took place over the span of one year. During which there were times when the Israelites tested God and complained against God and their leaders. They also became impatient with Moses and rebelled and started worshiping the gods of Egypt, resulting in the death of 3000. Also during that time, God established His covenant with them and the people agreed to be God's people and follow His commandments.

Now at the beginning of the second year, the Tabernacle is erected, Aaron and his sons are dedicated as priests and a consecration service is held for the Tabernacle and the priests. At that time the Glory of the Lord descended and filled the Tabernacle and it remained before it as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

It was this same cloud and pillar of fire that led the people as they traveled through the wilderness, Exodus 13:21-; 40:36-38.

Exodus 13:21-22 NASB The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. **22** He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Exodus 40:36-38 NASB Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; **37** but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. **38** For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.

Some days it would be easier if God still displayed His glory and gave direction in the same way today. If we could look up and see His Cloud or Pillar of Fire and it directed us in which way we should go and when, it would make life much easier. But God never intended their long term use. They would be temporary guides, helping to train the people to learn to trust and follow God, a tutor so to speak. That is how Paul describes the Law for Jews, Christians, and all people for that matter, in Galatians.

Galatians 3:23-24 NASB But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. **24** Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

This doesn't mean that we no longer have to read or study God's word. Quite the contrary, in it we have been given everything we need to know how to live to honor God, just as Peter said.

2 Peter 1:2-4 NASB Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; **3** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to

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life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

If we know God's word, it is able to give us direction and we won't need the physical manifestation of a cloud or pillar of fire. His Spirit resides in us and helps us remember the precepts found in God's word, enabling us to live to honor Him. The Spirit also urges us to repent and seek restoration when we fall short, at which time God is faithful, having already forgiven us. As the psalmist says, "For His lovingkindness is everlasting" (Psalms 136, *various verses*).

Lord God, Just as You guided the Israelites in the desert, now You guide us through Your word. We pray that Your Spirit will help us understand and remember the precepts found in Your word so that as we face the cares and concerns of the day we will be able to act in ways that honor You. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Key Words: Old Testament, Torah/Pentateuch, Exodus, Tabernacle, Glory of the Lord, Aaron, Priests, Cloud, Pillar of Fire

Note: This was originally published by me on studythebook.org on September 15, 2015.
