

Lesson Text

**I. The Completion Of The Tabernacle (Exodus 40:16-30)**

**II. God's Presence (Exodus 40:34, 38)**

The Main Thought: For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. (Exodus 40:38, KJV).

Unifying Principle: In the midst of a difficult transition, people look for security and guidance. Where can they find the security and direction they seek?

Lesson Aim: To help students understand the function and importance of the tabernacle.

Life aim: To explain how the tabernacle served as the dwelling place of God's presence among His people.

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40:16 Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he.

40:17 And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up.

40:18 And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars.

40:19 And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the Lord commanded Moses.

40:20 And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:

40:21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the Lord commanded Moses.

40:22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail.

40:23 And he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord; as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:24 And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward.

40:25 And he lighted the lamps before the Lord; as the Lord commanded Moses.

40:26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the vail:

40:27 And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the Lord commanded Moses

40:28 And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle

40:29 And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the Lord commanded Moses.

40:30 And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal.

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40:34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

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40:38 For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

**HISTORY:**

**Chapter 40:1-15** <sup>1</sup>A year had passed since the Passover night. On the night the Israelites had left Egypt. Now they called that night the first day. And they called the month Abib. It was the first month (Exodus chapter 12). Three months later the Israelites had arrived at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1). Moses received his instructions there, and they completed all the work during the next 9 months (Exodus 40:1). God told Moses how to place the tent. He told Moses where to place each different object in the tent. The special box (*the ark*) was the most important object. So Moses must place that first. And the curtain in front of the box hid the box (Exodus 40:2-8). Moses must mark the holy tent and everything in it with the special oil. This separated all those things to give honour to God (Exodus 40:9-11). Moses had to prepare Aaron and his sons to serve God as priests. They must wash before they put on the special clothes. Then Moses was to mark (*anoint*) them with the special oil. This showed that God had chosen them for his service. God chose only Aaron's family to be priests. Men from that family would always be the priests (Exodus 40:12-15).

**LESSON:**

**Exodus 40:16-30 The Completion Of The Tabernacle**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/exodus-19-40-lbw.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

**40:16** Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he. This emphasizes Moses' obedience to the Lord's instructions. God told Moses how to build and furnish the Tabernacle, and anoint for service. And Moses did it.

**40:17** And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up. <sup>2</sup>Tabernacle means "tent," "place of dwelling" or "sanctuary." It was a sacred place where God chose to meet His people, the Israelites, during the 40 years they wandered in the desert under Moses' leadership. It was the place where the leaders and people came together to worship and offer sacrifices. The Tabernacle was completed almost one year after the Exodus journey from Egypt. This is now the first day of the first month of the second year, and in a sense it tells Israel that they now have a new beginning, and now Moses has the task of putting together the tabernacle. He was chief overseer.

### Chronology Of The Exodus

Date	Event	Reference
Fifteenth day, first month, first year	Exodus	Exodus 12
Fifteenth day, second month, first year	Arrival in Wilderness of Sin	Exodus 16:1
Third month, first year	Arrival in Wilderness of Sinai	Exodus 19:1
First day, first month, second year	Erection of Tabernacle	Exodus 40:1. 17
	Dedication of Altar	Numbers 7:1
	Consecration of Levites	Numbers 8:1-26
Fourteenth day, first month, second year	Passover	Numbers 9:5
First day, second month, second year	Census	Numbers 1:1, 18
Fourteenth day, second month, second year	Supplemental Passover	Numbers 9:11
Twentieth day, second month, second year	Departure from Sinai	Numbers 10:11
First month, fortieth year	In Wilderness of Zin	Numbers 20:1, 22-29; 33:38
First day, fifth month, fortieth year	Death of Aaron	Numbers 20:22-29; 33:38
First day, eleventh month, fortieth year	Moses' Address	Deuteronomy 1:3

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**40:18** And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars. Moses began to put the tabernacle together by fastening the sockets (the shaped hole for connection); setting the frames into their bases, and attaching the crossbars; and putting together the columns or narrow poles. The Tabernacle was the portable worship center of the Israelites. It was the entire edifice. As they wandered through the desert, they would put up this structure wherever they camped. And whatever spot they chose became a holy place because this sacred tent was where God met His people.

**40:19** And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the Lord commanded Moses. The "tent" was the covering that surrounded the Tabernacle. The "tent" was the goats' hair covering, over the framework of wood that supported it. Then there was the outer covering of rams' skins and seals' skins. Moses spread the first cover over the tent and then he put the outer covering over the framework of the tent as commanded by the Lord.

**40:20** And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:— God had written His Laws on two flat stones— "The testimony" or "the Ten Commandments" which were placed inside the ark. Moses inserted the poles through the rings of the ark and put the mercy seat on top of the ark.

**40:21** And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the Lord commanded Moses. The "ark", sometimes described as "the Ark of the Covenant" or "the Ark of the Testimony." Moses brought the Ark into the Tabernacle (into the Holy of Holies/The Most Holy Place), partitioning off the veil or curtain covering by setting the ark of the Testimony from persons entering the dwelling or the Holy Place (separating the Holy of Holies from The Holy Place) as the Lord commanded. <sup>3</sup>The word "veil" in Hebrew means a screen, divider or separator that hides.

Essentially, it was shielding a holy God from sinful men. Whoever entered into the Holy of Holies was entering the

<sup>2</sup> [http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what\\_is\\_the\\_tabernacle](http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what_is_the_tabernacle)

<sup>3</sup> [http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what\\_is\\_the\\_tabernacle/tabernacle\\_holy\\_of\\_holies](http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what_is_the_tabernacle/tabernacle_holy_of_holies)

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

very presence of God. In fact, anyone except the high priest who entered the Holy of Holies would die.

**40:22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil.**

The "table" is the *"Table of the Shewbread (or Showbread)"*. Moses placed the table in *"the tent of the congregation"*, also known as "the tent of meeting" or *"the Tabernacle of the Congregation"* at the north side of the room outside the veil.

**40:23 And he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord; as the Lord had commanded Moses.**<sup>4</sup>The table of showbread was a small table made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. It measured 3 feet by 1.5 feet and was 2 feet, 3 inches high. It stood on the right side of the Holy Place across from the Lampstand and held 12 loaves of bread, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. The priests baked the bread with fine flour and it remained on the table before the Lord for a week; every Sabbath day the priests would remove it and eat it in the Holy Place, then put fresh bread on the table. Only priests could eat the bread, and it could only be eaten in the Holy Place, because it was holy. At this time Moses set the bread in order upon the table before the Lord, as the Lord commanded.

**40:24 And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward.** Moses placed the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, also known as *"The Lampstand."*<sup>5</sup>It stood at the left side of the Holy Place and it was the only source of light in the Holy Place. *"The candlestick or The Lampstand"* had a central branch from which three branches extended from each side, forming a total of seven branches. Seven lamps holding olive oil and wicks stood on top of the branches. Each branch looked like that of an almond tree, containing buds, blossoms and flowers. The priests were instructed to keep the lamps burning continuously.

**40:25 And he lighted the lamps before the Lord; as the Lord commanded Moses.** Moses did as he was instructed and lit the lamps before the Lord. Once the light of the lamps were lit, it was never allowed to go out. This was one of the important jobs of the priest: to keep this light burning perpetually. This Light was to never go out.

**40:26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil:—** Moses placed the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil.<sup>6</sup>The *"golden altar of incense"*, which is not to be confused with the brazen altar, sits in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. This altar was smaller than the brazen altar. It was square with each side measuring 1.5 feet and was 3 feet high. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. Four horns protruded from the four corners of the altar.

**40:27 And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the Lord commanded Moses.** Moses acted as priest in front of God. God commanded the priests to burn incense on the golden altar every morning and evening, the same time that the daily burnt offerings were made. The incense was to be left burning continually throughout the day and night as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. The incense was a symbol of the prayers and intercession of the people going up to God as a sweet fragrance. God wanted His dwelling to be a place where people could approach Him and pray to Him.

**40:28 And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle.** The entrance to the tabernacle or the Holy Place is called the *"door of the tabernacle."* It was hung on 5 pillars made of acacia wood that stood in bronze sockets. This shows that this entrance is part of the court. The door separated the earthly from the heavenly. The front door covered by a curtain containing the same colors as the Veil immediately in front of the Holy of Holies.

**40:29 And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the Lord commanded Moses.** This *"altar of the burnt offering"*, also known as the bronze or brazen altar was situated right inside the courtyard upon entering the gate to the tabernacle in its enclosure. When the Israelites gave a whole animal to God, they burnt it on the altar. They called that a *"burnt offering"*. The fire that burnt upon the altar was to consume the offerings by fire. Moses was to offer the burnt and meat (meal) offerings just as the Lord had commanded him to do.

**40:30 And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash**

<sup>4</sup> [http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what\\_is\\_the\\_tabernacle/tabernacle\\_table\\_showbread](http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what_is_the_tabernacle/tabernacle_table_showbread)

<sup>5</sup> [http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what\\_is\\_the\\_tabernacle/tabernacle\\_menorah](http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what_is_the_tabernacle/tabernacle_menorah)

<sup>6</sup> [http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what\\_is\\_the\\_tabernacle/tabernacle\\_altar\\_of\\_incense](http://the-tabernacle-place.com/articles/what_is_the_tabernacle/tabernacle_altar_of_incense)

**withal.** Moses set the laver in place. The "*laver*", or "*basin*", was a large bowl filled with water located halfway between the brazen altar and the Holy Place.<sup>7</sup> The priests were obligated to wash their hands and their feet before entering God's presence, to disobey would mean death (Ex.30:19-21). There was no floor (wood or tile) in the court or the tabernacle, therefore, the priest's feet would be defiled by the constant contact with the earth (dirt) and the hands by the work at the altar and other work. Therefore they had to wash before any ministry at the altar, to make them clean before communion with God and before service to man.

## **Exodus 40:34, 38 God's Presence**

**40:34** Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. God's presence had moved into the tent of the congregation because all that was commanded unto Moses by God was done. Therefore, this was the visible testimony of God's acceptance of the work done. God's pillar of cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord was a bright dazzling of light too difficult to look upon filled the tabernacle. God's glory indicated God's visible presence among His people.

**40:38** For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. Throughout the Israelite's journey, the cloud of the Lord was present upon the Tabernacle by day, and fire by night. It was a constant reminder to Israel that God's presence was among them. This was the same cloud, known as a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night over the mercy seat that the children of Israel followed throughout their wilderness wanderings.

## **SUMMARY:**

Moses obeyed everything the Lord instructed him to do. On the first day of the first month, in the second year, Moses set up the tabernacle by setting its frames into their bases and attaching the bars. He spread the coverings over the framework and the outer covering, just as the Lord had commanded him. Inside the Ark he placed the testimony (The Ten Commandments), attached the carrying poles to the Ark and installed the gold lid, the place of mercy. Then he brought the Ark into the Tabernacle hanging the veil of the covering and covered the Ark, just as the Lord had commanded. Next he placed the table at the north side of the room outside the curtain and set the Bread (showbread) in order upon the table before the Lord, just as the Lord had commanded. Moses places the lampstand next to the table, on the south side of the Tabernacle. He lit the lamps before the Lord, following all the Lord's instructions, and put the golden altar (of incense) in the Tabernacle next to the curtain, and burned sweet incense, just as the Lord had commanded. He hung up the curtain (door) at the entrance of the Tabernacle, and placed outside the altar for the burnt offerings near the entrance, and offered upon it a burnt offering and meat (a grain offering), just as the Lord had commanded him. Next he set the laver (washbasin) between the tent and the altar, filled with water for washing (**vv. 16-30**).

The cloud then covered the Tent of Congregation. But this time Moses could not enter in because the thickness of the cloud dwelt there, and God's Glory filled the Tabernacle. The cloud represented how powerful God's presence prevailed over the Tabernacle and could be seen by all the Israelites. Whenever the cloud lifted and moved from the Tabernacle, the people would go onward, but if the cloud stayed, then they stayed until it moved. the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel as they continued throughout all their journey while they traveled (**vv. 34, 38**).

## **APPLICATION:**

The need for survival is to have God's presence everywhere we go. God prepared the way through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit's leading for us, just as He has prepared the portable tabernacle for the children of Israel.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.watton.org/studies%26stories/tab/bronzelaver.shtml>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>