

The Pattern of Heavenly Things: A Study in Exodus 25

In Exodus chapter 25, we find ourselves at a remarkable turning point in the history of Israel. Up to this point, God has been delivering His people, guiding them through the wilderness, and giving them His Law. But now, the Creator of the universe says something breathtaking: *"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."*

It is interesting to note that as God gives Moses the design, He doesn't start with the exterior walls of the Tabernacle. He starts from the inside out. He begins with the furnishings—the very items that represent His presence, His mercy, and His fellowship with man.

The Heart of Giving: A Willing Offering

In Exodus chapter 25, verses 1 through 9, the Lord instructs Moses to speak to the children of Israel about an offering. Now, notice the specific requirement God sets: *"Every man that giveth it willingly with his heart shall take My offering."*

This is a beautiful biblical principle that carries right over into the New Testament. In Second Corinthians chapter 9, verse 7, we are reminded that *"every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."*

The word "cheerful" there in the original language actually gives us our English word "hilarious." God isn't looking for reluctant gifts. He doesn't want "grudging money" or "gripping money." If you are giving because you feel pressured by a clever letter or a manipulative appeal, keep it! God owns the cattle on a thousand hills; He doesn't need your resources, but He desires your heart. When we give to the Lord, it should be an act of joyful worship—a "Thank You, Lord!" for all He has provided.

The Pattern: A Model of Heaven

God repeatedly charges Moses in Exodus chapter 25, verse 9 and again in verse 40: *"Look that thou make them after the pattern, which was shewed thee."* Why such strict attention to detail? Because the Tabernacle wasn't just a tent; it was a model. The book of Hebrews tells us that these earthly things were shadows of the heavenly reality. When you look at the Tabernacle, you are getting a glimpse of the throne room of God.

The Ark and the Mercy Seat

The first item described is the Ark of the Testimony (Exodus chapter 25, verses 10 through 22). It was a chest made of acacia wood, overlaid with pure gold. Inside were the tablets of the Law, a jar of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded.

But the most important part was the lid: the Mercy Seat. Carved of solid gold, with two cherubim stretching their wings over it, this was the place where God would meet with man. It's a powerful picture. Between the holy Law of God (inside the box) and the presence of God (above the box) was the Mercy Seat. In the Old Testament, blood was sprinkled there to cover sin.

The Table and the Lampstand

Next, we see the Table of Showbread (Exodus chapter 25, verses 23 through 30). It held twelve loaves of bread, representing the twelve tribes. This speaks of fellowship. God desired to "eat" with His people, to have a relationship with them.

Opposite the table was the Golden Lampstand or Menorah (Exodus chapter 25, verses 31 through 39). It was beaten out of one piece of pure gold, shaped like an almond tree in bloom. It provided the only light in the Holy Place. It represented the light of God's presence and His desire for Israel to be a light to the nations.

Why the Lampstand Matters Today

People often ask why we might see a Menorah in a Christian setting. In Revelation chapter 1, John sees Jesus walking in the midst of seven golden lampstands. The Lord explains that these lampstands represent the Church.

We don't focus on a dead Savior hanging on a cross. While we glory in the work of the cross—knowing that Jesus saved us when He shed His precious blood there—the story didn't end in the grave! The resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord. He is the living Christ who walks in the midst of His Church today, ready to minister to your needs and light your path.

Practical Application & Challenge

The Tabernacle reminds us that God wants to dwell in our midst. But notice: the people had to provide the materials, and Moses had to follow the pattern.

My challenge to you as a believer is this: Are you following the "pattern" God has laid out in His Word for your life? Or are you trying to build your spiritual life according to your own blueprints? Let us be a people who offer our lives willingly and joyfully to Him, making room for His presence in our homes, our jobs, and our hearts.

An Invitation to New Life

Perhaps you are reading this today and you feel far from God. You feel like there is a "veil" between you and the Creator. I have glorious news for you. When Jesus died on the cross, the veil was torn in two. The way to the Mercy Seat is open.

Jesus shed His blood to wash away your sins, and He rose from the dead to give you eternal life. He is not a distant figure of history; He is the living Lord. If you will turn from your sins and put your trust in Him today, He will come and "dwell" within you. He will give you a peace that passes understanding. Why not give your life to Him right now?