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Exodus 40

(2020)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Exodus 40.

(A brief overview of the main topics).

Topics.

- Work to be done on the first day of the month.
- The furniture of the tabernacle is anointed.
- Aaron and his sons are clothed in holy garments.
- The Ark of the Covenant is brought into the tabernacle.
- The table of shewbread.
- The seven branched lampstand.
- The golden altar.
- The altar of burnt offering.
- The basin for washing.
- The screen of the outer court of the tabernacle.
- The glory of the LORD fills the tabernacle.

INTRODUCTION: in the book of Exodus, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham by multiplying Abraham's descendants into a great nation delivering them from slavery in Egypt to journey to the Promised Land, and then binding them to Himself with a covenant at Mount Sinai. Moses, under the direct command of God and as leader of Israel, received the Ten Commandments from God, along with other laws governing Israel's life and worship. He also led the nation in building the Tabernacle, a place where God's presence can dwell among his people and where they can make sacrifices for sin. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the Exodus from Egypt (about 1445 B.C.). Note: the promise God made to Abraham will be perfectly fulfilled when Christ returns in glory and all those (Jews and Gentiles) who belong to God's Kingdom are gathered to him. (See also the introduction to chapter one).

NOTE: for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

EXODUS 40:1-8

Work to Be Done on the First Day of the Month.

- **Exodus 40:1-8:** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. ³And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. ⁴And you shall bring in the table and arrange it, and you shall bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. ⁵And you shall put the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. ⁶You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, ⁷and place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. ⁸And you shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court.

On the first day of the week (Saturday) Israel was to set up the:

- The tabernacle (also called the tent of meeting).
- The ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle.
- The veil that screened the Ark of the Covenant from the Holy Place.
- The table in the Holy Place and arrange it with the shewbread.
- The lampstand and its lamps in the Holy Place.
- The golden altar of incense before the ark of the testimony in the Holy Place.
- The screen for the door of the tabernacle.
- The altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.
- The basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it.
- The court all around, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court.

EXODUS 40:9-11

The Furniture of the Tabernacle is Anointed.

- **Exodus 40:9-11:** "Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture, so that it may become holy. ¹⁰You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, so that the altar may become most holy. ¹¹You shall also anoint the basin and its stand, and consecrate it.

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In biblical language to consecrate a thing or a person means to pronounce or observe that thing or that person as being clean before the LORD. It carries the idea of dedicating that thing or that person to the LORD and setting it and the person apart for the work and service of the LORD. Likewise, to anoint a thing or a person means to smear that thing or that person with a smearing of oil. It carries the idea of giving that thing or a person an important position before the LORD.

An overview of the layout of the tabernacle: the tabernacle was divided into two sections; the first section was called the Holy Place the second section was called the Most Holy Place and the court surrounding the tabernacle was called the outer court. The entry into the outer court and the entry into the tabernacle faced east. When the people of Israel entered the gate into the outer court the first thing, they would see was the altar for sacrifices and burnt offerings, behind this was the basin for the priests to wash their hands and feet before ministering and behind the basin was the tabernacle itself. Behind the first curtain of the tabernacle (the entry into the Holy place) on the left was the golden lampstand and on the right the table of shewbread. The altar of incense was also in the Holy Place in front of the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy place. The Ark of the Covenant was behind this curtain in the Most Holy Place.

The altar of burnt offering: this is the first thing the people saw when they entered the gate of the outer court. It was upon this altar that the priests would offer the peoples sacrifices to the LORD. Some may tend to think that sacrificing so many animals was a waste, but this is not so. When the Scriptures talk of burnt offerings being sacrificed to the LORD, it helps to think of the word barbecued or cooked because most of the burnt offerings are not burnt as we think of something being burnt to

ashes, but are barbecued and become cooked food for the high priest and his family and for the Levitical priesthood. They are spoken of being offered to the LORD because almost all of them become food for the LORD'S priests and their families.

The basin and its stand: this basin is not a basin as we think of basins, it was quite large and used by the priests to wash in before serving the people before the LORD.

EXODUS 40:12-15

Aaron and His Sons are Clothed in Holy Garments.

- **Exodus 40:12-15:** Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall wash them with water ¹³and put on Aaron the holy garments. And you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. ¹⁴You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, ¹⁵and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests. And their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."

By being clothed in such rich and royal garments, the high priest outwardly symbolised the rich beauty of God that lies hidden within the faithful and the visible eye-catching and prominent position of the golden plate upon the high priest's forehead proclaiming HOLINESS TO THE LORD (Exodus 39:30-31) gave special meaning and character to all of his garments and to his office. For those seeking God and eternal life the high priest of the Old Testament was the most important man on earth and for those seeking God and eternal life in the New Testament the final High Priest (the Lord Jesus Christ) is still the most important man who ever walked on earth.

The symbolism: the sons of Aaron's were ordained priests, though not in the glorious robes of the high priest and secondary to his status speak of today's believers; while Aaron, the high priest, in his garments of glory and beauty, speaks of Christ our great High Priest.

It should be said: those who dress today in religious garments of glory and beauty as Aaron the high priest of the Old Testament did are still living under the Old Covenant and most likely deceiving the naive into thinking that they are holier than those who sit under their ministry. No one living today who ministers for the Lord needs to put on religious garments to make themselves appear outwardly holy or for any other reason the only clothing the Lord requires his servants to put on is humbleness, faithfulness, honesty, integrity, compassion, kindness, mercy and grace and an attitude that desires the best for others

EXODUS 40:16-18

The Tabernacle was Erected in the Month of Abib.

- **Exodus 40:16-18:** This Moses did; according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did. ¹⁷In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. ¹⁸Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars.

The first month of the ancient Hebrew calendar is Abib because it was on the first day of Abib that the LORD delivered Israel from the slavery and bondage of Egypt.

- Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night (Deut. 16:1).
- You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt (Exod. 34:18).

After the Babylonian captivity the name of the month was changed to Nisan (it means their flight) it falls somewhere within our months of March and April. It changes in relation to our months because the Jews use a lunar calendar (months of 29 or 30 days), with an extra month inserted in the year periodically to maintain the seasons.

EXODUS 40:19-21

The Ark of the Covenant is Brought into the Tabernacle.

- **Exodus 40:19-21:** And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁰He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. ²¹And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

It is interesting to notice that from the outside the tabernacle was simply covered with animal skins, it had no outward beauty, all its beauty was hidden within, the reason this is interesting is because the Scriptures when speaking of Jesus say:

- For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him (Isaiah 53:2).

Christ's beauty and glory were not in his outward physical appearance, but the Spirit and goodness that was within him. Likewise, the beauty and glory of all who belong to his Kingdom is not in outward appearance or what is seen by the eye, but the Spirit of Christ that dwells within. The Ark of the Covenant was a most beautiful box overlaid with gold, the testimony (the Ten Commandments) was put inside of it and the lid of the Ark was also overlaid with gold, it had a crown of gold around it and two gold Cherubim's looking over it.

From this we see two very interesting thing:

1. The lid of the Ark was called the Mercy Seat this means that to get to the law one first had to go through mercy.
2. The lid with the crown of gold and the Cherubim's watching over it can be seen as a symbol of Christ who all the angels watched over and who not only came with abundant mercy, but continues to offer mercy to all who come to him.

The Ark was set up in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle behind the veil no one could enter behind the veil into the presence of God except the high priest. Now here is another beautiful thing to notice. When Christ breathed his last breath on the bloodstained cross the Scriptures state:

- The curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom (Mark 15:38).

Symbolising the truth that all who belong to Christ's Kingdom can enter into the Most Holy Place of God and that no one who has faith in Jesus needs a human priest to stand between them and God. The only priest anyone needs today is God's perfect and eternal High Priest the Lord Jesus Christ.

EXODUS 40:22-23

The Table of Shewbread.

- **Exodus 40:22-23:** He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, ²³and arranged the bread on it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The table of shewbread is set up in the Holy Place of the tabernacle. The tabernacle and all its furniture is full of symbolisms of Christ, to see the beauty of these symbolisms see:

- Hebrews in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Here is another beautiful gem: the tabernacle consisted of two rooms called the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The first room anyone entered into was the Holy Place, in this room the priests had to daily attend to the shewbread and to keeping the lamps of the seven branched candlestick filled with oil so that their light (a symbol of the Spirit of God) continued to shine upon the bread (a symbol of Christs body) so it was a place of religious works. Now in the second room there was no work to be done, the high priest simply prepared himself and entered into this Most Holy Place. This is a perfect picture of the New Covenant of Grace no one can enter God's presence by adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions the only way into the Kingdom of God is by faith in Christ and by God's grace.

EXODUS 40:24-25

The Seven Branched Lampstand.

- **Exodus 40:24-25:** He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, ²⁵and set up the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The lampstand had one main stem and off this stem were six branches three on one side and three on the other side. The stem of course symbolises Christ while the branches symbolise the church it could be said the three branches on one side symbolise the Jews while the three branches on the other side symbolise the Gentiles. Now here is the interesting thing, this lampstand was made from the one piece of gold symbolising Christ and the believing Jews and the believing Gentiles being all one.

EXODUS 40:26-28

The Golden Altar.

- **Exodus 40:26-28:** He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, ²⁷and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁸He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle.

The golden altar of incense was set up in the Holy Place its sweet-smelling aroma would drift over the curtain and into the Most Holy Place symbolising that all prayers and work done in faith for the Lord enters heaven before the throne of God and is heard and seen by God and all the heavenly angels.

EXODUS 40:29

The Altar of Burnt Offering.

- **Exodus 40:29:** And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The altar for the people's sacrifices was set up at the entrance of the courtyard it was the first thing the people saw as they entered into the outer courtyard of the tabernacle. How beautiful is the symbolism embrace in this, i.e., for a sinner to enter the Kingdom of God they must first believe the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary the altar of

Christ's sacrifice. For those who feel (as I did many years ago) that sacrificing animals was an act of cruelty and a waste of animal life see the notes under the title: "The Altar of Burnt Offering" following (v9-11) (above). On behalf of the people the high priest would take a bowl of the animals' blood into the Most Holy Place to present it before the LORD. Now here is the wonder and beauty of Scripture, Jesus on behalf of all sinners laid down his life to a brutal, bloody and cruel death and took his own blood before the throne of God so that all who believe in him would be saved by faith and God's grace and set free from striving to attain to righteousness by self-effort and adhering to ceremonial rites and keeping religious customs and traditions.

EXODUS 40:30-32

The Basin for Washing.

- **Exodus 40:30-32:** He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, ³¹with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. ³²When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, as the LORD commanded Moses.

The basin was set up between the altar for sacrifices and the entrance of the tabernacle. No priest could minister before the LORD without first washing themselves with water. This is a beautiful symbol of New Testament water baptism. To enter the Kingdom of God and the family of Christ all sinners are called to enter through the waters of baptism. Many today believe that water baptism has passed away, yet long after Christ's death and resurrection all who confessed to believe in Christ throughout the book of acts were water baptised and the apostles and Paul proclaimed water baptism. It stuns me that this spiritual act of faith is considered irrelevant today when not only Paul (who wrote a great majority of the New Testament) was told to be water baptised and the founder of our faith the Lord Jesus Christ was water baptised. For further information concerning water baptism, see the title:

- Water Baptism (ON WEBSITE MENU).

EXODUS 40:33

The Screen of the Outer Court of the Tabernacle.

- **Exodus 40:33:** And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So, Moses finished the work.

The tabernacle was enclosed by a screen. From the outside the tabernacle was not a thing of beauty, but the more one entered into it the greater the beauty became likewise, looking at the bloodstained cross of Calvary has no beauty in itself until one understands its glorious message of self-sacrificing love and its message of salvation by faith and God's grace and that all have the opportunity to become sons and daughters of God through faith in Christ.

- But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

EXODUS 40:34-38

The Glory of the LORD fills the Tabernacle.

- **Exodus 40:34-38:** Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁶Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of

Israel would set out. ³⁷But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. ³⁸For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.

When God's plan and design of the tabernacle was complete and fully erected and not until then the glory of the LORD filled it. This is a perfect picture of the Lord's return, when Christ's global and spiritual temple on this earth is fully established Christ will return and the glory of the Lord that dwells within all faithful brothers and sisters will be manifested in royal wonder and splendour for all to see. The Scriptures state:

- For they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection (Luke 20:36).
- For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (Romans 8:19).
- For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith (Gal. 3:26).
- See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:1-2).

Moses one of the greatest prophets of the Bible was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. This will not be so when the Lord returns in glory, all who have died in faith and those who are alive will be resurrected and gathered together to be with the Lord and granted immortality and eternal life and dwell in everlasting glory with Christ forever. Throughout all Israel's wilderness journeys they were led by the cloud of the LORD by day and a pillar of fire by night. Obviously, a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire by night would be very easy to see. No one would have any doubt as to what God's will was, likewise Christ has made it very clear to all who follow him what the will of God is by giving us the following two commandments:

1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matt. 22:37).

Jesus said, "This is the great and first commandment" (Matt. 22:37-38).

2. You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Matt. 22:39-40).

Jesus said, "On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 22:40) and that there is no other commandment greater than these two (Mark 12:31). James the brother of Jesus wrote:

- If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well (James 2:8).

Concerning God's law Paul said:

- The whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Galatians 5:14).
- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

The reason Christ made it very clear that these two commandments are God's will for all who belong to His Kingdom is because the spirit behind the law is love because each law protects another human from harm. In the book of Romans Paul states:

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

The spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from physical, financial, sexual, verbal and emotional and spiritual harm. This is why those who know God are called to keep the law it is the right and loving thing to do and fulfils the royal law:

- Love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:31) (James 2:8).

Added to this it pleases God and brings a good testimony to His name and the name of, Jesus and the Christian faith. Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because they are saved. They understand that righteousness is a free gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort. One great scholar wrote: though the law is splendid as a guide to understanding God's will, as a means of reunion with God, the God we have sinned against, it is a hopeless failure nevertheless both law and grace go together, the law without the Gospel is diagnosis without remedy, but the Gospel without law is only the Good News of salvation for people who don't believe they need it because they have never heard the bad news of judgment, the law is not the Gospel, but the Gospel is not lawless (Rom. 3:19-20) (Eph. 2:13-22).

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount: the constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This means living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, "What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person." It is all about doing right to others. This is the reason the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). Based on the commandment, love your neighbour as yourself and the law it could be said that a wicked and evil person is one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and deliberately does harm to other humans. For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.