

# Exodus 40 Commentary

[PREVIOUS](#)

[NEXT](#)

**CLICK VERSE**

To go directly to that verse

[Exodus 40:1](#)

[Exodus 40:2](#)

[Exodus 40:3](#)

[Exodus 40:4](#)

[Exodus 40:5](#)

[Exodus 40:6](#)

[Exodus 40:7](#)

[Exodus 40:8](#)

[Exodus 40:9](#)

[Exodus 40:10](#)

[Exodus 40:11](#)

[Exodus 40:12](#)

[Exodus 40:13](#)

[Exodus 40:14](#)

[Exodus 40:15](#)

[Exodus 40:16](#)

[Exodus 40:17](#)

[Exodus 40:18](#)

[Exodus 40:19](#)

[Exodus 40:20](#)

[Exodus 40:21](#)

[Exodus 40:22](#)

[Exodus 40:23](#)

[Exodus 40:24](#)

[Exodus 40:25](#)

[Exodus 40:26](#)

[Exodus 40:27](#)

[Exodus 40:28](#)

[Exodus 40:29](#)

[Exodus 40:30](#)

[Exodus 40:31](#)

[Exodus 40:32](#)

[Exodus 40:33](#)

[Exodus 40:34](#)

[Exodus 40:35](#)

[Exodus 40:36](#)

[Exodus 40:37](#)

[Exodus 40:38](#)

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[View Chuck Swindoll's chart of Exodus.](#)

## Summary Chart of The Book of Exodus

**DELIVERANCE  
FROM OPPRESSION**

**PREPARATION FOR  
WORSHIP**

<b>Redemption from Egypt</b> Ex 1:1-18:27						<b>Revelation from God</b> Ex 19:1-40:38			
<b>Getting Israel Out of Egypt</b>						<b>Getting Egypt Out of Israel!</b>			
<b>Narration</b>						<b>Legislation</b>			
Birth of Moses Ex 1-2	Call of Moses Ex 3-6	Conflict with Pharaoh Ex 7-10	Exodus from Egypt Ex 11-12	Red Sea Crossed Ex 13-15	Journey To Sinai Ex 16-18	Law Given Ex 19-24	Tent Plan Ex 25-31	Idol Worship Ex 32-34	Tent Built Ex 35-40
<b>Subjection</b>			<b>Redemption</b>			<b>Instruction</b>			
<b>Suffering and Liberation of People of God</b>			<b>Guidance of God</b>			<b>Worship of God</b>			
<b>Moses and Burdens of Israel</b>		<b>Pharaoh and Plagues Upon Egypt</b>		<b>Red Sea Deliverance</b>	<b>Wilderness Provision</b>	<b>Sinai Instructions</b>			
<b>Bondage and Oppression</b>			<b>Deliverance and Provision</b>			<b>Law Pattern and Construction</b>			
<b>Israel in Egypt</b> Ex 1:1-13:16			<b>Israel to Sinai</b> Ex 13:17-18:27			<b>Israel at Sinai</b> Ex 19:1-40:38			
<b>God's People Enduring Bondage</b>			<b>God's Grace Revealed in Redemption</b>			<b>God's Glory Manifested in Worship</b>			
<b>Egypt</b> <b>430 Years</b> (15% of Exodus)			<b>Wilderness</b> <b>2 Months</b> (30% of Exodus)			<b>Mt Sinai</b> <b>10 Months</b> (55% of Exodus)			
<b>From Groaning</b>									<b>To Glory!</b>

[Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament - online](#)

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[Click for Excellent Map of Route of the Exodus](#)

[Click another Exodus from Egypt](#)

[Click for Events during the Sojourn at Kadesh-Barnea](#)

<b>GENESIS</b>	<b>EXODUS</b>
human effort and failure	divine power and triumph
word of promise	work of fulfillment
a people chosen	a people called
God's electing mercy	God's electing manner
revelation of nationality	realization of nationality

SUMMARY OF THE PENTATEUCH  
(from Believer's Study Bible)

**Exodus 40:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,**

- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Cassuto** prefaces this final chapter of this great book writing "All the components of the Tabernacle, its furniture and its utensils are ready for use, and each one of them has been duly delivered to Moses. The time has now arrived to put the parts together and to

set up the Tabernacle properly. After reading so many unrelated paragraphs, which show us each item as a separate and independent entity, we now wait for the process of dissection to be followed by one of integration, and we hope to be given an overall picture that will unify all the various elements into one whole structure, in which each constituent will occupy the place due to it and befitting its function. This complete view is now vouchsafed us in the last chapter of the Book." ([Commentary on the Book of Exodus](#))

**Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,** - This phrase **the LORD spoke to Moses** occurs 17x in Ex 6:10; Ex 6:13; Ex 6:28; Ex 6:29; Ex 7:8; Ex 13:1; Ex 14:1; Ex 16:11; Ex 19:21; Ex 25:1; Ex 30:17; Ex 30:22; Ex 31:1; Ex 31:12; Ex 32:7; Ex 33:1; Ex 40:1

**NET Note** - All of Ex 39:32–40:38 could be taken as a unit. The first section (39:32–43) shows that the Israelites had carefully and accurately completed the preparation and brought everything they had made to Moses: **The work of the LORD builds on the faithful obedience of the people.** In the second section are the instruction and the implementation (40:1–33): The work of the LORD progresses through the unifying of the work. The last part (40:34–38) may take the most attention: When the work was completed, the glory filled the tabernacle: By his glorious presence, the LORD blesses and directs his people in their worship.

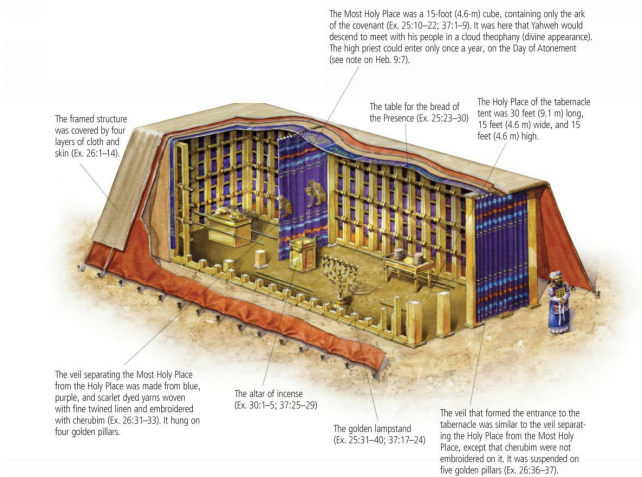
## SUMMARY OF EXODUS 40:1-33

**Exodus 40:17–33** contains 9 subsections each concluding with **just as the LORD had commanded Moses** (see Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32)

DESCRIPTION OF MOSES' ACTIONS	INSTRUCTION DESCRIBED	INSTRUCTION FULFILLED
Moses erected the tabernacle	Ex 40:2	Ex 40:17-19
Ark of Testimony placed and veil set up	Ex 40:3	Ex 40:20-21
Table of Bread of Presence placed	Ex 40:4a	Ex 40:22-23
Placed the Lampstand	Ex 40:4b	Ex 40:24-25
Placed Gold Altar of Incense	Ex 40:5a	Ex 40:26-27
Set up Veil for Doorway of Tabernacle	Ex 40:5b	Ex 40:28
Set up Altar of Burnt Offering	Ex 40:6	Ex 40:29
Set up the Laver for washing	Ex 40:7	Ex 40:30-32
Erected the Outer Court	Ex 40:8	Ex 40:33

**Exodus 40:2 "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.**

- **first month:** Ex 40:17 12:1,2 13:4 Nu 7:1
- **tabernacle:** Ex 40:6,18,19 26:1,7,30 27:21 30:36 35:11 36:18
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



**The Tabernacle**  
 Click to Enlarge  
 (Source: [ESV.org](http://ESV.org))

**On the first day of the first month** - "the beginning of the new year, when you enter upon a new period of your life, will also mark the inception for you of a new epoch in the Lord's service." (Cassuto)

**You shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting**- Yahweh gave the instructions to Moses who gave them to the skilled workers who with diligence, duty and devotion completed the task as we say today "to a T."

**Bush** - On the first day of the fifth month thou shalt set up the tabernacle. From an attentive survey of all the incidents recorded to have happened after the exodus from Egypt, it appears that about six months intervened between that event and the commencement of the work of the tabernacle. Consequently they were about six months employed in the work itself; for the tabernacle was set up at the beginning of the second year, or one year lacking fifteen days after they had left Egypt. Considering the vast amount of curious and costly workmanship that was requisite, the undertaking was carried through with great expedition. But the hearts of the people were in this work, and this made all their labor light; and the union of men's hands, and much zeal will necessarily bring to a speedy accomplishment any work that is undertaken.

**Exodus 40:3 "You shall place the ark of the testimony there, and you shall screen the ark with the veil.**

- Ex 40:20,21 25:10,22 26:31,33,34 35:12 36:35,36 37:1-9 Lev 16:14 Nu 4:5 Rev 11:19
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Ark of the Covenant

**You shall place the ark of the testimony there, and you shall screen the ark with the veil**- In Ex 26:33+ we read of this screening "You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and **the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies.**"

**Bush** - And cover the ark with the vail That is, hang up the separating vail so as to hide the ark from the public view. For this reason the vail is called, Num. 4:5KJV, 'the covering vail.'

**Exodus 40:4 "You shall bring in the table and arrange what belongs on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and mount its lamps.**

- **the table:** Ex 40:22,25 Ex 25:23-30 Ex 26:35,36 Ex 37:10-24
- **what belongs on it** , Lev 24:5,6,8
- **the lampstand:** Ex 40:24,25 Ex 25:31-39
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Table with Bread of Presence

**You shall bring in the table and arrange what belongs on it-** For the table description see comments on Ex 25:23-30. Ex 25:29-30+ describes **what belongs on it** = You shall make its dishes and its pans and its jars and its bowls with which to pour drink offerings; you shall make them of pure gold. You shall set the **bread of the Presence** on the table before Me at all times."



Lampstand with Lamps

**and you shall bring in the lampstand and mount its lamps-** See commentary on the **lampstand** and its construction in Ex 25:31-39.

#### Related Resources:

- [What was the bread of the Presence \(Exodus 25:30\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the Bread of Life" \(John 6:35\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the significance of the lampstand in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the menorah? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Exodus 40:5 "Moreover, you shall set the gold altar of incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the veil for the doorway to the tabernacle.**

- **set the gold altar of incense:** Ex 40:26,27 Ex 30:1-5 Ex 35:25-28 Ex 37:25-28 Joh 14:6 Heb 9:24 10:19-22 1Jn 2:1,2
- **set up the veil:** Ex 40:28 Ex 26:36,37
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Altar of Incense

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 30:6+ "You shall put this altar (OF INCENSE) in front of the veil (BETWEEN HOLY PLACE AND HOLY OF HOLIES) that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you.

**Moreover, you shall set the gold altar of incense before the ark of the testimony-** See commentary on Ex 30:1-5

#### Related Passage:

Exodus 26:36-37+ "You shall make a **screen** (HERE IN VERSE 5 CALLED "THE VEIL") **for the doorway of the tent** (TABERNACLE) of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of a weaver. 37 "You shall make five pillars of acacia for the screen and overlay them with gold, their hooks also being of gold; and you shall cast five sockets of bronze for them.

**And set up the veil for the doorway to the tabernacle-** It is interesting that his **veil** into the **Tabernacle** (and into the Holy Place) did not have figures of cherubim as did the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Two thoughts come to mind. One is to keep those Israelites who entered the courtyard to bring their sacrifices would not see an image and would not be tempted to make an image of angels or to worship angels. (2) The cherubim would have been symbolically guarding the way into the Holy of holies which could only be entered once a year on penalty of death. In a similar way God had "stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life" (Ge 3:24+) lest they eat of this tree and live forever in a state of separation from God because of their sin.

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**Question: [What was the significance of the altar of incense?](#)**

**Answer:** The altar of incense is first mentioned in Exodus chapter 30 as one of the items inside the Holy Place of the tabernacle. The top of the altar was square—one cubit per side—and the whole altar was two cubits high. A cubit was about twenty inches, or just under two feet. The altar of incense was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. It had four “horns,” one at each corner, similar to the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard (Exodus 27:2). Rings of gold were built into the altar so that it could be carried with acacia wood poles that were slipped through the rings. The altar of incense was placed before the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. On the other side of the veil was the [Ark of the Testimony](#), where the presence of God was (Exodus 25:22).

Aaron was instructed to burn incense on the altar each morning and at twilight, every day, as a regular offering to the Lord (Exodus 30:7–8). God gave the recipe for making the incense and stipulated that no other incense ever be burned on the altar (verses 34–38). The fire used to burn the incense was always taken from the altar of burnt offering outside the sanctuary (Leviticus 16:12). Never was the altar of incense to be used for a burnt offering, a grain offering, or a drink offering (Exodus 30:9). Once a year, on the [Day of Atonement](#), the high priest was to put blood on the horns of the altar of incense to cleanse it. The altar of incense was called “most holy to the Lord” (verse 10).

Of course, God’s primary desire for His people is that they be holy. Simply going through the rituals required by the Law—including the burning of incense on the altar of incense—was not enough to make the Israelites right with God. The Lord wanted their hearts and lives to be right, not just their formalities. During Isaiah’s time, the people were disobedient to God, yet they still maintained the temple rites, and that’s why God said through the prophet, “Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me” (Isaiah 1:13). More important than burning the proper incense at the proper time with the proper fire with the proper implements was having a proper heart before God.

In Scripture, incense is often associated with prayer. David prayed, “May my prayer be set before you like incense” (Psalm 141:2). In his vision of heaven, John saw that the elders around the throne “were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people” (Revelation 5:8; cf. 8:3). As Zechariah the priest was offering incense in the temple in Luke 1:10, “all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.”

The altar of incense, then, can be seen as a [symbol](#) of the prayers of God’s people. Our prayers ascend to God as the smoke of the incense ascended in the sanctuary. As the incense was burned with fire from the altar of burnt offering, our prayers must be kindled with heaven’s grace. The fact that the incense was always burning means that we should always pray (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). The altar of incense was holy to the Lord and was atoned for with the blood of the sacrifice; it is the blood of Christ applied to our hearts that makes our prayers acceptable. Our prayers are holy because of Jesus’ sacrifice, and therefore they are pleasing to God.

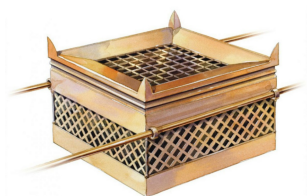
The altar of incense can also be seen as a picture of the intercession of Christ. Just as the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard was a type of Christ’s death on our behalf, the altar of incense in the Holy Place was a type of [Christ’s mediation](#) on our behalf—Christ’s work on earth and in heaven. The altar of incense was situated before the mercy-seat of the Ark—a picture of our Advocate’s standing in the presence of the Father (Hebrews 7:25; 9:24). The incense was to be burning continually on the altar of incense, which shows the perpetual nature of Christ’s mediation. Christ’s intercession on our behalf is a sweet-smelling savor to God.

It is beautiful to know that God considers the prayers of believers to be like a sweet smell of incense. Because of Christ, we can now enter God’s holy presence by faith, with full assurance (Mark 15:38; Hebrews 4:16). We offer our prayers upon the altar, trusting in Jesus, our eternal, perfect, and faithful High Priest (Hebrews 10:19–23). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

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**Exodus 40:6 "You shall set the altar of burnt offering in front of the doorway of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting."**

- Ex 40:29 Ex 27:1-8 Ex 38:1-7 Eph 1:6,7 Heb 13:10 1Jn 2:2 4:9,10
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Altar of Burnt Offering - Brazen Altar

**You shall set the altar of burnt offering in front of the doorway of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting-** (This is fulfilled in Ex 40:29 below). The **altar of burnt offering** is also called the bronze altar (Ex 38:30, Ex 39:39) or in the King James Version, the brazen altar (Ex 38:30KJV, Ex 39:39KJV). This **altar** is [shown in the courtyard in the schematic below](#) - after entering the courtyard, one first encounters the bronze altar and then the laver for washing. For the instructions on making the bronze **altar** see comments on Ex 27:1-8 (cf construction of the altar in Ex 38:1-7+. A description of the perpetual daily sacrifices and their purpose is described in Ex 29:38-43+.

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**Question:** [What was the brazen altar?](#)

**Answer:** During Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness, God commanded the people to build a moveable structure—the wilderness tabernacle—as a place of worship where He would come and dwell among them. The brazen altar, or “brass” altar, was a bronze structure upon which the burnt offerings of animal sacrifices were presented to the Lord.

The brazen altar was a portable construct and the largest of the tabernacle's seven pieces of furniture. Placed in the outer court of the wilderness tabernacle (Exodus 40:6), the brazen altar was the most prominent and imposing object in the court, and no worshiper could avoid seeing it upon entering.

The brazen altar was also called “the altar of burnt offerings” (Exodus 30:28), “the altar of God” (Psalm 43:4), and “the altar of the Lord” (Malachi 2:13). Built from acacia wood and overlaid with bronze, it measured 7.5 feet square by 4.5 feet high. At each of the altar's four corners was a horn-like projection, made of one piece with the altar. All of the utensils of the altar were made of bronze as well. The instructions God gave for the brazen altar also included a grating or network of bronze probably placed within the hollow center of the altar to hold the wood and sacrifice as it was being burnt. Two poles used for carrying the altar were overlaid with bronze and inserted into bronze rings at the altar's corners (Exodus 27:1–8).

Once the brazen altar was consecrated, whatever touched it became holy (Exodus 29:37). The Israelites made daily sacrifices to God on the brazen altar (Exodus 29:38). As the first priests began their service at the tabernacle, fire from the presence of the Lord consumed the sacrifice (Leviticus 9:24). According to Leviticus 6:13, the fire of the altar was to be kept burning at all times. The horns of the altar were to be covered with blood at the consecration of the priests (Exodus 29:1, 10–12; Leviticus 8:14–15; 9:9) and on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:18).

All of the elements of the wilderness tabernacle pointed to God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. By instituting each ritual of worship, God was teaching His people the fundamental principles of salvation. The brazen altar—where Israel's priests offered substitutionary animal sacrifices for the sins of the people—vividly illustrated the basics of atonement for sin.

Only by blood sacrifice was sin atoned. The brazen altar, ever ablaze and covered in blood, always stood open to accept the guilt of any Hebrew person who wished to come near to God. There the guilty sinner would offer another life, an innocent one, in his stead.

The brazen altar was situated prominently in the courtyard of the tabernacle. It was, in fact, the first thing one encountered upon entering the courtyard. The picture is clear: we cannot approach the holy presence of the Lord unless we first come to the place of sacrifice where atonement is made for our sin. The altar's placement revealed that coming to God or receiving the benefits of His presence requires dealing with the problem of our sin first. Later, Jesus would say, “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6; cf. 10:9). This ancient altar spoke unmistakably of Calvary, underscoring the meaning of Christ's death on the cross, which was the ultimate substitutionary sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 10:1–18). Access to God is ours only when we come to Him through the perfect, atoning sacrifice of the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Bronze is often associated with judgment in the Bible (see Numbers 21:9; Isaiah 60:17; Revelation 1:15). Bronze is harder than gold and silver and better able to resist heat and fire. In Deuteronomy 33:25 and Jeremiah 1:18, bronze is a symbol of the ability to endure. The bronze altar was a shadow of the reality found in Jesus Christ, who took our judgment and who alone possessed the power to endure the fire of God's holiness. Only Christ could withstand the cross and not be consumed by the flames of God's wrath and divine judgment.

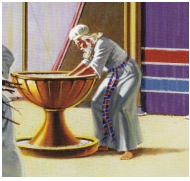
The altar, as the place of atonement, reminded worshipers of their sin and need of cleansing from sin's guilt. It signaled forward to the coming of Christ, in whom the entire ritual of sacrifice would reach its consummation.

The holiness and righteousness of God were displayed on the brazen altar. It was the place where sin was judged and its penalty paid. The brazen altar opened the way to approach God and find His mercy. Everything that touched the brazen altar was made holy. Jesus Christ is our brazen altar: “He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right” (1 Peter 2:24, NLT). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

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## Exodus 40:7 "You shall set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it."

- **set the laver** Ex 40:30-32 Ex 30:18-21 Ex 38:8 Ps 26:6 Zec 13:1 Tit 3:5 Heb 10:22 1Jn 1:7 Rev 1:5,6
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Laver of Bronze Before  
Entrance to Tent of Meeting

### Related Passages:

Exodus 30:18-21 (comments) "You shall also make a **laver of bronze**, with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar (BRONZE ALTAR, ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING - Ex 40:6), and you shall put water in it. 19 "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it; 20 when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, **so that they will not die**; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the LORD. 21 "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations."

**You shall set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it-** This **laver** is [shown in the courtyard in the schematic below](#). - after entering the courtyard, one first encounters the bronze altar and then the laver for washing. . See comments on Exodus 30:18-21. Moses follows this instruction in Ex 40:30, placing it between the tent of meeting and the bronze altar and putting water in it after which Moses, Aaron and his sons washed their hands and feet (Ex 40:31-32).

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### Question: [What was the significance of the bronze laver?](#)

**Answer:** The bronze laver, also called the "bronze basin" (NIV) and the "laver of brass" (KJV), was one of the furnishings required by God in the outer courts of the [tabernacle](#) and temple. It stood between the temple and the altar, and it held water for washing (Exodus 30:18).

The first bronze laver was made for the tabernacle, the movable tent erected in the desert after the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. The bronze laver was for Aaron and his sons (the priests) to wash their hands and feet before they entered the tabernacle, "so that they will not die" (Exodus 30:20). The priests also had to wash their hands and their feet before they approached the altar with a food offering (verse 21). God declared that this was to be a statute forever to them. The washing of the priests was to be observed by Aaron and his descendants in all ages, as long as their priesthood lasted. God wanted His people to understand the importance of purity.

Exodus 38:8 tells us that the bronze laver and its base of bronze were made from the mirrors brought by "the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting." The women of that day did not have glass mirrors as we do today. They used highly polished brass and other metals. Job 37:18 refers to a "mirror of cast bronze." The serving women donated their mirrors to the tabernacle to be used in creating the bronze laver.

After the Jews ended their wandering in the desert, the tabernacle was replaced by the [temple in Jerusalem](#), built by King Solomon. The bronze laver in the temple was made by a bronze worker named [Hiram](#) of Tyre who also crafted the [bronze pillars](#) that stood at the entrance to the temple vestibule (1 Kings 7:13–14). The "Sea of cast metal" (1 Kings 7:23), so called because of its great size, took the place of the tabernacle's laver, but its function was the same—the washing of the priests.

This second laver was much larger than the one in the tabernacle: 15 feet in diameter at the top and about 47 feet in circumference, with a depth of 7.5 feet (1 Kings 7:23). The depth of the water in the bronze laver seems to indicate that the priests completely immersed themselves in it, rather than just washing their hands and feet. The brim of the laver was carved with flowers, and oxen were carved or cut on the outside all around. The laver stood on a pedestal of twelve bronze oxen, three facing each direction of the compass. The temple court also held ten bronze basins for washing the sacrifices (2 Chronicles 4:6), but the Sea, or the bronze laver, was only for the priests to wash in.

When the [Babylonians](#) sacked Jerusalem in 605 BC, they "broke up the bronze pillars, the movable stands and the bronze Sea that were at the temple of the LORD and they carried all the bronze to Babylon" (Jeremiah 52:17). The bronze laver had to be rebuilt for [Zerubbabel's temple](#).

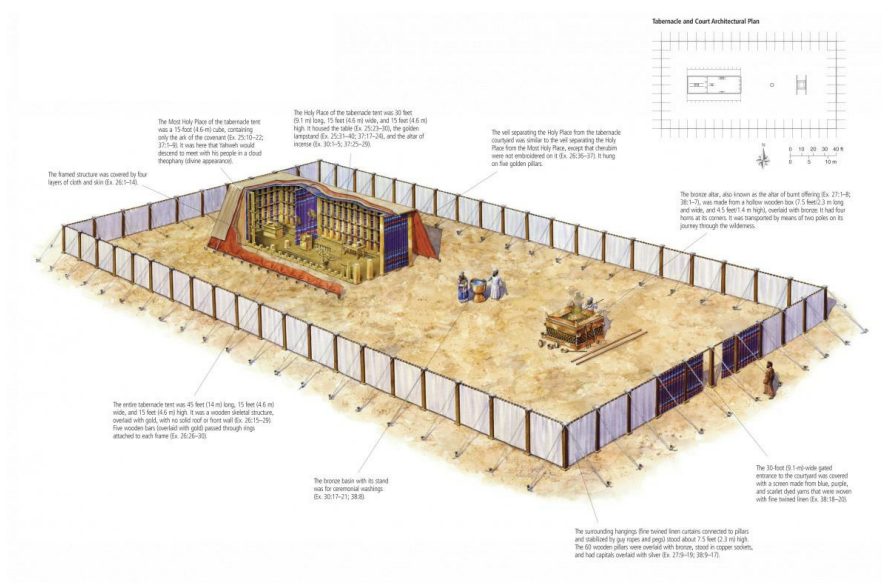


There are no biblical descriptions of the bronze laver as part of [Herod's temple](#), but historians believe the bronze laver rested on twelve bronze bulls and sat between the altar and the temple, as Moses had instructed. When the Romans sacked Jerusalem in AD 70, the temple was completely destroyed, and the furnishings, including the laver, were either stolen or destroyed.

It is significant that the bronze laver was the last object to be encountered before entering the tabernacle (Exodus 40:6–7). Before entering God's presence, one must be cleansed. The Levitical priests had to continually wash to ready themselves for the presence of Holy God, but Jesus Christ fulfilled all the Law (Matthew 5:17). When Christ died, His people were cleansed once for all time by His blood shed on the cross. We no longer need a ritualistic washing with water to come before God, because Christ has "provided purification for sins" (Hebrews 1:3). Now we can "approach the throne of grace with confidence" (Hebrews 4:16), being sure that we are acceptable to Him because we are spiritually clean. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

## Exodus 40:8 "You shall set up the court all around and hang up the veil for the gateway of the court."

- set up the court all around Ex 40:33 Ex 27:9-19 Ex 38:9-20 Mt 16:18 1Co 12:28 Eph 4:11,12
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



### COURT WITH VEIL OVER GATEWAY

**You shall set up the court all around and hang up the veil for the gateway of the court-** See comments on Ex 27:9-19 for the court and its construction. Ex 38:18-20+ describes the "screen (VEIL) of the gate (GATEWAY) of the court."

## Exodus 40:9 "Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and shall consecrate it and all its furnishings; and it shall be holy."

- the anointing oil Ex 30:23-33 Ex 37:29 39:39 Lev 8:10 Nu 7:1 Ps 45:7 Isa 11:2 61:1 Mt 3:16 Joh 3:34 2Co 1:4,22 1Jn 2:20
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Cassuto** - Even when the tabernacle has been duly erected and put in order, it will still not be deemed the sanctuary of the Lord until a special ceremony of consecration has been performed by anointing it with the oil of anointment.

**Then you shall take the anointing oil-** See comments on Ex 30:23-33 for preparation of the anointing oil and all the items anointed with it. Obviously this anointing could only be carried out after the Tabernacle were completely constructed.

**and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and shall consecrate it and all its furnishings; and it shall be** (from that moment) **holy** - Ex 30:29 says "You shall also consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be holy."

**Cassuto on all that is in it** - The inner vessels were included in the expression and all that is in it, and there was no need, therefore, to enumerate them all individually; but the case of the outer vessels was different, for they were not in it—in the Tabernacle—and hence they are mentioned in detail

**Bush - And thou shalt take the anointing oil and anoint, &c** Every thing having been duly brought and disposed in its proper place, the consecration of the whole by sacred unction follows.

**Exodus 40:10 "You shall anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, and the altar shall be most holy.**

- **anoint the altar of burnt offering** Ex 29:36-37 Lev 8:11 Isa 11:2 61:1 Joh 3:34 17:19
- **the altar shall be most holy**, Lu 1:35 1Co 1:30 2Co 5:21 Heb 7:26
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Altar of Burnt Offering - Brazen Altar

#### Related Passages:

Ex 30:26 "With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, 27 and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, 28 and the **altar of burnt offering and all its utensils**, and the laver and its stand. 29 "You shall also **consecrate** them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be holy.

**You shall anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, and the altar shall be most holy-** See comments on Ex 30:28-29. As Cassuto says "It, too, shall be most holy like the inner vessels; the point is specifically stated so that none should think that since its place was outside the Tabernacle, its sanctity was of a lower order. Similarly, Moses must anoint the laver and its base (verse 11)."

**Exodus 40:11 "You shall anoint the laver and its stand, and consecrate it.**

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Laver of Bronze

## CONSECRATION OF TABERNACLE COMPLETED

**You shall anoint the laver and its stand, and consecrate it-** This is described in Exodus 29:36 "With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, 27 and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, 28 "the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and **the laver** and its stand.

**U. Cassuto** (Exodus, 480) notes that the items inside the tent did not need to be enumerated since they were already holy, but items in the courtyard needed special attention. People needed to know that items outside the tent were just as holy.

**Exodus 40:12 "Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water.**

- Ex 29:1-35 Lev 8:1-13 9:1-24 Isa 11:1-5 61:1-3 Mt 3:16 Lu 1:35 Joh 3:34 Ro 8:3 Ga 4:4
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## STEP ONE: CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS

**Cassuto** - The consecration of the tabernacle is to be followed by that of its ministers, Aaron and his sons. The ritual of this consecration will comprise three stages. The first is the same for all the priests

**Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water-** The first stage is to wash them with water which reiterates Exodus 29:4+."Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water."

Notice that Moses was to **wash them**, which is interesting. Were they clothed at all? The text does not tell us. This external cleansing was the first step of consecrating them. The second step would be putting on the priestly attire. The third step would be an "internal" cleansing that would come with the blood sacrifices. This combination of external and internal reminds me of Paul's exhortation in 2 Cor 7:1+ "Therefore, having these promises (see 2 Cor 6:16-18), beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh** (CF "EXTERNAL") and **spirit**, (NET = "everything that could defile the body and the spirit") perfecting holiness (AND WHAT IS OUR MOTIVATION?) in the fear of God."

**John Currid** comments on the **washing** - It is a symbol of purification to the office of priest, so that the priest may safely enter the realm of the sacred (cf., Ex 30:17–21; Lev. 8:6). Apparently, at this investiture ceremony, the priests are to be washed on all parts of the body—that is, prior to their being clothed with the priestly garments. Later, they are required only to wash their hands and feet before entering the sanctuary (Ex 30:19). ([Epsc Exodus Volume 2](#))

**Guzik** - The process of consecration began with cleansing. All priestly ministries began with cleansing, and a cleansing that was received: **you shall wash them**. Aaron and his sons did not wash themselves; they received a washing. This was humbling, because it took place publicly at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. We cannot be cleansed from our sin without being humbled first.. This great cleansing was a one-time thing. From then on they just needed to cleanse their hands and their feet. Like these ancient priests, every Christian is washed by the work of God's word (Ephesians 5:26), by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). This cleansing work was accomplished by the death of Jesus for us (Revelation 1:5) and appropriated by faith.

Comparative Study of Three Biblical Priesthoods			
	Old Testament Levites	Christ Great High Priest	New Testament Believers
<b>APPOINTMENT</b>			
<b>Divinely Chosen</b>	Heb 5:4	Heb 5:5-6	1 Pet 2:9*
<b>Anointed</b>	Ex 29:7 Ex 40:12-15 Lev 8:12	Isaiah 61:1 Acts 10:38	1 Jn 2:20, 27
<b>Sanctified Set Apart</b>	Ex 28:36 Lev 8:30 Lev 21:6-8	John 10:36 John 17:19	1 Cor 1:2 Heb 10:14 1 Pet 1:2
<b>MINISTRY</b>			
<b>Receiving Keeping Revelation</b>	Deut 33:8, 10	John 17:8	Phil 2:15-16 1 Thes 2:13
<b>Teaching †</b>	Lev 10:11 Deut 17:11 Deut 33:10a Neh 8:9	Mt 5:2 Mt 7:29 John 3:2	Col 3:16 Heb 5:12
<b>Offering Sacrifices</b>	Levi 9:7 Deut 33:10b Heb 5:1	Heb 9:11–10:18	Heb 13:15-16 1 Pe 2:5

<b>Interceding</b>	Ex 28:12, 29** 1Sa 7:5, 12:23	Ro 8:34 Heb 7:25	1 Ti 2:1
<b>Judging Controversies</b>	Deut 17:8-13	John 5:22 Acts 10:42 2 Ti 4:8	1 Cor 6:1-5
<b>Entering the Holy Place</b>	Ex 30:7-10 Heb 9:1-7	Heb 9:12, 24	Heb 4:16 Heb 10:19-22

**SOURCE:** [CHART FROM DR WILLIAM BARRICK](#)

- \* With regard to the change over of the priesthoods and their relationship to God's program, compare Exodus 19:6 and Hosea 4:6 with 1 Peter 2:9-10.
- †"Law" (tôrâ) = "instruction." It is interesting to note Aaron's relationship to God's instruction in Leviticus. Compare "And the LORD called/spoke to Moses" (Lev 1:1; 4:1; 6:1; 8:1) with "And the LORD spoke to Aaron/to Moses and Aaron" (Lev 10:8; 11:1; 13:1; 14:33; 15:1). However, note that "after the death of the two sons of Aaron" (16:1) the remainder of Leviticus employs the formula, "And the LORD spoke to Moses" (Lev 16:2; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; etc.)
- \*\* Israel's high priest bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his garments as a "memorial." In other words, he represented the people. Such representation was part of his intercessory ministry.

**Exodus 40:13 "You shall put the holy garments on Aaron and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister as a priest to Me.**

- **anoint him:** Ex 28:41 Isa 61:1 John 3:34 17:19 Heb 10:10,29 1Jn 2:20,27
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

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## DRESSING AARON IN GLORIOUS ATTIRE

### Related Passages:

Exodus 30:30-33+ - You shall **anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them**, that they may minister as priests to Me. (**Cassuto comments** -Since this oil was a token of holiness, it was to be treated as something sacred. Moses was accordingly given this admonitory injunction) 31 "You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations . 32 'It shall not be poured on anyone's body, nor shall you make any like it in the same proportions; it is holy, and it shall be holy to you. 33 'Whoever shall mix any like it or whoever puts any of it on a layman shall be cut off from his people.'"

**You shall put the holy garments on Aaron and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister as a priest to Me-** This passage of course applies only to the High Priest and not the sons. **Cassuto** points out that "the third stage, that of the anointing, which is the central rite of the consecration, and is not identical for all; Aaron alone is anointed for the high-priesthood (see Bush's [note below](#)).

**Exodus 40:14 "You shall bring his sons and put tunics on them;**

- Isa 44:3-5 61:10 Joh 1:16 Ro 8:30 13:14 1Co 1:9,30
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GLORIOUS ATTIRE FOR AARON'S SONS

## Related Passages:

Exodus 28:40+ "For Aaron's sons you shall make **tunics**; you shall also make sashes for them, and you shall make caps for them, for glory and for beauty.

Exodus 29:8-9+ **You shall bring his sons** and put tunics on them. 9 "You shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and bind caps on them, and they shall have the priesthood by a perpetual statute. So you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

**You shall bring his sons and put tunics on them** - While they were not as resplendent as the attire of the High Priest, they nevertheless were "for glory and for beauty." (Ex 28:40+).

**Cassuto** - Thereafter the Torah enumerates the three phases of the consecration of Aaron's sons: first, brief mention is again made of bringing them to the entrance of the tent of meeting, 14 **And you shall bring his sons**; regarding the second stage it is stated, and put tunics on them, since these alone were their priestly vestments; at the end (verse 15 below), reference is made to the anointing of the ordinary priests

**Exodus 40:15 and you shall anoint them even as you have anointed their father, that they may minister as priests to Me; and their anointing will qualify them for a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."**

- **Perpetual** - Ex 12:14 Ex 30:31,33 Nu 25:13 Ps 110:4 Heb 5:1-14 7:3,7,17-24 Heb 8:1-10:39
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passage:

Exodus 28:41+ "You shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him; and **you shall anoint them** and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve Me as priests."

Exodus 30:30+ "You shall anoint Aaron **and his sons**, and consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to Me.

**and you shall anoint them even as you have anointed their father, that they may minister as priests to Me; and their anointing will qualify them for a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."** -

**Bush** - Their anointing shall be an everlasting priesthood. The meaning is, that as far as the common priests were concerned, the efficacy of this first anointing should extend to the whole future line, so that they need not from one generation to another receive successively the consecrating unction. With the **High Priest the case was different**. As he was elected, it was fit that he should, upon entering into office, be anointed; but in regard to the ordinary priests, who inherited their office as their birthright, the same necessity did not exist.

**Cassuto** on **will qualify them for a perpetual priesthood** - that means to say, that by virtue of this ceremony their anointing would be a token of everlasting priesthood to them and their children and their children's children after them.

**Exodus 40:16 Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did.**

- **according to all that the LORD** Ex 40:17-32 23:21,22 39:42,43 De 4:1 12:32 Isa 8:20 Mt 28:20 1Co 4:2
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did** - Note the "bookends" of **did** emphasizing complete obedience.

**Exodus 40:17 Now in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected.**

- **the first month**: Ex 40:1,2 Nu 7:1 Nu 9:1
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Currid** comments that "In a typical pattern, the author demonstrates the exact execution of the commands of 40:1–16. Moses was simply fulfilling the instructions that God had given him. That point is underscored in the text with the recurrence of the summary, ‘as Yahweh had commanded Moses’. It appears seven times in these verses (Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32. )." ([Epsc Exodus Volume 2](#))

**Now in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle** (lit "dwelling place") **was erected** - This corresponds Ex 40:2+. above. Moses completed them in the exact order of the Lord's instructions in Ex 40:1–8.

**Stuart** on **first day of the month** (Ex 40:2) - Did the erection of the tabernacle just happen to fall on New Year's Day, or was it put together that day as a further indication of its importance? The text does not overtly tell us, but it is hard to argue against the likelihood that such an auspicious day was chosen for the first tabernacle setup because it fit with the fact that the tabernacle itself was so auspicious as a sign of God's presence among the Israelites. In other words, when the tabernacle component parts were all ready to assemble, they probably were not assembled immediately but rather were kept ready by Moses (for several days? several weeks?) for the first day of the new year when he would put everything together and thus symbolically house Yahweh in the midst of his people. ([Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Cole** - **In the first month in the second year, on the first day.** It is one year after the exodus (Ex 12:2) and nine months after Israel's arrival at Sinai (Ex 19:1). When we take out the period spent by Moses on the mountain, this does not allow overmuch time for the manufacture of the various objects, if all dates are factual and not symbolic. ([Exodus-TOTC](#))

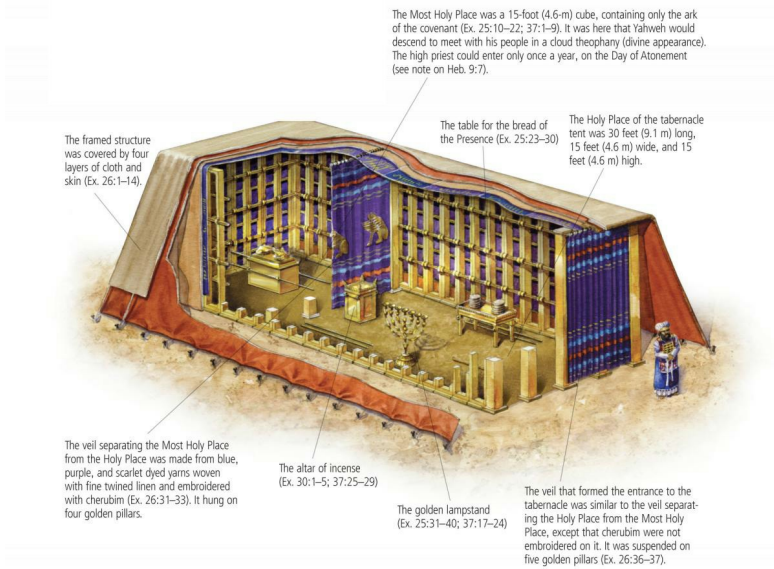
## SUMMARY OF EXODUS 40:1-33

**Exodus 40:17–33** contains 9 subsections each concluding with **just as the LORD had commanded Moses** (see Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32)

DESCRIPTION OF MOSES' ACTIONS	INSTRUCTION DESCRIBED	INSTRUCTION FULFILLED
Moses erected the tabernacle	Ex 40:2	Ex 40:17-19
Ark of Testimony placed and veil set up	Ex 40:3	Ex 40:20-21
Table of Bread of Presence placed	Ex 40:4a	Ex 40:22-23
Placed the Lampstand	Ex 40:4b	Ex 40:24-25
Placed Gold Altar of Incense	Ex 40:5a	Ex 40:26-27
Set up Veil for Doorway of Tabernacle	Ex 40:5b	Ex 40:28
Set up Altar of Burnt Offering	Ex 40:6	Ex 40:29
Set up the Laver for washing	Ex 40:7	Ex 40:30-32
Erected the Outer Court	Ex 40:8	Ex 40:33

**Exodus 40:18** **Moses erected the tabernacle and laid its sockets, and set up its boards, and inserted its bars and erected its pillars.**

- **Moses erected the tabernacle** Ex 40:2 Ex 26:15-30 Ex 36:20-34 Lev 26:11 Eze 37:27,28 Joh 1:14 Ga 4:4 1Pe 1:5 Rev 21:3
- **laid its sockets** Isa 33:24 Mt 16:18 1Ti 3:15
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



**The Tabernacle**  
 Click to Enlarge  
 (Source: [ESV.org](http://ESV.org))

**Cassuto** - Moses' name occurs expressly, as the subject of the verbs, once at the beginning (v. 18: And Moses erected) and once at the end (v. 33: So Moses finished). All the other verbs are impersonal in form ('and laid', 'and set up', 'and raised up', 'and spread', etc.), but the subject, even though not stated, is self-evident; it is always Moses. He directed the whole enterprise, and to him belongs the merit.

**Moses erected the tabernacle and laid its sockets, and set up its boards, and inserted its bars and erected its pillars-** This corresponds to Ex 40:2+ above. The details are described in Ex 26:15-30+ and Ex 36:20-34+.

**Exodus 40:19 He spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

- **He spread the tent:** Ex 26:1-14 Ex 36:8-19
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

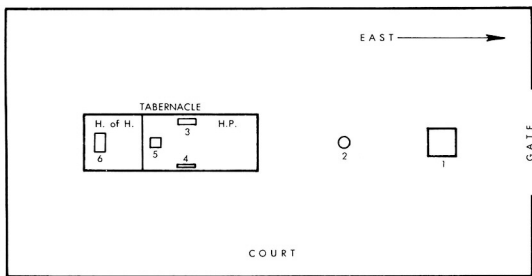
**He spread the tent over the tabernacle-** This corresponds to Ex 40:2+ above. This refers to the curtains of goats' hair (see the 4 layers in the diagram above)

**and put the covering of the tent on top of it-** Cassuto says "the covering of rams' skins dyed red."

**Just as the LORD had commanded Moses** - Repeated 7x - Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.

**Exodus 40:20 Then he took the testimony and put it into the ark, and attached the poles to the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark.**

- **took the testimony:** Ex 16:34 Ex 25:16-21 Ex 31:18 Ps 40:8 Mt 3:15
- **the mercy seat** Ex 40:3 Ex 37:6-9 Ro 3:25 10:4 Heb 4:16 10:19-21 1Jn 2:2
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



DIMENSIONS: (one cubit equals approximately 1 1/2 feet).

COURT.—100 BY 50 CUBITS.

GATE.—20 CUBITS.

TABERNACLE.—30 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

H. P.—HOLY PLACE.—20 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

H. of H.—HOLY OF HOLIES.—10 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

FURNITURE:

1. BRAZEN ALTAR.

2. LAVER.

3. TABLE OF SHEWBREAD.

4. GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

5. ALTAR OF INCENSE.

6. ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Pattern of the Tabernacle-Click to Enlarge



Ark of the Covenant

### Related Passages:

Exodus 34:1+ Now the LORD said to Moses, "Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered.

Exodus 34:4+ So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand.

Exodus 34:28+ So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water.

**And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments**

**Then he took the testimony and put it into the ark** - This corresponds to Ex 40:3+ above. This refers to the 10 Commandments that had been rewritten on stone tablets by Moses. In Ex 25:16,21+ God instructed Moses "You shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you. 21 "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you."

**and attached the poles to the ark** - As instructed in Ex 25:14+ = ""You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark with them." And they were never to be removed.

**and put the mercy seat on top of the ark**- Moses put the mercy seat, the [kapporet](#), on top of the ark in accordance with Ex 25:21+ ( "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you."). This is where God would descend to meet with man and where sin would be atoned for once each year with blood on the Day of Atonement.

**Exodus 40:21 He brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up a veil for the screen, and screened off the ark of the testimony, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

- **he brought:** Ex 40:3 Ex 26:33 Ex 35:12
- **screened off the ark:** Heb 10:19,20
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ACCESS TO GOD IS RESTRICTED BY THE VEIL

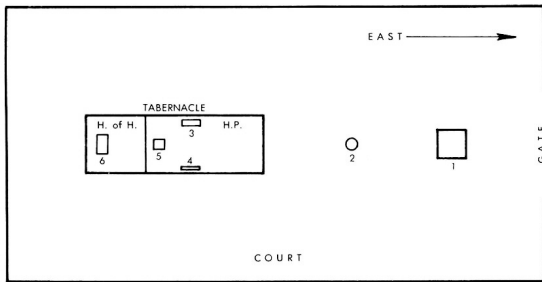
**He brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up a veil for the screen, and screened off the ark of the testimony**- This corresponds to Ex 40:3+ above. Moses put in place the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies which held **the ark of the testimony**.

**Just as the LORD had commanded Moses** - Repeated 7x - Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.



**Exodus 40:22** Then he put the table in the tent of meeting on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil.

- **Then he put the table:** Joh 6:53-57 Eph 3:8
- **north:** Ex 26:35
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



DIMENSIONS. (one cubit equals approximately 1 1/2 feet).

COURT.—100 BY 50 CUBITS.

GATE.—20 CUBITS.

TABERNACLE.—30 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

H. P.—HOLY PLACE.—20 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

H. of H.—HOLY OF HOLIES.—10 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

FURNITURE.

1. BRAZEN ALTAR.

2. LAVER.

3. TABLE OF SHEWBREAD.

4. GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

5. ALTAR OF INCENSE.

6. ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Pattern of the Tabernacle-Click to Enlarge



Table with Bread of Presence

## TABLE WITH BREAD OF PRESENCE ON THE NORTH SIDE

**Related Passage:**

Exodus 26:35+ **"You shall set the table outside the veil**, and the lampstand opposite the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and **you shall put the table on the north side**

**Then he put the table in the tent of meeting on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil** This corresponds to Ex 40:4a+ above. This would be the table that held the bread of the presence which would have been on the right side as one enters the holy place in the tabernacle. **Outside the veil** refers to the veil separating the holy place from the holy of holies.

**Exodus 40:23** He set the arrangement of bread in order on it before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

- Ex 40:4 Ex 25:30 Mt 12:4 Heb 9:2
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Table with Bread of Presence

## BREAD OF PRESENCE SET IN ORDER

**He set the arrangement of bread (bread of the Presence) in order on it before the LORD** - This corresponds Ex 40:4a+ above. In Ex 25:30+ the LORD had commanded Moses "You shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times."

**Just as the LORD had commanded Moses** - Repeated 7x - Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.

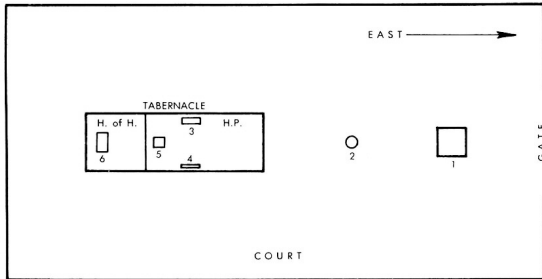
**Related Resources:**

- [What was the bread of the Presence \(Exodus 25:30\)? | GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org)

- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the Bread of Life" \(John 6:35\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Exodus 40:24 Then he placed the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table, on the south side of the tabernacle.**

- Ex 25:31-35 Ex 37:17-24 Ps 119:105 Joh 1:1,5,9 8:12 Rev 1:20 2:5
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



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FURNITURE.

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3. TABLE OF SHEWBREAD.

4. GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

5. ALTAR OF INCENSE.

6. ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Pattern of the Tabernacle-Click to Enlarge



Lampstand with Lamps

**and you shall bring in the lampstand and mount its lamps**- See commentary on the **la**

**Related Passage:**

Exodus 26:35+ "You shall set the table outside the veil, **and the lampstand opposite the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south**; and you shall put the table on the north side.

**Then he placed the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table, on the south side of the tabernacle**(the tabernacle being oriented with its opening curtains to the east Ex 27:13–16) - This corresponds Ex 40:4b+ above. **Tent of meeting** in this context is a synonym for the Tabernacle. The instructions for making the lampstand are found in Ex 25:31-35+ and the carrying out of those instructions in Ex 37:17-24.

**THOUGHT** - Today we can take the light of the LORD with us wherever we go, because the psalmist says "Nun. Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." (Ps 119:105+). Is this privilege we have today not another reason to motivate us to the Word of Truth that we might always have access to it? That is clearly a rhetorical question!

**Exodus 40:25 He lighted the lamps before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

- Ex 40:4 Ex 25:37 Rev 4:5
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Lampstand with Lamps

**and you shall bring in the lampstand and mount its lamps**- See commentary on the **la**

**Related Passage:**

Exodus 25:37+ "Then you shall make its lamps seven in number; and they shall mount its lamps so as to shed

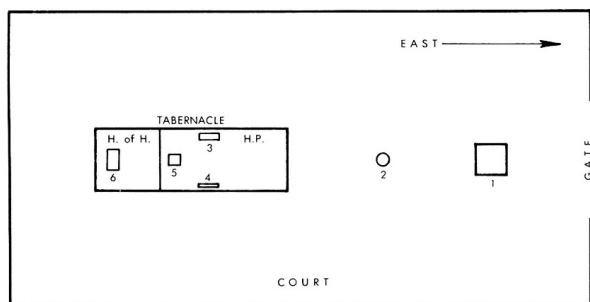
light on the space in front of it.

**He lighted the lamps before the LORD** - This corresponds to Ex 40:4<sup>b+</sup> above.

**Just as the LORD had commanded Moses** - Repeated 7x - Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.

**Exodus 40:26 Then he placed the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the veil;**

- Ex 40:5 Ex 30:1-10 Mt 23:19 Joh 11:42 17:1-26 Heb 7:25 10:1 1Jn 2:1
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



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FURNITURE.

1. BRAZEN ALTAR.

2. LAVER.

3. TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

4. GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

5. ALTAR OF INCENSE.

6. ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Pattern of the Tabernacle-Click to Enlarge



Altar of Incense

**Then he placed the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the veil** - This corresponds to Ex 40:5<sup>b+</sup> above. This completes the placement of furnishings (table, lampstand, altar) for the Tabernacle proper (Holy Place and Holy of Holies).

**Exodus 40:27 and he burned fragrant incense on it, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## INCENSE BURNED FOR FIRST TIME

**and he burned fragrant incense on it** - This was the first time incense was burned. It is interesting that in Ex 30:7 we read "Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps." But here Moses does the first burning of fragrant incense. As an aside if incense symbolizes prayer, is it not fitting that Moses would be the first to burn fragrant incense, for he had been lifting up "fragrant" prayers to Yahweh (1) to beseech Yahweh not to destroy Israel (Ex 32:11-14+) and (2) to go with Israel as they journeyed to the Promised Land (Ex 33:13-17+).

**THOUGHT** - IS PRAYER POWERFUL? That is a rhetorical question! May God's Spirit use this incredible truth to stimulate, provoke, urge, and motivate you to pray more often, modeling your prayers on those of Moses pattern. In Jesus' Name. Amen. **(Personal Testimony** - This book has changed my view of prayer and motivated me to pray far more than I did before.)

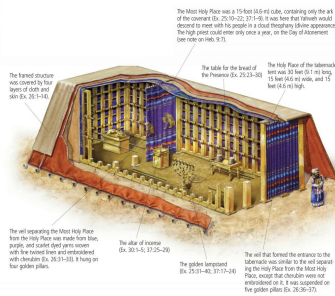
**Douglas Stuart** explains that "Earlier in Exodus no specific instruction to Moses required that he burn the incense at this point, so one may ask why he did it here. The answer is that he was functioning as God's priest prior to the actual consecration of the Aaronic priests, which would take place in Lev 8. Eventually the priests would take over the assignment of burning the incense, but for now Moses alone was unquestionably qualified. Moses thus fulfilled the commands of Exod 30:1–9, again, "as the LORD commanded

him," followed by the erection of the entrance curtain on the east end of the tabernacle proper (Ex 26:36–37)." ([Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Just as the LORD had commanded Moses** - Repeated 7x - Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.

### Exodus 40:28 Then he set up the veil for the doorway of the tabernacle.

- Ex 40:5 Ex 26:36,37 Ex 38:9-19 Joh 14:6 10:9 Eph 2:18 Heb 10:19,20
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



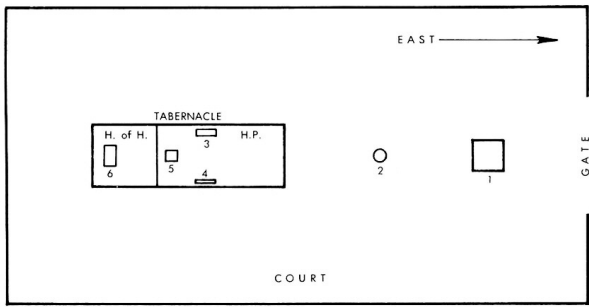
The Tabernacle  
Click to Enlarge  
(Source: [ESV.org](#))

**Then he set up the veil for the doorway of the tabernacle-** This corresponds to Ex 40:5+ above. This veil is not the inner veil but the outer veil of the Tabernacle (it is the veil the priest is standing before in the above diagram). See description of this doorway Ex 26:36,37+ and Ex 38:18, 19+.

**THOUGHT** - There is only **ONE WAY** into the Tabernacle, the dwelling place of Yahweh, through the single entrance into the court to offer sacrifices on the bronze altar (cf the Cross and Lamb of God, Jn 1:29+, 1 Pe 2:24+, Isaiah 53:4-6, 11+, 1 Pe 3:18+, Mt 26:28, Heb 9:28+, 1 Jn 2:2+), then through the single outer and inner veils into the Holy of Holies, the latter only accessible once per year on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:9-21, 22+) by taking the blood of a sacrificial animal (cf 1 Pe 1:18,19+). Today there is a Great High Priest, Christ Jesus, (Heb 4:14) Who has opened the veil that we might enter into the very presence of God (Hebrews 10:19-22+, Ro 5:1,2+, Eph 2:18+). But just as there is only one way into the Holy of Holies, Jesus made the exclusive claim "I am the (ONLY) **Way**, and the Truth, and the Life; (ABSOLUTELY) no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6, Jn 10:7,8,9, Acts 4:12+) Have you gained access God so that you now can come boldly into the throne room of God (Hebrews 4:16+).

### Exodus 40:29 He set the altar of burnt offering before the doorway of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the meal offering, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

- **set the altar of burnt offering:** Ex 40:6 Ex 27:1-8 Ex 38:1-7 Mt 23:19 Ro 3:24-26 Heb 9:12 13:5,6,10
- **offered on it the burnt offering** Ex 29:38-46
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



DIMENSIONS. (one cubit equals approximately 1 1/2 feet).

COURT.—100 BY 50 CUBITS.

GATE.—20 CUBITS.

TABERNACLE.—30 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

H. P.—HOLY PLACE.—20 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

H. of H.—HOLY OF HOLIES.—10 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

FURNITURE.

1. BRAZEN ALTAR.

2. LAVER.

3. TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

4. GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

5. ALTAR OF INCENSE.

6. ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Pattern of the Tabernacle-Click to Enlarge



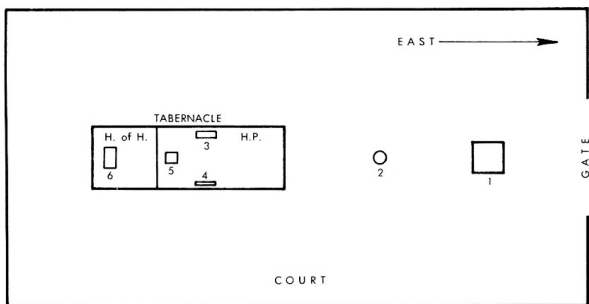
Altar of Burnt Offering - Brazen Altar

**He set the altar of burnt offering before the doorway of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the meal offering** - For the location see #1 on the Tabernacle schematic above. See discussion of construction of the bronze altar in Ex 27:1-8 (see also Ex 38:1-7+). This corresponds to Exodus 40:6+. A description of the perpetual daily sacrifices and their purpose is described in Ex 29:38-43+.

**Just as the LORD had commanded Moses** - Moses' perfect obedience. Repeated 7x - Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.

**Exodus 40:30 He placed the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing.**

- Ex 40:7 Ex 30:18-21 Ex 38:8 Eze 36:25 Heb 10:22
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



DIMENSIONS. (one cubit equals approximately 1 1/2 feet).

COURT.—100 BY 50 CUBITS.

GATE.—20 CUBITS.

TABERNACLE.—30 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

H. P.—HOLY PLACE.—20 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

H. of H.—HOLY OF HOLIES.—10 BY 10 BY 10 CUBITS.

FURNITURE.

1. BRAZEN ALTAR.

2. LAVER.

3. TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

4. GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

5. ALTAR OF INCENSE.

6. ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Pattern of the Tabernacle-Click to Enlarge



Lave of Bronze

**He placed the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing**- See #2 on the Tabernacle schematic above. This corresponds to Exodus 40:7+. See discussion of the bronze laver in Ex 30:18-21 (see also Ex 38:8+).

**THOUGHT** - The bronze laver reminds us of the exhortation by the writer of Hebrews = "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and **our**

**bodies washed with pure water."** (Heb 10:22+) This begs the question [have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb \(listen to this song\)](#)? Paul alludes to washing in Titus 3:5-6+ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration** and renewing by the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior." And again in Eph 5:26+ writing "so that He (CHRIST) might sanctify her, having cleansed her **by the washing of water with the Word.**"

#### **Exodus 40:31 From it Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet.**

- **washed:** Ps 26:6 Ps 51:6 Ps 51:7 Joh 13:10 1Jn 1:7,9
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

Psalm 51:7+ Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow (cf Isaiah 1:18+).

**From it Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet** - This is almost verbatim of what Moses stated in Ex 30:19+ except Moses is now added. Moses is added here because this was still before the formal commencement of the Levitical priesthood, and so Moses was functioning as the priest and needed to wash just as the other priests. **Stuart** writes that "A better translation of the Hebrew, one that would make clear that such a washing was in the future—not necessarily immediately upon the assembling of the tabernacle—would be "Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons were to wash their hands and feet from it." ([Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**THOUGHT** - This recalls John's description of Jesus washing the disciple's feet in John 13:8-10 Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." And now as "we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, (and) we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son ([present tense](#) - continually) cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7+).

#### **Exodus 40:32 When they entered the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

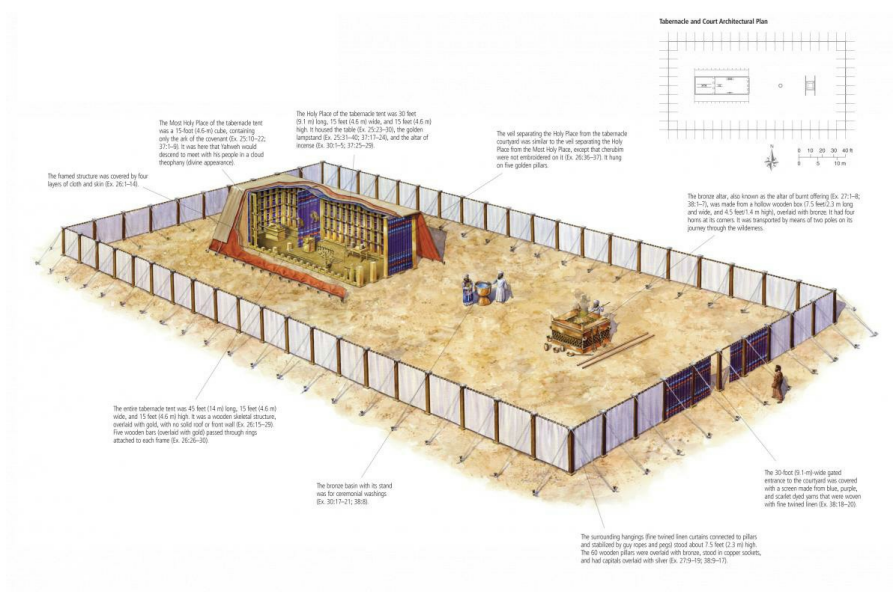
- **just as the LORD had commanded Moses:** Ex 40:19 Ex 30:19,20 Ps 73:19
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**When they entered the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed** - This corresponds to God's instructions in Exodus 40:12+ "Just as 40:12 was predicting what Moses would eventually do once the tabernacle was entirely set up, so the present paragraph also looked forward to Lev 8:1-36+, the upcoming consecration/ordination of Israel's priests." ([Stuart](#)). So as with the previous passage, this passage also anticipates the future performance of these actions. This was described in Exodus 30:20+ and tells us the purpose of this washing = "When they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, **so that** (TERM OF PURPOSE) **they will not die**; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the LORD."

**Just as the LORD had commanded Moses** - Repeated 7x - Ex 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.

#### **Exodus 40:33 He erected the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the veil for the gateway of the court. Thus Moses finished the work.**

- **erected the court:** Ex 40:8 Ex 27:9-16 Nu 1:50 Mt 16:8 1Co 12:12,28 Eph 4:11-13 Heb 9:6,7
- **hung up the veil:** Joh 10:9 Jn 14:6 Eph 2:18 Heb 4:14-16
- **Moses:** Ex 39:32 1Ki 6:9 Zec 4:9 Joh 4:34 17:4 2Ti 4:7 Heb 3:2-5
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



**COURT WITH VEIL OVER GATEWAY**

He erected the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the veil for the gateway of the court. This corresponds to God's instructions in Exodus 40:8+. These are the last items to be assembled as originally described in Exodus 27:9-19+.

**Thus Moses finished the work** - This fulfills Jehovah's original instruction in Ex 25:8+ "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them (IN THERE MIDST - EXACTLY WHAT TRANSPIRED IN Ex 40:34)." Notice also that this time the text does not say **Just as the LORD had commanded Moses** for now Moses had accomplished completely what God had instructed him to construct. Of course as **Stuart** says Moses did not do it all by himself, for "it would seem impossible for a single person to do certain of the tasks associated with the setting up of the tabernacle, such as the erection of the large frames and the pulling of the lengthy curtains and coverings over the top of the frames. Likewise, how could Moses possibly put the ark in place by himself since the only proper way to transport it was with the two poles that had to be carried on either end?" (NAC-Ex) Some writers see a parallel with God's completion of Creation - "By the seventh day God **completed** (Ge 2:2 and Ex 40:33 use the same verb **kalah**) **His work** which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." (Ge 2:2)

**THOUGHT** - Would it be said of each of us when we fall asleep in Jesus (1 Th 4:14), that we had finished the work which He had ordained for each of us to do, for indeed each believer is "His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which **God prepared beforehand** so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+) Are you walking in His **good works** or your (eternally) worthless works? (Jn 15:16NET = "go and bear fruit, fruit that remains") Jesus declared "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he **bears much fruit**, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5) "My Father is glorified by this, that you **bear much fruit**, and so prove to be My disciples." (Jn 15:8) And "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it **bears much fruit** (SPEAKS OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION BUT PRINCIPLE OF DEATH TO SELF APPLICABLE TO BELIEVERS)." (Jn 12:24) Dearly beloved, can I ask you, "How does your (His) garden grow?"

**Cassuto** has an interesting comment - The Tabernacle is a kind of miniature Sinai, which can be transported from place to place, in order to accompany the children of Israel in their wanderings and to serve as a palpable token of the Divine Presence in their midst throughout their journeyings. Just as the Lord had revealed Himself to them on Mount Sinai in the awe-inspiring theophany of the third month, even so He manifests Himself to them now, and will reveal Himself in the future, in the sanctuary that they have made to Him.

**Exodus 40:34** Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

- **cloud:** Ex 13:21,22 Ex 14:19,20,24 Ex 25:8,21,22 Ex 29:43 Ex 33:9 Lev 16:2 Nu 9:15-23 1Ki 8:10,11 2Ch 5:13 7:2 Ps 18:10-12 Isa 4:5,6 Isa 6:4 Eze 43:4-7 Hag 2:7,9 Rev 15:8 21:3,23,24
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

**Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle**—The fact that the [Shekinah glory cloud](#) covered the tent showed (1) Yahweh's **presence** and that (2) He was **pleased**. "It is important to note that the verb for **filled** appears here in the fientive state, which means that it reflects a dynamic, ongoing situation. Yahweh is with his people continually, and he will go with them as they travel to the promised land." ([Currid - Epsc Exodus Volume 2](#))

This divine manifestation was the same cloud the Israelites had seen atop Mount Sinai when they first arrived (Ex 19:9, 16+; cf Ex 24:15–18+) and it as the same [Shekinah glory cloud](#) that had indicated the presence of Yahweh at the entrance to the temporary tent of meeting which Moses had set up outside the camp (Ex 33:9–10+; Ex 34:5+)

**THOUGHT** - And as an aside, clearly whatever they saw of God's glory was but as it says in Job are just **'the fringes of His ways,'** (Job 26:14) because no man can see the full effulgence of God's infinite glory!!! But beloved, that is exactly what is promised to believers when we are glorified and in His glorious presence! We will not die but it is likely we will still be overwhelmed with awe and adoration of the splendor, majesty and greatness of our Jesus! Paul writes "t just as it is written, **"THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."** (1 Cor 2:9) John writes "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. **We know that when He appears,** we will be like Him (**GLORIFIED!**), because we will see Him just as He is (cf Mt 24:30+ - "great glory"). And everyone who has this hope (A PURIFYING HOPE!) fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:2-3+)

**Stuart** comments that the cloud "was a way God chose to manifest himself—a visible presence—indicating symbol of an invisible God. In the hot, arid wilderness of Sinai, where the sun beat down mercilessly upon people, plants, and animals, a cloud during the day represented a cool, beneficent, shade-giving divine kindness. But the cloud was much more than that. It displayed Yahweh's glory, which was an awesome and frightening thing the closer one got to it. Accordingly, as the Israelites saw the cloud, they understood it to be a potentially overwhelming manifestation of the presence of their God, to be avoided carefully and not infringed upon. The cloud had thus progressed in location from Mount Sinai to the little, temporary tent of meeting to the tabernacle. Presumably since it was only sometimes seen at the tent of meeting, it usually was still seen on Mount Sinai from which it "came down" (33:9) when Moses arrived there (and to which it presumably returned when he left the tent)." ([Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

As we have discussed before, the [Shekinah glory cloud](#) was a [theophany](#) or visible manifestation of Jehovah's presence. An almost identical divine manifestation occurred when [King Solomon had finished the Temple](#) and brought "the [Ark of the Covenant](#) of the LORD from the city of David, which is Zion" (1 Ki 8:1) to the Temple.

Then the priests brought the [ark of the covenant](#) of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the house, to the most holy place, under the wings of the cherubim.....It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, **the cloud filled the house of the LORD**, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.(1 Ki 8:6,10-11)

Notice the parallel pattern in Exodus 24:15-16+

Then Moses went up to the mountain, and **the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai**, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud.

I love **John Currid's comment** - "The point of the parallel is to show that as Yahweh once dwelt on Mount Sinai, separated from Israel, he now resides in the very midst of them. This is what is called the **Immanuel principle**—that is, that God is with his people. A similar scene occurs later during the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:10-11)." ([Epsc Exodus Volume 2](#))

This momentous event marks the fulfillment of God's promise to be present with Israel...

Exodus 29:42-46+ "It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the doorway of the tent of meeting before the LORD, **where I will meet with you**, to speak to you there. 43 **I will meet there with the sons of Israel**, and it shall be consecrated by My glory. 44 "I will consecrate the **tent of meeting** and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me. 45 **"I will dwell among the sons of Israel** and will be their God. 46 "They shall know that I am the LORD their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that **I might dwell** among them; I am the LORD their God.



Exodus 33:14+ And He said, **"My presence shall go with you,** and I will give you rest."

Numbers 9:15 Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected **the cloud covered the tabernacle,** the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning.

**Stuart** asks "How would an invisible God show his people that he had indeed come to dwell among them as they so earnestly desired (cf Ex 33:4-6+) and that thereby he was fully in covenant relationship with them, willing to go with them wherever he led them (cf Ex 34:9ff+.; Ex 33:14–17+) that is, that the rift between Yahweh and his people had been fully healed by reason of God's gracious love for his people and in consequence of Moses' faithful intervention with Yahweh on behalf of the people? The answer is that he visibly went into his house! (see Ex 32:31–32+) He left Mount Sinai and came to dwell among the encampment of his people, just as he had promised he would (Ex 33:14–17+). His people had built his house for him just as he commissioned it, and he showed his approval of their efforts and, more importantly, his desire to dwell among them by symbolically entering his house through the glory cloud that covered the house ("Tent of Meeting" now in the sense of tabernacle) and also filled its inside spaces." ([Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Guzik** points out that "When the tabernacle was finally assembled, it was an earthly model of a heavenly reality. Since Moses was instructed to build and arrange everything according to pattern, it isn't surprising that we see elements of this tabernacle arrangement in the Bible's descriptions of heaven.

- In Revelation 4:1–6, the Ark of the Covenant (representing the throne of God), the lampstand, and the laver all correspond to a heavenly reality.
- In Revelation 8:2–4, the altar of incense in heaven is mentioned.
- In Isaiah 6:1–7, the tabernacle structure is implied by the mention of the temple, and the brazen altar is described.
- In Hebrews 9:23–24, it tells us that at some point in time (after the cross), Jesus entered the heavenly reality represented on earth by the tabernacle, and appeared in the presence of God to offer a perfect atonement for our sins. Therefore, every time before this event, when the High Priest made atonement in the earthly tabernacle, it was "play acting"—and looking forward to—the perfect atonement the Son of God would offer.

#### Related Resources:

- [Glory of God - an overview](#)
- [The Abiding Presence of God](#)
- [What is the Shekinah glory? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is a theophany? What is a Christophany? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Bush - Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation.** Rather according to the Hebrew literally translated, 'the cloud' (חֶנֶן hēanan) that is, the cloudy pillar, or cloud of the Shekinah, which had previously abode for many weeks on the summit of the mountain, and which had subsequently descended upon Moses' tent and stood before the door of it, as mentioned, ch. 33:9. This sublime cloud now removed from its former station and stood at first not only over, but around the tabernacle, completely covering or enwrapping it in its sombre folds while inner unseen Glory, after first filling the outer room, entered and took its station in the Most Holy Place between the Cherubim.

**Henry Morris** - This cloud of glory, so brilliant that they could not even enter the tabernacle, had been with them day and night ever since they left Egypt (Exodus 13:21,22) and stayed with them as guide and protection throughout their years in the wilderness (Numbers 9:15-23). Its perpetual presence, evidencing the personal presence of God the Creator, who is Light, testifies clearly that these forty years were years of unique divine power and provision. Its miracles are not to be explained in terms of the normal processes of nature. This shekinah, the glory cloud, appeared again, centuries later, at the dedication of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:10,11). It will also fill the new Jerusalem, the eternal heavenly tabernacle (Revelation 21:10,11, 22,23), when it is established on the new earth, and there God, in Christ, will personally dwell with His people forever.

**Bush - The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.** That is, the visible sign or symbol of the Lord's glorious presence 'By this Glory was signified,' says Matmonides 'a certain created splendor which God caused miraculously to dwell any where for the purpose of manifesting forth his majesty.' Abrabanel on this passage speaks still more distinctly; 'Behold, it is clear that the Glory of the Lord was not a cloud, but something in respect to light and splendor like unto fire. A cloud, however, was round about it, as smoke is always about a fire; and as burning lamps (or lightnings) appear from the midst of clouds, so was the Glory of the Lord like to fire in the midst of the cloud and the darkness.' In this august manner God took formal possession of the house which had been prepared for his residence. All things having been duly made ready, the great and glorious Occupant now makes a solemn entry into the habitation in which he had promised to dwell, and of which he now virtually says, 'This is the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever.' By this act Jehovah not only testified the restoration

of his forfeited favor to the people, and his gracious acceptance of their services, but also gave typically a pledge of the future tabernacling of Christ: the true Shekinah, in human flesh, and of an ulterior visible manifestation of the divine glory in the latter days on the earth. This latter great event is distinctly foreshown in the following passages in language bearing evident allusion to that of Moses in the narrative before us; Ezek. 43:4, 5, 'And the Glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.—So the Spirit took me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold the Glory of the Lord filled the house.' John also in the Revelation, chap. 21:10, 11, alluding to the same illustrious period of the church, says, 'And he carried me in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God; having the Glory of God.' For ourselves we think it deserving of the most serious and profound enquiry, whether this 'glory to be revealed' be not another term for the whole heavenly world composed of the glorified spiritual bodies of Christ and his saints, together with his holy angels, coming down to enter into a new and abiding connexion with the church on earth in its latter-day prosperity. To what else can it refer? Our Savior expressly assured his disciples that 'hereafter they should see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending, upon the Son of Man. Equally explicit is the declaration of John in the Apocalypse, ch. 21:3, 'And I heard a great voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and shall be their God.' As the glory of the Shekinah came in all its effulgence and took possession of the tabernacle when it was prepared for its reception, so when the earth, by the previous outpouring of the Spirit and the universal diffusion and establishment of the gospel shall have become fitted for the divine inhabitation, are we not taught to expect that the glorified Savior and the glorified saved—the substance of the resplendent Cloud and the shining Cherubim of the most holy place—shall come and fix themselves in permanent sojourn in the temple thus prepared for them? Not that we are to understand this as implying that the glorified saints will ever be promiscuously mingled together with the tenants of earth, the dwellers in houses of clay and houses of wood or stone, but simply that there will be a visible communication and an intimate relation between these two great departments of the Lord's family. We have no reason to suppose that spiritual bodies will ever inhabit material tenements on the earth, but as there was at the birth of Christ a sudden and glorious manifestation of a multitude of the heavenly host in the air, so we are perhaps taught that a similar development of the invisible world will be made and become permanent in the latter day, abiding in immediate proximity to our globe, and thus giving its ultimate fulfilment to the dream of Jacob of an angelic inter-course between heaven and earth. In this state of things, the separating veil between the holy and the most place, will be done away. The cherubim will be 'living creatures' and pass freely out into the outer room. Sure we are, that if these predictions do not announce the sublime event now suggested, as they plainly point to some fulfilment of stupendous character, it behoves the interpreters of the oracles of God to inform an inquiring world what they do mean. It is impossible to be faithful to the entrusted truth of heaven, and permit its most sublime revelations to lie shrouded in obscurity under the idle plea that they are a part of prophecy, and that prophecy was not designed to be understood till it is accomplished. Not indeed that we would maintain that prophecy can be equally well understood before and after its accomplishment, but if it be unintelligible, why are we exhorted to study it? The truth is, the prophecies touch the very vital doctrines of Christianity. Its grand sanctions—its promises of bliss and its threatenings of woe—the judgment, the resurrection, and the New Jerusalem—are inseparably interwoven with the fulfilment of the great chain of scriptural prophecy; and we doubt not the time is not far distant when the interests of truth will imperiously demand that the mysteries of the Apocalypse shall be unfolded.

**Exodus 40:35 Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.**

- Lev 16:2 1Ki 8:11 2Ch 5:14 7:2 Isa 6:4 Rev 15:8
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **MOSES UNABLE TO ENTER TENT OF MEETING**

**Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle** - The same phenomenon occurred with the Temple was dedicated "so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God." (2Chr 5:14) Why could not Moses enter? Because **the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle**. God's glory at this time was too much for a man to bear. This is interesting for what did Moses do in Ex 24:18? "Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights." And also in Ex 33:9+ "Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent."

**Stuart** answers the question - The answer is that the tabernacle was now Yahweh's house and no one else's. It was no more

appropriate now for Moses to enter the tabernacle, even though he had been all through it as its building supervisor, than it would be for a house builder in modern times to retain a key and enter at will a house that he had built once it was sold to its occupying owner. When the new owner enters, the new house is exclusively his—not the builder's. Later Moses and Aaron would be able to enter the tabernacle, and provision would be made for the high priest to enter it, even the holy of holies, periodically. This was possible because the glory cloud did not continue to stay inside the tabernacle but mainly hovered on top of it, as Ex 40:36–38 state overtly. But by the present act of occupying his house through his glory and temporarily keeping all others out, God showed Moses and all Israel that the house was now his and his alone and indeed his truly and entirely, the very thing they had built it to become.

[\(Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition\)](#)

**Bush - 35. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, &c.** The glory of the Shekinah shone so bright and dazzling, that it was absolutely insufferable to the sight. Indeed, as the phenomenon was in effect the same with that which appeared on the summit of Sinai, and of which it is said, Ex. 24:16, that the part of it covered by the cloud, when partially exposed to view, was like unto 'devouring fire,' the tabernacle could not now be entered for the same reason that the cloud could not then have been entered, even by Moses, without a special summons to that effect from Jehovah himself. Precisely the same thing happened at the dedication of the temple of Solomon, when, we are told, 1 Kings, 8:10, 11, 'The cloud filled the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.' A palpable allusion to this incident is also to be recognised in Rev. 15:7, 8, although the meaning of the prophecy is too profound to be hastily decided upon; 'And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.' Moses was obliged to wait till the overwhelming brightness had somewhat abated, and the Glory had retired within the veil. That these circumstances were designed to point forward to some grand accomplishment of far more illustrious character, in the state described in the closing chapters of Ezekiel and John, when the divine Glory shall again take up its abode on earth, we have no doubt. But as the precise manner of its ultimate fulfilment appears to be hidden by a veil at present inscrutable, we are thrown upon a moral improvement of the occurrence, upon which no mystery rests. It affords another intimation how awful and terrible is the majesty of Jehovah when he is pleased to reveal himself to human eyes. How impossible it was for Moses to behold it without a screen, we have already had occasion to notice. The greatest and the best of men are utterly unable to stand before it. 'Our God is a consuming fire.' How thankful then are we called to be, that we may contemplate the softened glories of the Godhead in Jesus Christ, who has drawn nigh and entered as our forerunner into the holy place not made with hands, that we might in due time be admitted to a participation of the same honor and joy.

**Exodus 40:36 Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out;**

- **whenever:** Ex 13:21,22 Nu 10:11-13,33-36 19:17-22 Ne 9:19 Ps 78:14 105:39 1Co 10:1 2Co 5:19,20
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD'S GUIDANCE

### Related Passages:

Numbers 9:15-22 Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning. 16 So it was continuously; the cloud would cover it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. 17 Whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the sons of Israel would then set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp. 18 At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped. 19 Even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the LORD'S charge and not set out. 20 If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of the LORD they remained camped. Then according to the command of the LORD they set out. 21 If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they would move out; or if it remained in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out. 22 Whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the sons of Israel remained camped and did not set out; but when it was lifted, they did set out.

**Steward** explains that Exodus 40:36-38 is parallel with "Nu 9:15–22 in a way that links the present context with the story of the eventual travels of the Israelites and that of Yahweh's tabernacle (and thus far more

importantly, Yahweh) with them. In between the two contexts there remains a period of about forty-eight days (from the first day of the first month of the second year, when the tabernacle was erected, as stated in 40:1, to the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, when the Israelites left Sinai, as stated in Num 10:11). During those forty-eight days, the instructions and activities described in all of Leviticus and in Num 1:1–10:11 take place.

**Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out**

Note that the verb set out is in the imperfect tense in the Hebrew which speaks of an action that occurred repeatedly. In Numbers 10:11-13 we read

Now in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, **the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony**; 12 and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran. 13 So **they moved out for the first time** according to the commandment of the LORD through Moses.

Immediately upon deliverance from Egyptian bondage Jehovah had provided guidance for them in the form of a cloud and will continue to do so for the next 40 years...

Exodus 13:21; 22+ (See also Ex 14:19–20, 24+; Ex 16:10+) 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.

**THOUGHT** - You may be thinking "That's great. Israel had a visible marker to tell them when to go, where to go and when to stop. But what about me?" While we do not have a "divine cloud" guiding us in our "wilderness journey" during our stay on earth, God has provided guidance in His written Word and by His indwelling Holy Spirit. The Word of the Lord is the best way to discern the Will of the Lord. While providential circumstances may be provided, we do well to avoid the snare of giving them more credence than we give to the written Word of God. And so if we sense by some circumstance we should go to a particular place or take a specific action, we dare not follow that lead if it clearly conflicts with the word of God! We can supplement our discernment of God's will by passages such as Romans 12:2+ (making sure we first truly carry out Romans 12:1+!) which gives us two commands "And **do not be conformed** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to this world, but **be transformed** ([present imperative](#) see [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) by the renewing of your mind (HOW? BY REGULAR INTAKE OF THE WORD WHICH THE SPIRIT USES AS DESCRIBED IN 2 Cor 3:18+), so that you may prove ([dokimazo](#) = TEST OR "ASSAY" SO AS TO APPROVE) what **the will of God** is, that which is **good** and **acceptable** and **perfect**." And one other thing we should do of course is to pray, including praying specifically as Paul modeled in Colossians 1:9-10+ "**to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will** in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

#### Related Resources:

- [The Will Of God](#) - lengthy on site article with numerous notes
- [How can I know God's will for my life? What does the Bible say about knowing God's will? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can we recognize the voice of God?](#)
- [Does God have a plan for me?](#)
- [How can I find my spiritual calling?](#)
- [How can I get to know God better?](#)
- [What is the difference between God's sovereign will and God's perfect will?](#)

**Bush - 36, 37. And when the cloud was taken up, &c.** Thus the cloud was a guide to the camp of Israel in their march through the wilderness. While the cloud remained upon or over the tabernacle, they rested abiding in their tents; when it removed, they removed and followed their aërial conductor. This is more fully detailed Num. 9:15–23, and long afterwards mentioned with grateful remembrance by the Psalmist, Ps. 78:14–105:39; and Nehemiah notices its continuance as an extraordinary mercy notwithstanding their great provocation in the matter of the golden calf; ch. 9:19, 'Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light and the way wherein they should go.'

**John Currid** - Admiral Nelson of the British navy was such a fine seaman and leader of men that sailors loved to serve under him. Sir Robert Stopford, who was sailing with Nelson in the West Indies, wrote home to a loved one that 'We are half starved and otherwise inconvenienced by so long out of port, but our reward is that we are with Nelson.' So it was with the Israelites who were about to embark into the wilderness, where there was little comfort, little food and little water. Yet, God was with them, and how greatly he would supply all their needs! That is how we ought to look at life as well. We may be persecuted, or half starved, or put upon by various trials, but our reward is God's presence with us, no matter what our external circumstances. ([Epsc Exodus Volume 2](#))

**Exodus 40:37 but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up.**

- Nu 9:19-22 Ps 31:15
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **MARCHING ORDERS FROM JEHOVAH**

**but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up** - It is interesting that there is no record here of grumbling, but sadly there would again be grumbling even in the face of such an amazing divine manifestation. (Numbers 14:2, 14:36, Nu 16:11, 41, Nu 17:5, 10, 10)

**Exodus 40:38 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.**

- **the cloud of the LORD:** Ex 13:21 Nu 9:15
- **there was fire in it by night:** Ps 78:14 Ps 105:39 Isa 4:5,6
- Exodus 40 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **SHEKINAH - FIRE BY NIGHT**

**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** - The presence of God was with Israel the entire 40 years.

**Stewart** - The once relatively distant cloud (either far above them in the wilderness or on Mount Sinai or at the entrance to the little tent of meeting outside the camp) was now in the center of their encampment, right above the dwelling place of their God, who "lived" inside his tabernacle. They could see the cloud at all times, so it could at all times guide them in their travels (v. 38)...Wonderful as this was, it was but a shadow of the closeness to God available now to his corporate people known as the church and his direct indwelling available to every individual who repents of sin and trusts in God's gift of salvation through Christ (Eph 2:22; Col 1:27)—his New Covenant's new Moses and his for-all-time honored and accepted representative (John 1:14), rescuer, (Matt 1:21; 2 Tim 1:9) lawgiver (Gal 6:2), law ender, (Rom 10:4.) and heavenly Temple (Rev 21:22).

**THOUGHT** - And now where is God's Temple? Paul answers "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Cor 6:19-20+) In 2 Cor 6:16 Paul says "Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE." And in 1 Cor 3:16 the reference is to the entire local church " Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

And so Exodus ends but the first words in Lev 1:1 quickly pick up the story - **"Then the LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying."**

**Bush - 38. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle, by day, &c** Chal. and Targ. Jon. 'The cloud of the Glory of the Lord.' Targ. Jerus. 'The cloud of the Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord.' That same mysterious cloud which had led them up from Egypt, and which had all along been pregnant with wonders, now settled upon the tabernacle and hovered over it, even in the hottest and clearest day; for this was not a cloud of which it could be said that the sun 'wearieth the thick cloud; he scattereth the

bright cloud.' It was a cloud that served as a remarkable token of the Divine Presence, constantly visible day and night to all Israel, and to those who were situated in the remotest corners of the camp, so that they could never have occasion to propose the question, 'Is the Lord among us, or is he not?' They could not doubt it, unless they could doubt the evidence of their own senses.

**And fire was on it by night in the sight of all the house of Israel, &c** The fire and the cloud were not, as we have before remarked, two different and distinct things. It was one and the same pillar which was a dark cloud by day and a shining fire by night. Indeed, as the original for 'on it' is *בּוּ* *bo*, in it, it is contended by Fagius and others that the true meaning is, that the fire was in the cloud by night, i. e. that the cloud was the seat of it, that it did not emanate from any source different from the cloud; not that the fire was so enveloped in the cloud as to be invisible, for on that supposition, the fire was in it by day as well as by night. It is possible that the term 'fire' is to be understood merely of a phosphorescent glow which the exterior of the cloud was made to assume at night, and thus to be viewed as entirely distinct from the inner enwrapped glory, which Moses so ardently desired to see. These are particulars in respect to the cloud which it is exceedingly difficult to determine, but the general image can easily be brought before the mind, and we can see at once how express is the allusion to this incident in the words of the prophet, Is. 4:5, 'And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence.' The dwelling-places of Mount Zion here spoken of are doubtless Christian churches, and the intimation seems to be, that in the times of the gospel each individual church, or congregation of believers, should be as complete in itself in its endowments, and prerogatives; that it shall be as truly distinguished by the tokens of the Divine presence, guidance, and guardianship, as was the one congregation of Israel with its one tabernacle, surmounted by the pillar of cloud and of fire. The Jewish nation formed but one church, having its unity concentrated in one place and one system of worship. As such it was not so properly a type of the whole collective body of Christian churches, nor of any one great sectarian division of the church, as of each particular single church, duly organized and furnished. All such churches the Scriptures represent as complete and independent in themselves, and subject to no jurisdiction save that of Christ administered by his word, spirit, and officers.

**Throughout all their journeys.** This circumstance is so prominent in the history of the wanderings of Israel, and so replete with interest in itself, that we know not how to forbear enlarging somewhat more at length upon it. Whatever may have been the impression produced by it upon the minds of those to whose senses it was present, it soars majestically before our minds as a threefold token of the divine presence, protection, and guidance. In this sublime symbol the journeying host could but feel that God was always nigh them, resting with them when they rested, and moving with them when they moved. Never could they cast their eyes upon that towering pillar, ever dark by day and bright by night, always maintaining its position, and not like other clouds, changing, breaking, and dissipating into the surrounding air; never, we say, could they look upon this august object without being reminded that 'a God at hand, and not afar off, was the Lord in his holy habitation.' But not only so; it was a source of protection. It shaded them, as a pleasant pavilion, from the rays of the noon-tide sun, and under its canopy they could rest as under the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Nor less did it serve as a defence from their enemies, than as a shade from the beams of the sultry sun. Its descending and interposing folds placed a wall of adamant between them and their Egyptian pursuers, beyond which they could no more penetrate than they could have broken through the granite barriers of Sinai and Horeb. But last, though not least, they had in the cloudy pillar a constant guide and director. It conducted them in all their movements, and indicated to them all their rests. They rose up and journeyed whenever it began to move; they stopped at the moment when it became stationary. When it rose they knew not whither it would go, but it led them constantly in the right way; and they had no inquiries to make, no doubts or fears to cherish, nothing to do but to yield themselves implicitly to its guidance. What a wondrous mercy to be thus conducted in all their way! Travellers, especially in desert and inhospitable climes, like that which now lay before the children of Israel, are prone to be concerned about their route and about their safety. They lie down, at night with planted guards around them, and look with fearful solicitude to the events of the coming day, lest perchance they should lose their way, or their water become exhausted, or their strength fail. But no misgivings of this nature could trouble the peace of the favored hosts of Israel. They could lay them down to rest without any care how far or whither they should go on the morrow, or whether they should move at all. No anxiety as to food or drink could afflict their minds, for without any care or thought of theirs, 'their bread would be given and their water would be sure,' and if they journeyed, an unerring guide would mark out their place of rest. 'Happy, thrice happy, ye highly favored of heaven!' we are prone to exclaim in view of this distinguished lot of the chosen tribes. Thrown often ourselves into the greatest perplexity as to the decisions we shall make, and the conduct we shall pursue in life, we naturally feel how great would be the blessing of being ever thus sensibly directed by the Lord.

But let us not disparage our own privileges compared with those of the seed of Jacob. As to the presence of Jehovah with us, encompassing our ways, we are not left destitute of that. If we have not the Shekinah in shadow we have it in substance, in him who is 'the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.' His tabernacling has already, in one sense, been with men in human flesh, and he is the proper object to bring before our thoughts, whenever we would have an equivalent for the visible symbol of Jehovah. In him the promise is, 'I will dwell in (among) them, and walk in (among) them, and they shall be my people.' 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' By his spirit he is present with his whole church and with every individual member of it. By that Spirit he will abide with them for ever, cheering their hearts and renewing their strength by the light of his countenance.

Do we desire protection as real and as effectual as that which spread its canopy over the chosen race? The consoling strain in which, if his, we are assured of it, is uttered in the language of the Psalmist, 'The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy

right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for ever more.'

Finally, do we desire guidance, an infallible light to direct us in all the mazes and perplexities of our path—something which shall stand to us instead of the luminous pillar that, in the dark night poured its splendors upon the shifting sands and the rocky roughnesses of the Arabian desert? Doubt less, secret intimations of Providence are sometimes given to this end, especially if sought in earnest prayer and humble watchfulness. But however this may be, we have a more sure directory of duty. The Bible is our pillar of cloud and of fire. Let us look to the pages of that inspired word which is a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path,' and we shall cease to desiderate the guiding glory which aided only the outward eye, and directed only a local sojourn. We have all and abound. We have the oracles of truth and life; we have the proffer of the illuminating Spirit; we have the promise of a better Canaan than that which smiled beyond Jordan; and if we can sincerely say with the Psalmist, in respect to the divine leading on earth, 'Thou shall guide me with thy counsel,' we may confidently add the supplementary clause 'And afterward receive me to glory.'

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