

Preparing for God's Dwelling
Exodus 25:1-9

Thank you for joining us this week as we continue our study through Exodus. Now, let's go with Bible teacher, J Mark, for a closer look at today's lesson.

Genuine hope can only be experienced when we are in the right relationship with God. Our greatest need is to hear what the LORD has said. The text for the teaching that follows is important because, in it, God commands Israel to make a dwelling place for Him.

Perhaps that sounds strange to you because King Solomon said to God, "the heaven of heavens cannot contain You." The Prophet Isaiah, speaking for the LORD, said, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool." How then could God dwell in a structure made by man?

God planned to live among His people, Israel. We cannot question that the LORD chose a particular people to whom He related in a special way. He is sovereign, He makes His choices, and He doesn't need to give us the reasons for His choices.

From earlier chapters in Exodus, we saw how the LORD led Israel out of Egypt and brought them to Mt. Sinai. There God led them into a covenant relationship with Him. He needed a people through whom He could reveal Himself to all of humanity. So, Moses on the mountain, in the presence of the LORD, received the instructions for all the details of a place for God to dwell among His people. This place would be called the Tabernacle.

God's relationship with Israel was to be visible. He commanded Moses to build the Tabernacle with all of its furniture and various vessels as visible proof that God was, in fact, "living" among His people.

Moses received from God the patterns and detailed instructions to present to the people in PREPARING FOR GOD'S DWELLING. In **Exodus 25:1-9** we are introduced to the materials.

- 1. And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,*
- 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.*
- 3. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass,*
- 4. And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair,*
- 5. And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood,*
- 6. Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense,*
- 7. Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate.*

8. *And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.*

9. *According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.*

In this text we find the several CONDITIONS which are necessary for any people who desire to prepare a dwelling for God.

First is,

The Condition of the Offeror.

In God's request for an offering, He included everyone even though He knew only some would respond. However, the heart of the offeror, each one who would give, must be in a proper condition. God appealed to person's choice and requested the offeror to "give it willingly." Such a word quickly takes it out of the realm of any kind of taxation. The amount is not stated. The amount is completely decided in the heart of the offeror.

Let's probe a little farther. At first by referring to "the children of Israel" we might consider the whole assembly for, so it was intended. They were to be the covenant people. Consequently, God was expecting a corporate or group response from the covenant community.

However, another truth comes immediately to the surface when God added "of every man." The community is made up of individuals, and the final responsibility rests on each person. God understood this most critical situation. Without the cooperation of every person in Israel the preparation for the dwelling would not be complete.

The individual is never lost in the community. God wants a personal response from everyone. In fact, we can go a bit farther, God wants a personal response from you! He wants to be your personal God. For too many people, God is only an idea. From this portion of God's Word, we should gather the clear truth that God wants a willing-hearted, personal offeror to give. It is important that we see this condition of the offeror clearly, not only for Israel, but for us.

Next is,

The Condition of the Offering.

While God left the amount up to the willing heart to determine, He did say what to give, not how much but what kind, not quantity but quality. Let us examine what they were to include in the offering.

1. The metals: God specified the metals: gold, silver, and brass (bronze). The first two are precious metals, valuable even in those days. The bronze most likely was an alloy whose base was copper.

2. The cloth and skins: Here we find the colors requested: blue, purple, and scarlet. Certain types of cloth were needed: fine linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins.

3. The wood: acacia or shittim.

4. The oil and spices: oil for light, spices for ointment and sweet incense.

5. The stones: precious stones to be set in the ephod and breast plate.

From this list we conclude that God had a definite plan for the tabernacle and its furniture. The metals did not include iron, which is a metal associated with warfare. The offerings were limited to the metals which would enrich the dwelling of God. They would remind Israel of the glory and beauty of their God. It may be that the metals were to tell a story to the people: gold to tell of divine glory; silver to tell of divine redemption; brass to tell of divine justice.

Each kind of cloth had a particular function. We noticed that color was specified. Blue may tell of the heavenly, the color of the sky; purple may tell of royalty, God, their King; scarlet may tell of sacrifice, a necessity for anyone to approach God in His holiness.

The fine linen may tell of the need for divine righteousness for the prophet Isaiah referred to our own righteousness as filthy rags. The rams' skins dyed red surely tell of the required blood sacrifice. Goats' hair and badgers' skins tell of protection.

The oil and precious stones further tell of the glory of God. He wanted the best for His people, and He wanted them to know He required the best, which in reality was still not enough.

Where did all this offering come from? Remember the LORD instructed Moses to tell the people to ask the Egyptians for jewels of silver and jewels of gold. And when that final hour came for the children of Israel to leave, the Egyptians gave them jewels and raiment in abundance.

The treasure they carried out of Egypt made it possible for them to give an offering to God. God asked for it. It made them aware of the relation they had with God. It is so today. The LORD desires the best. Our gain demands we give to God willingly.

And Finally,

The Condition of the Offer.

The willingness of the offeror is now transferred to the offer in these words, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." What condescension! The God who cannot be housed in the heavens said He wanted to dwell among His people in the barren land of Sinai.

He reduced His dwelling to a tent like theirs and yet not completely like theirs. Meditate on what the tent idea meant. It meant God would be travelling with His people as long as they travelled, that wherever they went He would be with them.

Further, notice that the plans for the sanctuary were not left to be drawn up by anyone among them. The complete plans were given to Moses by God. The sanctuary was to be exactly like the pattern Moses received from the LORD in the mountain. No generalities or modifications would be permitted. It was to be exactly and accurately done.

Consider the actions of God. He is particular about how men approach Him, every detail carefully described is to be carefully followed. He is a God of order to the finest points, and nothing is left to chance.

Now consider what it meant to Israel to have God's dwelling among them. It was a unique and awesome situation. With no other people has God chosen so to dwell. The awesomeness goes beyond Israel. To Israel it meant they will live with God's presence among them. To the nations around them it was awesome in that it marked out Israel as a people of a different level.

Surely this should teach us that God is a personal God. It is not enough that He dwells in the heaven of heavens, He wants to dwell with His people, even today.

From these verses we must conclude that God wants willing service from the offeror; He wants the best in our offering; and He wants to dwell with His people by the offer. Have you found Him as your personal God?

Thanks J Mark for this teaching and thank you for being here for this teaching. It is neat to see God's heart for His people here in Exodus 20. He shows the children of Israel more of Himself. They were terrified but as we just learned God guided them through their fears.

It is incredible to realize the Lord of the universe wants a relationship with people. He wants your heart. Way back here at Mt Sinai, God came close. Again, many years after this, God came closer. This time he came as a baby. God came in the flesh and limited Himself to a body. His desire was and is the same. He desires a relationship with you, He wants to be the object of your worship, after all, He alone is worthy. We see God going to extreme measures to make this possible. Today we saw a small part of the

story and thankfully Jesus has completed it. Through what Christ has done on the cross, we can come into the presence of our Holy God and be in relationship with Him. This is worth thinking about.

If you'd like a copy of today's teaching, or if you'd like to contact us for any reason here are a few ways you can reach us. The best way is through email. Our email is hope@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, no problem, just write to us, our address is Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is Heraldsofhope.org. On our website you will find some resources and under the listen tab there is other teaching similar to what you just heard. If you go to the connect tab you can message us directly. Again, our website is heraldsofhope.org.

Thank you so much for joining us. We look forward to being with you next week and till then go with God and grow in your connection with Him. He is an amazing God to love and serve.