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**C0646 – December 13, 2006 – Ex 25:1-9 – Contributions For The  
Tabernacle**

Okay, we've slept 14 times since we've been in Exodus. I don't know about you but I often forget where we were and so I have to review these things. Last time we worked with **Ex 25:8** "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them." This verse stands behind a tremendous amount of Jewish rabbinic writings and if you don't understand this verse I think you are going to have terrible difficulty understanding why the Temple Mount in Israel is the center of such a tremendous amount of world controversy. On the most fundamental level the Temple Mount is the constant dispute between Jews and Muslims because of the different nature of God intrinsic to these religions. Judaism believes (and Christianity is in agreement) that God desires to dwell with man and that the Temple is the location where that takes place. Islam teaches that God cannot dwell with man and that no Jewish temple has ever been on the Temple Mount. This is also the reason Islam rejects the idea that Jesus was God. Since Jesus dwelled with man it is impossible that He was God. Jesus may be a prophet of God but He can't be God. Sometimes it's hard to see how deep the issue is but I believe the real issue between Islam, Judaism and Christianity is the nature of God. What you have are two different views of who God is. Judaism and Christianity both view God as dwelling with man (transcendent and immanent) and Islam views God as one who cannot dwell with man (transcendent but not immanent). Exodus 25:8 is designating the locale of God's dwelling with man as the sanctuary or Tabernacle. Islam denies such a possibility. Therefore, these two views of God are in diametric opposition. If you were a Muslim and the center of your theology was the view that God does not dwell with man then what would you have to say about the dwelling of God on the Temple Mount? You'd deny the existence of a Jewish "Temple" where God dwelled. So, you can see that the real issue between Judaism and

Christianity and Islam is the nature of God; whether He dwells with man or not, whether God is immanent or not. That is why there is a battle over the Temple Mount today and that is why there will always be a battle over the Temple Mount until the Revelation of Jesus Christ when He will once again dwell among men on the Temple Mount in the Millennial Temple. That is why we are facing such perilous times with Islam. Jews and Christians are infidels, unbelievers who stand in the way of Islam. We might also note that the secular world is largely ignorant of this most fundamental difference between the God of Islam and the God of Judaism/Christianity. They often think that Jews, Christians and Muslims all worship the same God when in fact it is the two different views of God that is causing all the turmoil. So, the major issue is the nature of God. Does God dwell with man or not? If He does then where? The Tabernacle/Temple.

With respect to the Tabernacle/Temple in Exodus 25:8 there are two basic teachings that are crucial to understanding God's purpose for time and eternity. First of all, one of God's key purposes is to dwell with man. When God created man He dwelled with man in a visible way in the Garden of Eden. The Hebrew text indicates He moved around in the garden in face to face fellowship with Adam. When Adam sinned God cast him out of the Garden toward the east, away from God. This separation had to take place because God is holy and man was a sinner. But God continued to desire to dwell with man. God planned the Tabernacle and the priestly purification rites so as a Holy God He could dwell with man. So, the basic purpose of the Tabernacle was that God could dwell with man. So, the first thing we learn about the Tabernacle from this verse is that it is God's purpose to dwell with man. God wants to restore the face to face communion he had with Adam in the Garden of Eden. Ultimately, we see the consummation of this in the new Jerusalem.

Second, the way God would dwell with man would be by the Shechinah Glory. The Shechinah Glory is not God Himself because God is omnipresent so Shechinah Glory is a local visible manifestation of God. Shechinah would provide supreme assurance that God was dwelling among His people Israel. Our concept of Shechinah is derived from the Hebrew verb in this verse "to dwell" (*shakan*). So, Shechinah Glory first dwelled in the Garden of Eden and now He is returning to dwell in the Tabernacle. Throughout Scripture He is manifested in several ways: a fire, a cloud, a storm, a light, a star,

etc...Apparently in the Tabernacle He was a bright light because when Moses would exit his face would be aglow.

In conclusion of 25:8, God chose to dwell with Israel by way of Shechinah in the Tabernacle. To dwell with man is one of God's key purposes both in time and eternity. The ultimate realization of this goal will be in the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:9-22:5). Understanding that God's purpose is to dwell with man deeply informs our understanding of the present Middle East Crisis which centers on the place God has historically dwelled with man, the Temple Mount. Therefore, the current conflict stems directly from God's command in **Ex 25:8** "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them."

### **THE WORDS USED OF THE TABERNACLE/TEMPLE**

There are four words or phrases which attest to the significance of the Tabernacle. Each word or phrase points out some aspect or function of the Tabernacle.

The first is "sanctuary". In Exodus 25:8 God said, "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me". The word "sanctuary" in the Hebrew comes from the word *miqdash* which means "a holy or sacred place". The Tabernacle was a holy or sacred place.

The second word is "tent". In Numb 9:15 the Tabernacle is called "the tent of the testimony" because it housed the testimony of the Ten Commandments inside the Ark of the Covenant. In 1 Kings 2:28-30 it is called "the tent of the Lord" because it was His tent. In 1 Chron 9:23 it is called "the house of the tent" because His house was inside the tent in the holy of holies. In Exod 33:7 it is called "the tent of meeting" because it was the place where God met with Moses.<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew word for tent is *ohel* and means an appointed meeting place. The Tabernacle was the appointed meeting place between God and Moses.

The third word is "tabernacle". For example, in Exod 25:9 God told Moses He was going to show him "the pattern of the tabernacle". The Hebrew word is *mishkan* and means "dwelling" or "residence". The Tabernacle was the place where God dwelled among His people Israel.

The final phrase is “house of the Lord” used in Exod 23:19 since it was YHWH’s house. While there are four different ways I could refer to this structure I will normally refer to it simply as “the Tabernacle”.

From the word study we can conclude that the Tabernacle was a tent that served as the temporary residence for the Shechinah Glory and where He would dwell among His people and meet with Moses.<sup>ii</sup> The Tabernacle was with Israel from 1445-967BC, a total of ~480 years (Exod 25:8). In the year 967BC the Tabernacle was replaced by Solomon’s Temple (1 Kings 6:1).

### **THE HEAVENLY ARCHETYPE OF THE EARTHLY TABERNACLE**

In order to build the Tabernacle and the furniture Moses was shown a pattern of the Tabernacle in a vision accompanied by detailed verbal instructions during a period of 40 days and 40 nights on Mt Sinai (Acts 7:44). Without doubt the pattern of the earthly tabernacle was after the heavenly tabernacle. Remember, there is a heavenly temple that is not a part of this creation (Heb 9:11). Some say what Moses saw was architectural plans or drawings of the heaven tabernacle, others say it was a model or replica of the heavenly tabernacle, and still others say he saw the heavenly tabernacle itself. What did Moses see? The Hebrew word describing what Moses saw is translated “pattern” in Exod 25:9. This is the Hebrew word *tabnith*. This word is not definitive on whether it was an architectural blueprint, a model or the actual Tabernacle. However, other passages that describe what Moses saw indicate it was the actual Tabernacle after which was made an earthly model or replica. Further, the NT word used to translate this Hebrew word in Heb 8:5 is *tupos* and refers to a “form”. Also, what Moses made in the wilderness was a “copy and shadow” of heavenly things. The word “copy” is *hupodeigma* and refers to a “figure” of the heavenly things. Lastly, there are many detailed pieces of furniture and articles (e.g. the golden lampstand, table of the bread of presence, three pronged fork, silver shovel, incense chalice, etc...) that had to be made for the tabernacle. If Moses did not see the actual furniture and articles in heaven it would be difficult to re-construct them after the heavenly articles. So, it seems that what Moses actually saw the heavenly things and the earthly temple was a model or replica of those heavenly things.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE TABERNACLE<sup>iii</sup>

“The form of the Tabernacle was relatively simple, with one outer court defined by a rectangle 75 feet wide and 150 feet long. Its structure consisted of linen curtains 7 ½ feet high set on 60 posts made of acacia wood overlaid with bronze and spaced 7 ½ feet apart. The entrance was at the eastern end, and as one moved westward, the degree of sanctity increased. Toward the center of this court was the brazen altar of sacrifice, and just west of it a bronze washbasin called the *laver*. At the far western end of this court was pitched a rectangular tent 15 feet wide and 30 feet long. This structure was divided into two sections, again moving in a westward direction: a Holy Place and a Most Holy Place, separated from one another by a curtain or veil (Hebrew, *paroket*). Within the Holy Place were housed three ritual objects: the golden table for the showbread on the right, the golden lampstand on the left, and the golden altar of incense directly in the middle, close to the separating curtain. Within the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies, a square room 15 feet in width and length, was only one ritual object; the Ark of the Covenant. While the high priest and his priests officiated in the outer court and the Holy Place, only the high priest was permitted within the Most Holy Place to perform the annual act of atonement on behalf of the people of Israel.”<sup>iv</sup>

“The Tabernacle as a whole was situated in the very midst of the encampment of the tribes of Israel (Numbers 2:17; 10:14-28), which is estimated to have stretched approximately 12 square miles. This central location was not because the Tabernacle had to be guarded by the people, but because it served as the focal point of Israel’s daily life.”<sup>v</sup>

### A. The Construction Materials (25:1-9)

Before you build something you need a list of materials. So, the first thing God revealed to Moses was a list of construction materials and the appropriate means of acquiring these materials.

**The LORD said to Moses,**

**<sup>2 r</sup> “Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From <sup>s</sup>every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me.**

<sup>3</sup> And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them:  
gold, silver, and bronze,  
<sup>4</sup> <sup>t</sup>blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen,  
goats' hair,  
<sup>5</sup> tanned <sup>u</sup>rams' skins, goatskins, <sup>l</sup> acacia wood,  
<sup>6</sup> <sup>v</sup>oil for the lamps, <sup>w</sup>spices for the anointing oil and for the  
fragrant incense,  
<sup>7</sup> onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the <sup>x</sup>ephod and for the  
breastpiece.  
<sup>8</sup> And let them make me a <sup>y</sup>sanctuary, that <sup>z</sup>I may dwell in their  
midst.  
<sup>9</sup> <sup>a</sup>Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the  
<sup>b</sup>tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.<sup>vi</sup>

Now, we are on Mt Sinai here and **The Lord said to Moses, Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution.** The **contribution** (*terumah*) was an offering. Notice in our passage it is a free will offering. **From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me.** This is a one time gift or offering based purely on grace. No one should be forced to give a **contribution**. Grace is not force and yet some groups teach it that way. So, what we have here is a one time **contribution**. This is not a tithe.

The word "tithe" in the Hebrew is *maaser* (*maasar* or *maasrah*) and means "a tenth part". People are very confused about tithing in the Bible. People still think we are supposed to tithe and there is no lack of sermons on tithing in churches today, especially when there is a new building program. Normally they like to go to Malachi 3 and say that if you don't tithe you're robbing God and this makes people feel guilty and then they give out of that guilt. Frankly, I challenge anyone to show me a passage in the NT that says the Church is obligated to tithe. The Church is not supposed to tithe. Why not? The basic reason has to do with the nature of tithing? Tithing was a part of the Mosaic Law and it was a national tax. If you're paying taxes to the IRS every year that's the equivalent of tithing. Giving is something different. Giving is from the heart and I can assure you, paying taxes is not from the **heart**. You're not making a "contribution" when you pay your taxes. It's a requirement of the law and it was the same in Israel. To not tithe in the OT would be the equivalent of tax evasion. So, why did they have tithing in the

OT? The reason they had tithing was to support the Levites who served in the sanctuary (Numb 18:21, 24, 26). The Levites received no inheritance in the land and so God provided that a tenth of the other eleven tribe's inheritance was for the Levites as their inheritance. In other words, the other eleven tribes paid a tenth from the production of their inheritance to the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi would spend their time studying God's word and carrying out tabernacle duties. So, basically they were dedicated to teaching Bible doctrine. There was no separation of Church and State in OT Israel (and nor is there in the US Constitution). In fact, the national tax was designed to support religion and that was the only reason it was required. Just imagine if all the money we gave our government went to train and support Bible teaching. We'd live in a different America. But what we have here is not a tithe but a **contribution** that comes from **the heart**. The NT parallel for the church is that...

PRINCIPLE: "Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Pressures that cause someone to give "grudgingly" or "under compulsion" should be avoided. I would avoid the following: secular charities (since they are earthly investments), televangelists (often living large and flashing 1800 numbers on the screen every other minute, prosperity oriented), commitment or pledge cards (e.g. pledge to give so much per month), bank drafts (e.g. Disciples of Christ approve and endorse drafting a percentage from their members bank accounts), plate passing (a mild form of compulsion). On the other hand, I think it is fine and important for a church or ministry to reveal its financial standing and announce special needs for individuals or groups that the congregation might want to give to and have some eternal interest. I would suggest the following guidelines for giving: that you put money away each week for giving (1 Cor 16:1-4), when your heart wants to give pray about how much to give and give out of that which you have stored away, give to Jewish saints (Rom 15:25-28), give according to your own free will and according to your means and at times beyond your means but not so as to go into debt (2 Cor 8:1-4). It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35) but do not be reject a gift when you have a genuine need. The Spirit of God lays it upon His people's hearts to meet genuine needs. To turn them away is to quench the work of the Spirit in others lives. At the same time those who are on the receiving end should not "get used to it" and take advantage of those who give to them. The bottom

line is that there are genuine needs and when our hearts sense a need we are responsible to respond with positive volition (1 John 3:17).

Returning to Exodus 25, as per the **contributions** they were to consist of the articles in verses 3-8. **And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, <sup>4</sup>blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, <sup>5</sup>tanned "rams' skins, goatskins,<sup>1</sup> acacia wood, <sup>6</sup>oil for the lamps, <sup>w</sup>spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, <sup>7</sup>onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the <sup>x</sup>ephod and for the breastpiece.** Now, let's think about this. Where did the Israelites get these things? Most of it came from the Egyptians.

**Exodus 12:35-36** Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; <sup>36</sup> and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians (cf 3:22, 11:2-3)

This was not stealing this was receiving what was due. Israel had worked as slaves without pay for 400 years. To appreciate the magnitude of God's salvation from Egypt you have to realize the power and wealth of Egypt. Egypt was the world's superpower with the strongest economy in the world. They were continuing to build that economy through slave labor. Now, on the night that they left Egypt what happened? God took Egypt's economy and transferred it to Israel. As a result, Egypt was wrecked in a single night and Israel marched out with a strong economic base.

God also knew that these articles would serve to build His Tabernacle. So, who gave Israel the material possessions in the first place? God. God predisposed the Egyptians to give these things to them. And now God is asking for them to give from their own hearts whatever each one wants to build Him a house. Is that asking too much? We have to be constantly reminded that everything we have as Christians is ours because He has given it to us and really it is His. All we have, all we are is His and should be used to serve and glorify Him.



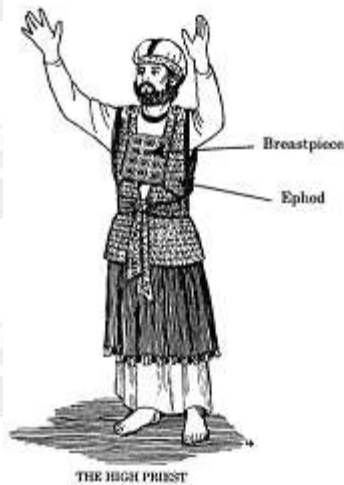
Let's look at the list of materials briefly. The first three metals, **gold, silver, and bronze** are metals arranged from most valuable to least valuable. **Gold** is the pre-eminent metal in the Bible. **Silver** is second to gold. **Bronze** was used to make tools in many cultures and was a very decorative metal.

In verse 4 three colors of yarn or wool, **blue and purple and scarlet** are mentioned. Actually the Hebrew words translated **blue and purple** were both shades of purple. The **blue** was **violet-purple** and the **purple** was **red-purple**. "Both colors came from dyes made from the secretion of certain mollusks, or shellfish, along the Mediterranean Sea."<sup>vii</sup> The **scarlet** color "came from the larvae of an insect found on the oak trees of that area."<sup>viii</sup> It was a deep crimson red. Also they could contribute **fine twined linen**. This **linen** was made from the flax plant in Egypt.

Next they could contribute **goats' hair**, <sup>5</sup> **tanned "rams' skins**, and **goatskins**. The first two are self-explanatory but the third, **goatskins**, is difficult in the Hebrew. It is literally the skins of the *tachashim* but that animal is unknown now. It is probably either the dolphin or a large sea cow such or the dugong from the Gulf of Aqaba. Bedouins still use the skins of the dugong to make sandals.

Next we have <sup>1</sup>**acacia wood** which is a beautiful wood that comes from the *shittah* tree which is very plentiful in the Sinai wilderness. It is hard and durable and makes long planks. <sup>6</sup> **oil for the lamps** is olive oil. Olive trees are also common in the Middle East. The finest oil would be burned continually in the seven-branched golden lampstand called *menorah*. <sup>w</sup>**spices for the anointing oil**. These were "fragrant things to mix with the oil for anointing the sacred tent and the priests".<sup>ix</sup> **and spices for the fragrant incense**. These were spices that would be added to incense to be burned on the altar.

Lastly, verse 7, **onyx stones**. It's unsure exactly what colors these were, some say a dark milky gray with white and others say carnelian red. Two of these stones were on the high priests ephod. Also **stones for setting**. A list of these stones is in Exod 28:17-20. The **setting** is the mold in which the stone fits. These stones were **for the <sup>x</sup>ephod and for the breast piece**.



The **ephod** was like an apron that the high priest wore and the **breast piece** was a 9in by 9in pouch<sup>x</sup> (Exod 28:16) that hung on the front of the **ephod** and contained the Urim and Thummim, special stones that the high priest could consult to determine the will of God (Exod. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Deut. 33:8; Ezr. 2:63; Neh. 7:65). Set in the **breast piece** were also twelve stones. Each stone was inscribed with one of the names of the tribes of Israel (Exod 28:21).

In conclusion, one of God's key purposes both in time and eternity is to dwell with man. This is a fundamental truth of Judaism and Christianity that is radically opposed by Islam. Understanding this difference provides a partial explanation for the conflict between Islam, Israel and the West. It all started in Exodus 25:8 when Moses was commanded to build God a sanctuary that He may dwell among them. God chose to dwell among Israel by way of the Shechinah, a visible manifestation of God's presence. The location of this manifestation was the Tabernacle and eventually the Temple. The earthly Tabernacle had to be built precisely after the heavenly Tabernacle that Moses saw on Mt Sinai. In order to build this structure specific construction materials were required. The list of materials consisted of articles the Israelites had received from the Egyptians on the night of the Exodus. This plundering of Egypt took place because God graciously gave Israel favor in the sight of the Egyptians so that when they requested articles of gold, silver and clothing the Egyptians let them have their request. This plundering had both long and short term effects. In the long term it provided for a thriving economy that peaked under the golden era of King Solomon which accumulated unimaginable wealth and developed the highest biblical culture the world has ever known. In the short term it provided the necessary

articles to build the Tabernacle for Shechinah. Since God had graciously given Israel these articles it was not too much to ask each of them to give a contribution as their heart moved them (Exod 35:20-29). This was not a tithe, a required national tax, but a free will offering from the heart. The articles would be used in the construction of the sacred Tabernacle, sacred objects used in Tabernacle worship and special garments worn by the priests in their holy service (Exod 35:21). The section admonishes us to realize that all we have is given to us by God and when our heart moves us should be used to glorify Him.

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<sup>i</sup> Elwell, Walter A. ; Beitzel, Barry J.: *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Baker Book House, 1988, S. 2015

<sup>ii</sup> Randall Price says that “It is preferable to see “the Tent of Meeting” and “the Tabernacle” as two parts of a single structure—the outer “tent” (Hebrew, *ohel*) and the inner “Tabernacle” (Hebrew, *mishkan*)). For this reason 2 Samuel 7:6 notes that God moved about “in a tent, even in a tabernacle.” *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 62.

<sup>iii</sup> “During the time of the Tabernacle’s construction a “Tent of Meeting” was erected by Moses outside the camp so that Moses could privately enter into the presence of God (the *Shekinah*) and receive divine guidance and answers to the people’s prayers (Exodus 33:7-11)...” *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 62.

<sup>iv</sup> Price, Randall, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 63.

<sup>v</sup> Price, Randall, *The Temple and Bible Prophecy*, 64.

<sup>r</sup> For ver. 1-7, see ch. 35:4-9

<sup>s</sup> ch. 35:5, 21, 29; 36:2; Judg. 5:2; 1 Chr. 29:5; [Ezra 1:6; 2:68; 3:5; 7:16]; Neh. 11:2; [2 Cor. 8:12; 9:7]

<sup>t</sup> ch. 26:1, 31, 36

<sup>u</sup> ch. 26:14

<sup>1</sup> Uncertain; possibly *dolphin skins*, or *dugong skins*; compare 26:14

<sup>v</sup> ch. 27:20

<sup>w</sup> ch. 30:7, 23, 34; 31:11

<sup>x</sup> ch. 28:4, 15

<sup>y</sup> Heb. 9:1, 2; See ch. 36:1-4

<sup>z</sup> ch. 29:45; 1 Kin. 6:13; 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 21:3

<sup>a</sup> ver. 40

<sup>b</sup> ch. 26:1

<sup>vi</sup> *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version*. Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001, S. Ex 25:1

<sup>t</sup> ch. 26:1, 31, 36

<sup>u</sup> ch. 26:14

<sup>1</sup> Uncertain; possibly *dolphin skins*, or *dugong skins*; compare 26:14

<sup>v</sup> ch. 27:20

<sup>w</sup> ch. 30:7, 23, 34; 31:11

<sup>x</sup> ch. 28:4, 15

<sup>t</sup> ch. 26:1, 31, 36

<sup>vii</sup> Osborn, Noel D. ; Hatton, Howard: *A Handbook on Exodus*. New York : United Bible Societies, 1999 (UBS Handbook Series; Helps for Translators), S. 582

<sup>viii</sup> Osborn, Noel D. ; Hatton, Howard: *A Handbook on Exodus*. New York : United Bible Societies, 1999 (UBS Handbook Series; Helps for Translators), S. 583

<sup>u</sup> ch. 26:14

<sup>1</sup> Uncertain; possibly *dolphin skins*, or *dugong skins*; compare 26:14

<sup>v</sup> ch. 27:20

<sup>w</sup> ch. 30:7, 23, 34; 31:11

<sup>ix</sup>Osborn, Noel D. ; Hatton, Howard: *A Handbook on Exodus*. New York : United Bible Societies, 1999  
(UBS Handbook Series; Helps for Translators), S. 584

<sup>x</sup>ch. 28:4, 15

<sup>x</sup> 1 span = 8.8583inches

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