

Exod 05-03-20a

Let's continue our worship this morning. This is the 20th of March 2005. We're studying the book of Exodus where we have worked our way through quite a bit of material, not always sequentially dealing with the tabernacle and with the priesthood, but we find ourselves at the threshold of chapter 40, the final chapter of the book.

Let's take a moment at this point in our worship to clear our minds and prepare our hearts and seek the ministry of God's Holy Spirit as we go to the Lord in prayer. Father, once again we find ourselves before your throne with the opportunity to receive the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the study of your word and through the gifts that you've distributed to each one of us in our fellowship. We thank you for each one who is here.

We thank you for their faithfulness, for the encouragement of their presence, for the enthusiasm that is expressed as we contemplate together the meaning of your word and its application in our lives. We thank you for the country in which we live, the freedom that we enjoy. We are not persecuted.

We are not imprisoned. We are not hounded or otherwise threatened because of our faith. In fact, we have every opportunity.

We have so many resources through technology, through the scholarship that has gone on in the last many years that opens up your word and makes it available to us, and we are thankful for that. We are grateful that there is so much light shed upon the meaning of the word. We pray that you'll continue to be with those who guide our government and who secure our freedom both at home and abroad, especially those who are of the household of faith.

We pray a special blessing on them that you will minister your word to their hearts and meet their every need, comfort, encourage, and strengthen them. We pray that all of us can find our hearts impressed with the opportunities that we have, the potential that exists through the Lord Jesus Christ to accomplish your purpose and be prepared for the next phase of your plan even as it unfolds before us. We are so grateful for the Lord Jesus Christ, for his work on our behalf, as we think in particular of his work on the cross in this week, anticipating resurrection Sunday.

We pray that our lives will reflect that we have died with Christ and have been raised with him to new life. The death that he died, he died to sin, and the life that he lives, he lives to you, and we pray that we can reflect that truth in our lives. We pray that our study will contribute to that, and we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. For our script reading this morning, I would like to read something that is probably as pertinent to Exodus chapter 40 as anything we could possibly look at, and that is Leviticus chapter 7 beginning in verse 28. We are going to be looking at the actual inauguration of tabernacle worship this morning, having seen both the construction of the tabernacle in

accordance with its design, which reflects the heavenly pattern that was shown to Moses in the mountain, and the personnel.

Most churches, when you drive up and you read the sign, the lighted sign, the plastic sign that has the name and the saying for the week and the pastor's name at the bottom, I'm going to put one of those out on the front lawn, I think. I have told Patty many times I've often thought about, you know, we have the porta pulpit that folds away during the week, and I would like to have a porta steeple that I would make out of plywood with hinges and stuff, and on Sundays I would just go up and pull a cord and the steeple would pop up over our house, and I would fold it up and it would have a cross on top, and then after church I would just fold it all back down and wait and deploy it for the next class. But many times when you come up and you drive down the street and you see a church on the left and a church on the right, there's no city better for that than Dallas.

I think we have one of the highest levels of churches per capita of any city in the nation. But you see two parts. You see the building, the parking lot, the educational facilities, and all the other physical accouterments, and then there is a church staff.

There's a pastor, and in the modern day with large churches, they often have very extensive paid staff. They have the assistant pastor for this and the assistant pastor for that. They've got the minister of education, the minister of music, and the minister of the sick and afflicted roundabout.

There's just a plethora of staff, and that's the two things that generally make up a modern day church. Well, it's not without precedent. They tend to look back at the Old Testament model of the tabernacle and see that you have a facility and you have the people that run the facility.

That's generally what constitutes the thing. Well, that's what we have studied. We've seen the command, the design, the offerings, and the construction of the tabernacle with all of the seven major elements of furniture and the surrounding curtains and so on.

We've studied the priesthood with their garments, their functions and duties, and their consecration is what we have just finished looking at, the offerings, the bull and the two rams. And we're going to see the whole thing crank up now. All of this has been preparation.

All of it has been anticipation. And now in chapter 40 of Exodus, we're going to see it happen. But our scripture reading this morning is in Leviticus because it's going to give us another view of the consecration.

And one detail in particular that I want to look at begins in chapter 7, verse 28 of Leviticus. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offering to the Lord shall bring his offering to the Lord from the sacrifice of his peace offering. His own hands shall bring the offerings made by fire to the Lord.

The fat with the breast he shall bring, that the breast may be waved as a wave offering before

the Lord. And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his son's. Now, I read this only because this is representative.

We're going to study hard upon the heels of completing the book of Exodus. We're going to move right into Leviticus and do the Levitical offerings in the first six chapters. And then we'll stop when we get to the point of this scripture reading because I'm not planning to do Leviticus as a book at this time.

But we're going to do the Levitical offerings. It's a natural extension of studying the tabernacle and the whole experience of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai. But this is the part that would come after.

And this is representative. There's a certain portion of what goes on in tabernacle worship that is dedicated to the priests. Look at verse 32.

The right thigh you shall give to the priest as a heave offering from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. When you bring a peace offering and certain other sacrifices, there is a portion of those freewill offerings that belongs to the priest. He among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offering and the fat shall have the right thigh for his part.

For the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering I have taken from the children of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings and I have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons from the children of Israel by a statute forever. This is the consecrated portion for Aaron and his sons from the offerings made by fire to the Lord on the day when Moses presented them to minister to the Lord as priests. That's the day we have been studying.

The Lord commanded this to be given to them by the children of Israel on the day that he anointed them by a statute forever throughout their generations. This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the consecrations and the sacrifice of the peace offering which the Lord commanded Moses on Mount Sinai on the day when he commanded the children of Israel to offer their offerings to the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai. Now, there are two illustrations and applications of this truth which is pointed out by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament where he says you shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain.

There are those who labor in the word and they are worthy of double honor. What does double honor mean when you get over there to Timothy? Well, there is honor in the sense of respect and there is honor in the sense of remuneration. It doesn't have to happen.

It doesn't always need to happen. God can provide in a lot of different ways. But the principle is there that the laborer is worthy of his hire and you do not muzzle the ox as he treads out the grain.

So it is legitimate for churches to provide financial support for their paid staff whether it is a single pastor, whether it is a plethora of pastors. It is a legitimate biblical principle. It is not to

be looked down upon.

It is also not always necessary. And we are grateful and blessed by God in the sense that our church doesn't have to do that. God has provided in other ways for me in particular and we have the ministry in a lot of different areas whether it is music or technical support or whatever where we have unpaid staff as it were.

And it is optional. The church age is the age of grace. It is the age of flexibility.

God does not lay down the type of legislation that he gave Israel because we are to figure out what works best in our local assembly. And we have it figured out and it works great in ours. So this is not a leaning on the congregation.

So where is my check? I am pointing out that we will cover everything that we encounter in the Word of God. This is in the Word of God. It applies directly from looking at the Levitical priesthood and it is here.

And we don't have to shy away from it or pretend that it isn't there. It is there. But it also is an illustration in our case of the fact that God can provide in other ways.

Paul the Apostle said, Do I not have the right to lead about a wife? Do I not have the right to be supported by the churches? But I don't exercise that right because I don't need it. Basically. He was doing a different thing.

God's plan for the operation of the Apostle Paul was such that those things were not an issue. And so if there is one thing we learn from this, it is that we are responsible to be intelligent in the application of the Word of God. We have to figure out what fits.

Now this doesn't mean that we can choose the parts we like and apply those and the parts we don't like, we don't apply them. Prayerful meditation on the Word of God. If we have the heart that wants to please God and live for Him, God will impress on our hearts the parts that need to be applied.

And it is between us and the Lord if we fail to do that. If God is trying to speak to our heart through His Word, and we are saying, Oh no, that doesn't apply to me, I am a special case. Well, God is going to straighten that out.

I don't need to. I just give you the Word of God and each of us as believer, priests, get the chance to determine how we function. How well we walk the narrow road.

But this is here. Now, that's the application for modern churches. It is legitimate.

If God chose to do something different, if my job disappeared and our numbers quintupled and then quintupled again, generally speaking, there is a rule of thumb, just as an aside, that it requires about 50 families in a church to support a full-time pastor. If you work out the economics of it, and what is reasonable giving on the part of people to their local assembly, and

what it takes to pay a full-time pastor, it generally takes a base. This is just the rule of thumb when you take ecclesiology in seminary.

A church of about 50 families can support a full-time pastor. Well, we are a tiny fraction of that. So God says, well, I'm not going to try to crowd 50 families in.

So He's made other arrangements for us, which is great. And I would have it no other way. I like things just the way they are because I can say whatever I want to from the Word of God, and nobody is going to say, well, wait until the offering comes around next time there, buddy, which happens in a lot of churches.

You take somebody off, you step on their toes, and all of a sudden there's a couple of short months. And we're mercifully free from that. But it is a valid principle.

Do not despise churches who have full-time pastor or pastors. It's a perfectly legitimate, responsible way to do business. There's nothing wrong with having a big church.

We just don't happen to be one. But there's nothing intrinsically wrong with it whatsoever. It's biblical.

It's in the book. Now look at chapter 8. This pertains more directly. Well, before we look at chapter 8, let me go ahead and give you the other half of this.

Keep your finger in Leviticus chapter 7 and turn with me to 1 Samuel chapter 11. Actually, 1 Samuel chapter 9. 1 Samuel chapter 9. This is the first anointing of a king in Israel. We've been through 1 Samuel, depending on how long you've been listening, twice.

I've taught it verse by verse twice. But you know this story in general. Samuel, the people demand a king.

God says, I'm your king. People say, no, we want to be like the nations. God says, fine, Samuel, go anoint Saul as king.

You have the whole thing about the asses of Kish. Do you remember that little pun? So, chapter 9, Saul is chosen to be king. The Lord, in verse 15, told Samuel in his ear, the day before Saul came, saying, Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over my people Israel.

Remember, this is not Melech, king. This is the word used for prince leader. That he may save my people from the hand of the Philistines, for I have looked upon my people because their cry has come to me.

So when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him, There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over my people. Saul drew near to Samuel on the gate, said, Please tell me, where is the seer's house? Samuel answered Saul and said, I am the seer.

Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today. Tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart. As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not be anxious about them, for they have been found.

This is a knee-slappingly funny thing when you realize how it is applied here, because the donkeys in Israel have gotten their king, so to speak, and it's too hard to explain. On whom is the desire of Israel? Is it not on you and on all your father's house? There's no accident here in verse 20. If you sit and think about this, the donkeys in Israel have been found.

They are the ones who are going to think that Saul is a great king. Saul answered and said, now pay attention, verse 21. This is important.

Saul answered and said, Am I not a Benjamite of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Now, in the space of six verses here, we've been told three times what tribe Saul is from. Have we not? Three times. Any time something like this gets repeated, you have to say, you know, this is an important element in the story.

God's not just repeating himself because he likes to hear the sound of his own voice. Three times now, Saul is from the tribe of Benjamin, from Benjamin, from Benjamin. Why is that important? Keep reading.

Least of the tribe of Benjamin, why then do you speak like this to me? Now Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and had them sit in the place of honor among those who were invited. There were about 30 persons. 30? What do you think of when you think of 30? Is this a positive number or a negative number? How many pieces of silver was Jesus betrayed for? Anyway.

So Samuel said to the cook, Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, set it apart. Now remember, Samuel is down in the road and meets Saul and says, Come up to the high place and eat with me. The feast has already been cooked.

Samuel gave these instructions before he met Saul based on what God told him the previous day. So the cook had set this apart. The cook, verse 24, took up the thigh with its upper part and set it before Saul.

Samuel said, Here it is, what was kept back. It was set apart for you. Eat, for until this time it has been kept for you since I said, I invited the people.

So he's saying, When I first set this banquet up and I invited the people yesterday, I said there's going to be a big feast tomorrow. Y'all come. And I told the cook, When you cook the food, cook it all up, but save this piece aside because I'm going to give it to the guest of honor because God told me I'm supposed to anoint the king.

So set this aside. So he brings it and he says, Take this and eat it. And what does it say at the

end of verse 24? Saul ate with Samuel that day and he ate this part.

Now what part did he eat? He ate the upper thigh that is reserved for the priests. What tribe is Samuel from? The tribe of Levi. He is a priest, isn't he? He's trained up.

He wore the ephod when he was a little kid with Eli. Does Samuel know what belongs to the priests? Does he know what goes on in this? Turn over to Leviticus chapter 20 and then go to 21. You have the instructions for the separation of the priests there.

We've already covered this. We talked about it in the last couple of weeks. Chapter 22, verse 2, Speak to Aaron and his sons.

This is Leviticus 22. That they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel. They do not profane my name.

Verse 10, No outsider shall eat of the holy offering. One who dwells with the priest or a hired servant shall not eat the holy thing. If the priest buys a person with his money, he may eat it.

One who is born in his house may eat his food. If the priest's daughter is married to an outsider, she may not eat of the holy offerings. But if the priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, has no child, has returned to a... Notice, a priest's daughter could be divorced.

There was legitimate reasons to be divorced. She wasn't kicked out. God doesn't say, Oh, your daughter got divorced.

She can't come back. If the priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, has no child, has returned to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat her father's food, but no outsider shall eat of it. You can clearly see the principle of the umbrella of authority over a woman in Israel.

She either belongs to her father the priest, in which case she can eat his food, or she belongs to a husband, in which case she cannot eat the father's food anymore because her provision has been transferred. The responsibility for her care and her food has been transferred to another man. If that goes away through death or divorce, and she comes back, and she has no child, because if she has a child, whose family does she now belong to? They're her grandparents.

She's associated with another clan, with the husband's people. And he's supposed to care for her. This is true in any tribe.

Remember Ruth and Naomi? Who does she belong to? She belongs to the husband's clan. Boaz is a relative of Naomi's husband. That's why he is the kinsman redeemer.

She belongs to the clan. She had sons. So Naomi doesn't go back to her father's house.

She goes to the clan of her husband to which Boaz belongs. Anyway, same thing here. So, she may eat her father's food.

No outsider shall eat it. No outsider shall eat it. Verse 14, If any man eats the holy offering unintentionally, he shall restore a holy offering to the priest and add a fifth to it.

They shall not profane the holy offerings of the children of Israel which they offer to the Lord, or allow them to bear the guilt of trespass when they eat their holy offerings, for I the Lord sanctify them. This is a time of feast. This is a holy day.

Samuel sets it up. And he says, reserve this particular portion. And Saul, after repeatedly emphasizing the fact that he is not a Levite, nor is he from the tribe of Judah, sort of doubly disqualifies himself here, doesn't he? There are 30 people at the feast.

He's right there in front of all of it. And Samuel says, I've set this all up. Here's this piece of meat.

And no questions are asked. And you wonder, well now, did Samuel understand that he was causing a trespass on the part of Saul here? Was this a test that Saul failed? But symbolically speaking, Saul both begins and ends the effective part of his kingship by violating the sacrifice of God. He starts out on day one before he's even anointed by violating the sacrifice of God and eating the upper thigh that belongs to the priest.

Other parts of the sacrifice, this belongs to God. It's the choice part. And he violates it.

And then how does he lose his kingship? He again takes the part of a priest that he should not take in offering the sacrifice because his people are melting away into the hills and Samuel has not come within the seven days that he specified and so on. Saul begins and ends by demonstrating his failure to observe the word of God. Everybody in Israel knew what belonged and what did not.

Does Saul even ask a question about this? This is Samuel's food. It is the upper thigh. And you say, well, maybe it was just some other animal that they slaughtered for the feast.

That's not the occasion and that's not the point here. Why does it stress three times that Saul is from the tribe of Benjamin? Because he doesn't have the right to eat this. Can you imagine David in this same situation? What did David do when Saul tries to put his armor on him? He says, I'm not qualified to wear this armor.

This isn't for me. Time and time again, when young David is tested, he says, I will not do this. He is a man of principle and you can see the distinction so clearly spelled out.

Well, all of this relates to the function of the priesthood. They have to know what is legitimate and what is not. And everybody else has to know what is legitimate and what is not.

So now, back to Exodus chapter 40. Let's back up to 39-32. Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished.

And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so they did.

They brought the tabernacle to Moses. Now, here's the inventory.

This is the final completed thing. They brought him the tent and all its furnishings, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets. We should have a general remembrance of all of these things and what they're made of and what they mean, right? The sockets that sit on the base of the ground made of the redemption money, the silver that lifts the tent up off of the cursed earth.

What separates the tabernacle from the cursed ground? The silver of redemption. The hooks on which the curtains depend, on which they hang. The clasps, the boards, the bars, the pillars, and the sockets.

The structure that holds it up. They brought the covering of ram skins dyed red, the covering of badger skins, and the veil of the covering. The ark of the testimony with its poles and the mercy seat, the table, all its utensils, and the showbread.

The pure gold lampstand with its lamps, the lamps set in order, all its utensils, and the oil for light. The gold altar, the anointing oil, and the sweet incense. The screen for the tabernacle door, the bronze altar, its grate of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils.

Do you notice anything here about the order? I heard a guy on the radio yesterday talking about his memory system. If you've ever heard these memory guru people talking about here's how to remember, this guy set some kind of a world record for memorizing a 28 digit number in a minute and a half. He's memorized a 150 digit number and read it both forwards and backwards in like five minutes.

One of the techniques, and I've done some study on memory because as mine started to fail I had to start propping it up in other ways. I used to be able to just stick stuff in there and go back and it would be right where I left it. Then as you get older you find that things are not so functional as they used to be.

You put something there and you go back and not only is it not there, but then you can't find your way back out. There are techniques for using your memory. For example, let's say you want to remember a list of ten things.

Let's say you want to remember the ten commandments or you want to remember ten points in a verbal speech that you're going to give. What you do is visualize something. You can visualize the rooms in your house and you put one element in each room in the house.

You say, okay, the first commandment thou shalt have no other gods before me. I'm going to put that in my office downstairs. The second commandment, thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

Well, I'm going to put that in the living room. The third commandment, what's the third commandment? Have no other gods before me, thou shalt not make unto thee any graven

image. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

I'm going to put that in the kitchen. Fourth commandment, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. I'm going to put that on the stairway.

Fifth commandment is honor your father and mother that your days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. I'll put that in Elizabeth's room. Anyway, you do this all the way through and then when you want to rehearse these things back, you just take a walk through your house and you look over in the office, oh, thou shalt have no other gods before me.

You look over in the dining room, thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. You look in the kitchen, etc. And so you visualize, you make these compartments and you put things in them and that's how you remember.

I hope I can remember why I went down that road because I had a point. But the guy was saying that this visualizing and putting things in these little compartments, this is how you help yourself remember. And so you take this mental journey through.

I can remember the house I lived in when I was a little boy out in California. And sometimes when I would daydream or even in my dreams, I would go back through that house room by room down the hall and just reflect how much can I remember about how it looked and what the bedspreads were like and the curtains and what the walls and the floor looked like and just make a little mental tour. You can do that in the house you live in right now.

Just mentally walk in the front door and look around. That's what's happening right here. We have had ten chapters of detail about design and implementation and construction, the golden calf right in the middle of it.

So now this is the trip through. Where does it start? Verse 33, They brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent with its furnishings, clasps, boards, bars, pillars, and sockets. This is what holds the whole thing together.

If you don't have clasps and boards and bars and sockets, there's nothing to hold it up. This is the essential skeleton of the thing. Right? And then he looks specifically at the coverings, the covering of ram skins dyed red, the covering of badger skins and the veil of the covering.

Now we're going to start in the Holy of Holies. We're going to work our way out. The Ark of the Testimony with its poles and the mercy seat.

We're starting at God and we're working our way out. Now we have the table. This is the table of showbread with its utensils and the showbread.

The pure gold lampstand over on the other side with its lamps, the lamps all set in order, all of its utensils and the oil for the light. The gold altar right in the middle of the holy place. The

anointing oil and the sweet incense.

The screen for the tabernacle door. That's as you walk out the holy place. And now you're outside.

The bronze altar. Its grate of bronze, its poles and all its utensils. The laver with its base.

The hangings of the court, its pillars and its sockets. So you're standing there looking out and even though the laver is in front of you, the thing that catches your attention is the bronze altar because this is where the fire and the smoke and the sacrifices are taking place. The laver is the washroom.

It's the utility room, right? And so you can walk into a house and you've got the laundry room and the kitchen but you tend to look at the kitchen first because that's where everything happens and then you look at the laundry room. So you have the bronze altar and then you have the laver. The hangings of the court.

Now we're looking at the perimeter. Its pillars and sockets. The screen for the court gate.

Its cords and its pegs. All the utensils for the service of the tabernacle. This is the shovels for cleaning up after the animals.

And the forks and the hooks and the pans for carrying coals. And cleaning up. And all of the accouterments for the tent of meeting.

Then 41. Now we're going to look at the priests just like we did in our study. The garments of ministry to minister in the holy place.

The holy garments for Aaron the priest and his son's garments to minister as priests. Verse 42. According to all that the Lord had commanded Moses so the children of Israel did all the work.

Wouldn't it be great if that was the coda? If that was the last sentence in the book of our life? According to all that the Lord had commanded so, fill in your name here, did. Wouldn't it be great? According to all that the Lord commanded that's what they did. Verse 43.

Then Moses looked over all the work and indeed they had done it as the Lord commanded just so they had done it and Moses blessed them. It puts you in vague remembrance of the end of the sixth day when God looks over all that he created and saw that it was good. Moses looked over all the work and indeed they had done it as the Lord had commanded just so they had done it and Moses blessed them.

Now chapter 40. Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. You shall put in it the ark of the testimony and partition off the ark with the veil.

Now, once again, think about that mental trip. I don't mean take a mental trip. I mean visualize

beginning in the holy of holies.

Remember we had our... I still got my little poster back here. No, it went away. The whole tabernacle complex.

We're starting in the holy of holies. Put in the ark of the testimony. Partition off the ark with the veil.

Bring in the table in the holy place. Arrange the things that are to be set in order on it. Bring in the lamp stand and light its lamps.

You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting and you shall set the labor between. Do you notice that the order is exactly the same as what we had at the end of chapter 39? This is sort of an order of priority, isn't it? Set the labor between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar and put water in it.

You shall set up the court all around and hang up the screen at the court gate. Notice the people of Israel, especially on the first time that this is ever set up, you can imagine there's going to be a huge gaggle. This is what's happening on that day.

It's like the county fair. And so everybody is gathered around the central courtyard in the center of the camp and the first thing they see is the completed ark of the testimony with the veil covering it coming out into the very center and it's set up. And the tabernacle tent is erected and then that veil is raised and hung in front of it.

And then they see the table being carried in. Then they see the lampstand being carried in. Pretty soon they can see the flicker of the light coming out the opening.

Then they hang the screen across the holy place. Then they set up the altar of burnt offering. And then they set up the laver and they fill it with water.

Now the court walls are going up. But everybody saw all the other stuff being set up because these curtains go up last, right? So what do you think the little kids, the 10 and 12 year olds are going to be doing? They're going to be turning to their father and they're going to be saying, Abba, what does this mean? Why are they doing that? What are these colors? What are these skins? What are these implements? Why is it gold? Why is it silver? And their father is looking down at them saying, Son, I have no earthly idea. I just don't know.

We'll have to ask Moses the first chance we get because it's a big mystery to me that we made this stuff. I worked on casting those silver sockets myself, but the explanation of it I don't quite understand yet. I've got to get the word and I'll let you know when I find out.

So all of this takes place. Set up the court, verse 8, all around and hang up the screen at the

court gate and you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it and you shall hallow it and all its utensils and it shall be holy. You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils.

Consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy. You shall anoint the labor and its base and consecrate it.

Notice there are two most holy things at opposite ends of the tabernacle complex. You have the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant is and the other thing that is said to be most holy is the altar which is furthest away from it and everything happens in between those two. You have the altar at one side.

You have the presence of God at the other. In between you have the labor. You have the lamp stand.

You have the table of showbread. You have the golden altar of incense. You have the veil, but everything is comprehended between those holy outside elements and then you just wrap a curtain around the whole thing.

Then, verse 12, you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. Now this would have been a spectacle. All these people have been watching.

They have nothing else to do. They're sitting at the foot of the mountain and all this stuff that they've been working on for however long is hauled in and set up and all of that. So now, at the onset of this, you bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water.

So, can people see this or not? The curtains are up and the screen has been hung, right? So unless somebody was in there doing a sacrifice, which they're not, this is now inside and so all the people, they see Aaron and his sons troop in, curtain closes. See Moses and a couple of buckets of water, some hyssop probably, going in and then it's closed. They say, wow, I wonder what everybody's whispering.

I wonder what's going on in there. Well, they hear the noise of splashing and if the water's cold, they probably hear some of the sons of Aaron yipping in the cool breeze of the morning because he's washing them. He's washing them down with water.

You shall put the holy garments on Aaron. Notice, they don't get to put on their priestly vestments until their bodies are washed with pure water. Where have we encountered that concept? Hebrews chapter 10.

Then put the holy garments on Aaron and anoint him and consecrate him that he may minister to me as priest. And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. You shall anoint them as you anointed their father that they may minister to me as priests for their anointing shall

surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

Now, what does everlasting mean? Lasts ever, right? Everlasting. They have the boxing equipment, Everlast, you see it on the cuffs of the boxing gloves like you can't wear them out. Trust me, you can wear out boxing gloves, but they're called Everlast.

I know because we used to have to box in gloves that 15 other people had worn that day and they wear out. But Everlasting. But this is conditional, isn't it? It's modified.

It says everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. At the point that they stop having generations, the priesthood is going to stop, isn't it? And that is what has happened. The Levitical priesthood is no longer functional.

It is going to get a resurrection when the Levites are resurrected, when the nation of Israel is resurrected. So, verse 16, Thus Moses did, according to all that the Lord had commanded him, so he did. Compare verse 16 to verse 42.

According to all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. Thus Moses did, according to all that the Lord had commanded him. Verse 32, The children of Israel did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so they did.

There is a high level of emphasis on following to the letter what God says, isn't there? Now, verse 17, It came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up. Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and raised up its pillars. And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Now, let me ask you something. You know the rough dimensions of this thing and how heavy all these ram skins, dyed red, and the rest of it is. When it says, Moses did this, do you think that the 80 year old Moses went out there and hefted those ram skins and tossed them over the, you know, single handedly built this? The Bible says, Moses raised up the tabernacle.

Moses fastened the sockets. Moses spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it. Now, either this is an extraordinary feat of strength for an 80 year old man, or Moses saw to it that this was accomplished.

He directed the crews of Levites who pulled this stuff together. You know, we can say President Bush went to war against Iraq, but he didn't put on a steel pot and grab an M16 and go over there and fight, right? So, we understand and we give the Bible the freedom to say things in an understandable way without being absurdly literal. Because an absurd literalist would see a miracle here.

Moses single handedly stuck the whole thing together. You just can't put this together as one man without a miracle. And it doesn't call for a miracle.

Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened the sockets, spread the tent out as the Lord had commanded Moses. Verse 20, He took the testimony and put it into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. Moses picked up that 600 pound chunk of gold mercy seat and stuck it on top.

Well, if he did, he's a better man than me. 600 pounds of gold. He brought the ark into the tabernacle.

Would he stand on both ends of the two poles and just ran really fast? Obviously. But the reason I point this out is you have a lot of people who press a literal view when Paul says, of all sinners, I am chief. They say, well, he was absolutely the worst sinner that ever lived.

He's worse than Hitler. He's worse than Mussolini. He's worse than Bin Laden or any horrible person you can name.

He's worse than the guy that shed the blood of the Jews in the temple and all that. Who was that guy? Who am I thinking of? Antiochus Epiphanes. The Apostle Paul is worse than Antiochus Epiphanes.

He's worse than Nero. We have to be careful about being absurdly literal. Moses saw to it that the testimony was put into the ark.

The poles were inserted. The mercy seat brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, partitioned off the ark of the testimony as the Lord had commanded. Moses noticed once again, the end of verse 19, the end of verse 21, as the Lord had commanded that's how it was done.

Verse 16, verse 19, verse 21, follow the instructions of the book. That's what God expects and that's exactly what they did. Well, we're going to pause here and take our break, but looking at the culmination of all of this work, we think about the temple of God in our own soul.

Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are the dwelling place of God. God can indwell us.

The Lord Jesus Christ can indwell us if we have His Word and keep it. So, how do we make that happen? Well, think about it. The components have to be holy.

What you put into your soul has to be holy. We have to bring in sanctified things that are washed with pure water. We have to anoint ourselves, make sure that we are holy, that we are sanctified, that we have washed our bodies with pure water, that we have sprinkled our hearts from an evil conscience so that we can approach how can we set up the holy place in our soul if we are not sanctified? How can we create a dwelling place for God in our heart if we have a lot of impure, unholy stuff littering the area? It can't happen.

So, there is an order and there is a means by which God comes and dwells in our hearts by faith. We have the instructions. We have been commissioned as priests and it's our job to make

sure that we are holy so that the holy God can dwell in our midst.

Let's pause here and take a break. When we come back we'll pick up in verse 20.