

## **Establishment of a Nation (1525 – 1400 BCE)**

### ***Construction of the Tabernacle***

**Readings: Exodus 39:2-43; 40:1-35**

#### ***Reflections:***

- The priestly robes are described in great detail and were rich with symbolism and beauty.
  - Laver: washing was symbolic of being made clean and pure.
  - Lamp stand: represented the light of God’s truth.
  - Ark of the Covenant: symbolic of God’s presence
    - Angelic guardians over the mercy seat, the place where God’s presence meets with sacrifice.
    - Within the Ark was manna which was symbolic of God’s provision.
    - Moses’ staff was symbolic of God’s leadership and power.
    - The Law was symbolic of God’s covenant relationship and righteous requirements.
  - Table: symbolic of eating with God and having a meal with him.
  - Altar: symbolic of the place of sacrifice and blood that brings reconciliation for sin.
  - Oil: symbolic of the health, wholeness, and blessing of God’s presence.
  - Incense: symbolic of the beauty of God’s presence.
  - Priests’ garments - symbolic of being clothed in righteousness so that a person can approach God. The breastplate highlighted the importance of covering the heart so that the heart is made righteous.
- The inscription on the diadem captures the heart behind all that was created in the tabernacle and priestly robes: “Holy to the Lord.” Holy simply meant, “set apart for a special purpose.”
- Moses carefully inspects all that is made. It is important for leaders to inspect peoples work and to properly affirm work that honors God. This helps to ensure that no detail has been

missed. Moses models excellent leadership and the importance leaders play in ensuring that those that serve under them complete their work with excellence.

- Moses orders for the tabernacle to be fully set up. The priests are to be anointed for their work. We see that the work of God is again not to be done in our own strength. This anointing is a physical expression of God's presence filling their lives for their service as mediators between God and his people. We are reminded that in the story of Israel all of the spiritual principles are expressed externally.
- Over and over again it says that everything was done "as the Lord commanded." We must remember the importance of remaining fully aligned with God in all we do to serve him. This is not meant to create in us a legalistic obsession but rather a humble dependence as we seek to do everything God calls us to do.
- Once everything is in place we see God's presence comes to the tabernacle: "Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle." (Exodus 40:34-35) We must note the following:
  - We see the powerful reality of God's presence as God manifests his presence in a cloud so the people know the reality of his presence with them;
  - This is the rare exception that Moses cannot come in and stand before God. Normally Moses can simply hang out with God as his friend. This was a special moment and so even Moses must stand back in awe;
  - Within the story of Israel, God's glory is displayed in power over and over again. In Jesus, we will see God's glory displayed in weakness and humble love. Jesus shows us that God is not just a God on a power trip. He is a God of humility who willingly identifies with our weakness and vulnerability.