

June 23, 2019

Speaker: Eric Naus **Series:** God With Us **Passage:** Exodus 25-27, 30

Community Group Questions: "God's Custom Home"

1. In Exodus 25-30, Moses goes back up to the top of Mt. Sinai where he spends 40 days in God's presence (see 24:18). During this time, among other things, Moses receives architectural plans for building God a "custom mobile home" known as the tabernacle. As a group, take time to leaf through chapters 25-27 and 30, pointing out the various places where instructions are given for the various elements of the tabernacle. Looking at the tabernacle as a whole, as shown in the picture below, what lessons do we learn about the nature of God and how he relates to his people?



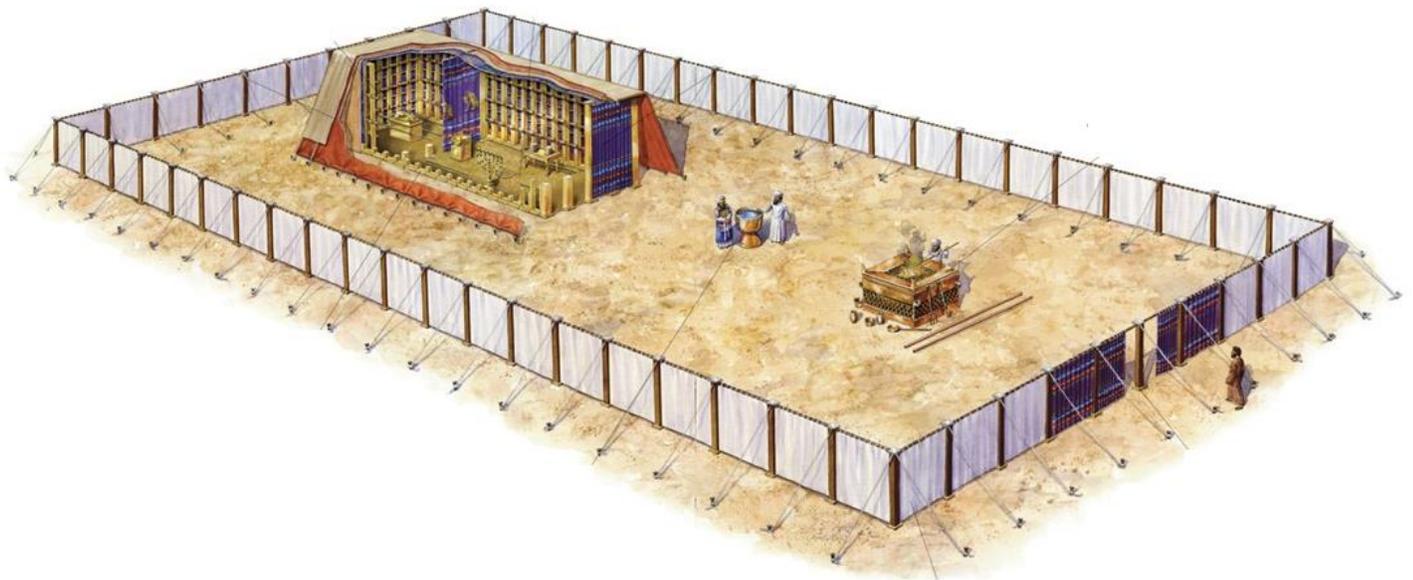
2. Exodus 25:10-22 speaks of the Ark of the Covenant. It was a hollow, wooden chest overlaid in gold, and its lid was made of pure gold, ornamented with cherubim angels (angels that guard God's holy presence). This ark was the symbolic throne-seat of God, the place where God would manifest his presence. Only one person, the high priest, was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place, once a year, to approach the ark and sprinkle the blood of animal sacrifice on the lid, making atonement for the sins of the people. Other than that, the ark was to remain completely hidden from human eyes. Anyone who touched it would die.

How does the Ark of the Covenant show us God's holiness? How does it point us to Christ? What would it look like for Christians to treat God with the overwhelming reverence that he deserves?



(Image from ESV Study Bible, Crossway, 2008)

3. The tabernacle included a number of elements that gave it a heavenly feel. For instance, the walls were made of wooden frames that were overlaid in gold. The first layer draped over these frames was made of linen fabric dyed in beautiful shades of blue and decorated with angels (see the picture below). When a person stood inside the Tabernacle and looked up at the curtains, they would get the impression of heaven. This was "heaven on earth!" How does the heavenly tabernacle point us to Jesus, the one who fulfills the tabernacle (see John 1:14)? How did the Tabernacle foreshadow the New Heaven and New Earth described in Revelation 21-22?



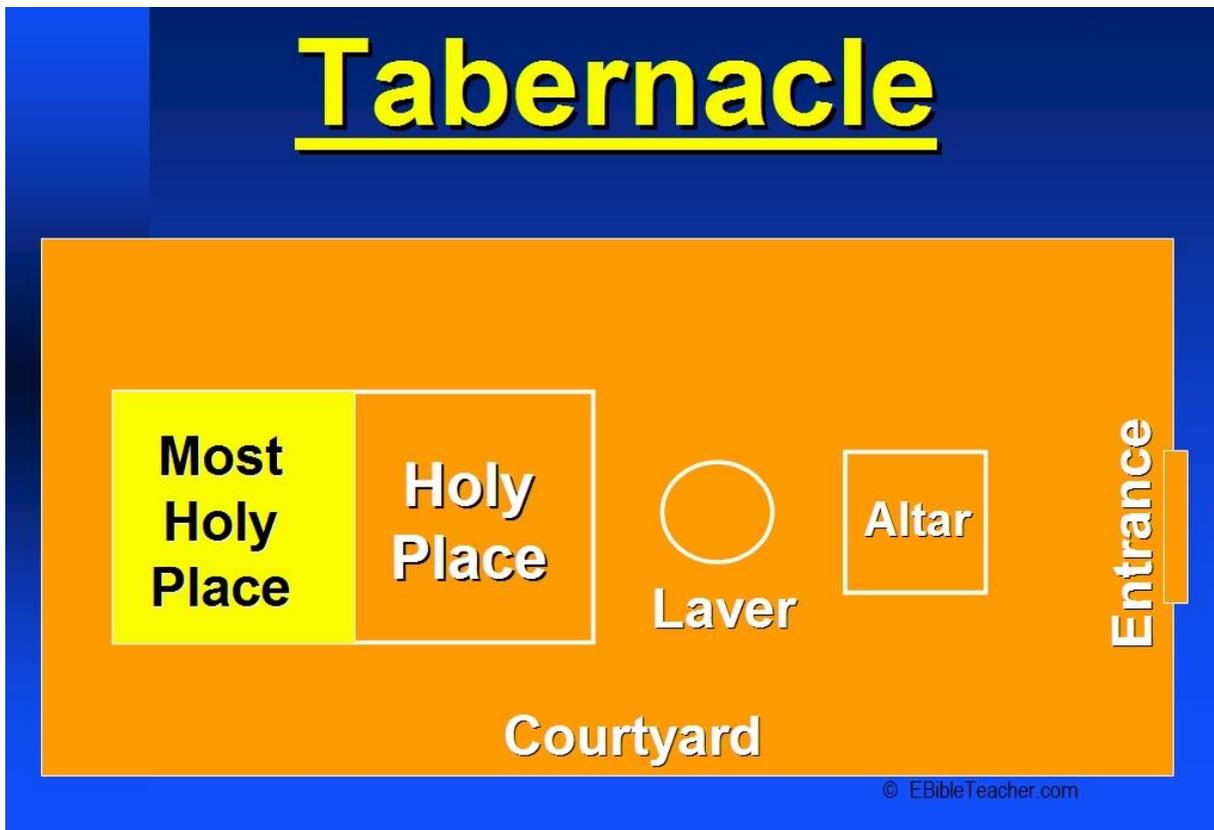
(Image from ESV Study Bible, Crossway, 2008)

4. The Tabernacle's furniture and layout were all designed to communicate a home. God's home has lights (the golden lampstand), a dinner table with bread, inner and outer rooms, servants (the priests), a front yard (the courtyard), and a barbecue grill (the altar). Israelites were welcomed in to feast with God. How does this "meal theme" show us how God intends to relate to us today? (see John 6:35, Revelation 3:20)



(Images from ESV Study Bible, Crossway, 2008)

5. The diagram below shows an aerial view of the tabernacle. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place (passing through the diving curtain). Only the priests could enter into the Holy Place. Everyday Israelites were allowed into the courtyard. How does this structure illustrate both the "transcendence" of God (his holiness and greatness), as well as the "immanence" of God (his closeness and intimacy)? How does Jesus bridge the gap between a holy God and a sinful people? How would you explain the gospel to someone using the imagery of the tabernacle?



6. Eventually the tabernacle was replaced by a permanent temple. The Bible makes it wonderfully clear that not only did Jesus himself fulfill the tabernacle/temple (John 1:14, John 2:19), but now every individual Christian is a temple where God's Spirit dwells (1 Cor. 6:19), and together the church is a collective temple where God is pleased to make himself at home (2 Cor. 6:16). In light of this theology, what should people learn about the character of God by analyzing our individual lives and by analyzing our church? How does this theology encourage us to pursue holiness, purity, and reverent worship?

Prayer suggestion: Praise God for his greatness, holiness, and transcendence. Spend time thanking him for how he has drawn near to us in Christ. Ask God to make us faithful as "tabernacles" of his Holy Spirit, bearing witness to a watching world.