

EXODUS PART FOUR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SANCTUARY

The next part of the Book of Exodus will concern the instructions for building the Tabernacle. There is an overall pattern for the instruction, which is not usually dealt with in studies (and would not be in sermons since very few people will preach on this section). The whole section is laid out in seven speeches, which correspond to the seven days of creation; this is because the sanctuary was supposed to be a replica of the Garden and of Eden. For a detailed study of that, and especially the speeches of this section, see my book on worship, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*.

In developing expositions of this section of the book we have to follow a slightly different method, albeit the same basic procedure.

1. Study the passage in great detail to make sure that you know what it says, especially noticing the names and terms description of the function of what is being made. You will have to combine the passage in this section and the corresponding passage at the end of the book that describes what they made. And, you may find it helpful to look at some of the Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias for full discussions.

One thing that will come up that has to be dealt with is the fact that much of this is similar to what had been built and used by pagan religions for centuries. So then, how is this divine revelation of Sinai? Or, perhaps more to the point, how did the pagans come up with these structures, if the pattern for them is the heavenly temple?

2. Out of this study you will develop the primary theological message, and it will have to do with the trappings of worship. This will find a correspondence in the Church in establishing the setting and circumstances of worship. Many churches do not think of this, or they turn it over to architects. But if every piece of furniture, every color, every substance, was both functional and symbolic for worship, then that is what we have to tap into for the primary lesson. How do we make the setting of our worship work in every way for the worship that we carry out there? This, then, will be a practical correspondence.
3. Now, and only now, you can go forward to study the typology. Here you will build on the symbolic meaning of the things in the passage, and show how those religious ideas find fulfillment in the New Testament. There will often be a correlation between the symbols and furnishings of our worship and the doctrine we teach that is connected to them. But you have to be careful, for we have to have a hermeneutical approach for typology. Things cannot simply mean what you think fits. You have to find supportive Scripture to show this is what the New Testament writers were seeing as the spiritual fulfillment of the form. We find here a lot of clues in the books of Hebrews and Revelation.
4. Finally, you can make the application of the typological correlation. You do not end up just preaching the New Testament passage, for the point about typology is that there is a divinely intended **corresponding** reality in the New Testament. The basic idea should fit both testaments. And you have to show this in your sermon, because people need to see the links and the development.

UNIT 45

THE OFFERINGS OF THE SANCTUARY **(Exodus 25:1-9; 38:21-32)**

Probably the first few verses of Exodus 25 would be covered in the discussion of the building of the Tabernacle. I would join it with unit 59 on the willing artisans. Two parts may be isolated: the willing offerings (vv.2-7) and the

purpose of the offerings (8, 9). The point is: ***God calls his people to offer of their substance so that his sanctuary (and what it does) can be established.***

You will have to discuss “offering” (“heave offering” in Leviticus) and “offers it willingly with his heart.” The word *nedabah* in Leviticus is the freewill offering. Here the verb is supported by “heart,” stressing the will of the offerer.

The purpose was to make God a “sanctuary” (*miqdash*) that He might dwell (*shakan*) among His people. This holy place had to follow the holy orders if God was going to reveal Himself there. God revealed the pattern (*tabnit*) of the tabernacle and utensils, so everything had to be made perfect for His presence. This “pattern” I take to be a revelation in form of some spiritual heavenly reality. In the course on Worship I suggest that John on the island of Patmos saw essentially what Moses saw, both being revelatory replicas of the spiritual world of the Godhead.