

# The Tabernacle: God's Presence with His People

Exodus 36–40

# I. Chapter 36: The Generosity of the People and the Building of the Tabernacle

- God equipped and called individuals to build the tabernacle.
- "Stirs": Demonstration of the Holy Spirit's OT ministry by which the heart is divinely-prompted, compelling that person to action toward a holy or a righteous purpose.
- The people respond with overwhelming generosity, giving more than enough.
- Reflects Spirit-empowered obedience and willingness.
- Outer layers = protection
- Inner curtain = contained the presence of God
- Veil = separated God from man.

## II. Chapter 37: The building of the Ark of the Covenant and worship elements

<u>Element</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Symbolic Meaning</u>
Ark of the Covenant	Chest of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, with molding	Held the tablets of the Law, Manna, Aaron's rod	Represents God's presence, holiness, and covenant relationship
Mercy Seat	Solid gold cover placed on the Ark	Place of atonement where blood was sprinkled	Symbolizes God's mercy, forgiveness, and meeting place with humanity
Cherubim	Two gold angelic figures overshadowing the Ark	Guarded sacred space and represented heavenly beings	Represents divine throne, glory, and protection
Poles	Gold-covered poles inserted into rings	Carried the Ark without direct contact	Shows reverence and separation due to God's holiness
Table of Showbread	Gold-covered table with rings and molding	Held the bread of the Presence	Symbolizes provision and fellowship with God

## II. Chapter 37: The building of the Ark of the Covenant and worship elements

<u>Element</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Symbolic Meaning</u>
Utensils	Gold plates, dishes, bowls, pitchers	Used in offerings and rituals	Represents purity and sacred service
Golden Lampstand	Pure gold lampstand with branches and almond blossoms	Provided light in the tabernacle	Symbolizes God as light, life, and spiritual illumination
Lamps & Tools	Wick trimmers and trays of gold	Maintained continual light	Represents ongoing worship and sustaining God's presence
Altar of Incense	Gold-covered altar	Burned incense before the Lord	Symbolizes prayer and intercession rising to God
Incense	Sacred perfumed blend	Burned daily as offering	Represents prayers and devotion of the people
Anointing Oil	Special consecrated oil	Used to set apart priests and objects	Symbolizes sanctification and being dedicated to God

### **III. Chapter 38: The construction of the altar of sacrifice and other elements**

- The altar of sacrifice highlights the necessity of atonement before approaching God.
- Worship begins with sacrifice, showing that sin must be dealt with before entering God's presence.
- The inner beauty of the Tabernacle and the inner worship of God, is replaced with blood, sacrifice, and atonement.
- The cost of the tabernacle being funded out of the gold and valuables of the people

# IV. Chapter 39: The Priestly garments

<u>Item</u>	<u>What it was</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Priestly Garments	Holy garments for Aaron and his sons	Worn during ministry before God	Worship is not casual—God requires holiness, reverence, and order when approaching Him
Ephod	A richly designed priestly vest (gold, blue, purple, scarlet)	Central garment of the high priest	Represents glory and beauty—God is to be honored with excellence and intentional worship
Onyx Stones	Stones engraved with the 12 tribes	Worn on the shoulders	The priest carries God's people before Him—symbolizing responsibility and representation
Breastpiece	Pouch with 12 precious stones	Worn over the heart	Represents intimate care—the people are held close, showing intercession and love

# IV. Chapter 39: The Priestly garments

<u>Item</u>	<u>What it was</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Urim & Thummim	Means of divine decision-making	Used for guidance	True direction comes from God—not human wisdom; God reveals His will
Robe (Blue)	Garment with bells and pomegranates	Worn under the ephod	Access to God requires life and fruitfulness—symbolizing spiritual vitality and evidence of faith
Gold Plate	Plate reading 'Holy to the LORD'	Worn on the forehead	The priest is set apart—holiness is essential, not optional, in serving God
Tunics, Turbans, Sashes	Basic priestly garments	Used in daily ministry	Even ordinary service must be done with purity, order, and devotion before God

## **V. Chapter 40: God fills the Tabernacle**

- After faithful obedience, God's glory fills the tabernacle. His presence confirms His approval and dwelling among His people, guiding them continually.

## V. Chapter 40: God fills the Tabernacle

*“(The Cloud) was a way God chose to manifest himself—a visible presence—indicating symbol of an invisible God. In the hot, arid wilderness of Sinai, where the sun beat down mercilessly upon people, plants, and animals, a cloud during the day represented a cool, beneficent, shade-giving divine kindness. But the cloud was much more than that. It displayed Yahweh’s glory, which was an awesome and frightening thing the closer one got to it. Accordingly, as the Israelites saw the cloud, they understood it to be a potentially overwhelming manifestation of the presence of their God, to be avoided carefully and not infringed upon.□ The cloud had thus progressed in location from Mount Sinai to the little, temporary tent of meeting to the tabernacle...*

*How would an invisible God show his people that he had indeed come to dwell among them as they so earnestly desired□ and that thereby he was fully in covenant relationship with them....willing to go with them wherever he led them□....(and that) the rift between Yahweh and his people had been fully healed by reason of God’s gracious love for his people?*

*The answer is that He visibly went into his house! He left Mount Sinai and came to dwell among the encampment of his people, just as he had promised he would. His people had built his house for him just as he commissioned it, and he showed his approval of their efforts and, more importantly, his desire to dwell among them by symbolically entering his house through the glory cloud that covered the house and also filled its inside spaces.”-Douglas Stuart*