

Ex. 40:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Ex. 40:2 On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

The LORD now instructs Moses when to set up the tabernacle—on the first day of the first month. I believe this is a reference to Exodus 12:2 regarding the establishment of the Passover. This would seem to indicate that the beginning of year two of their wandering in the wilderness is approaching.

Ex. 40:3 And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail.

Ex. 40:4 And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof.

Ex. 40:5 And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle.

Ex. 40:6 And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

Ex. 40:7 And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein.

Ex. 40:8 And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate.

Ex. 40:9 And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy.

These verses provide a listing of how the tabernacle is to be set up. First Moses is told what to put inside the tabernacle:

1. the ark of the testimony covered by the veil
2. the table that holds the shewbread
3. the candlestick and its lamps
4. the golden altar for incense goes in front of the veil that hides the ark

Next comes the hanging door of the tabernacle. The laver filled with water is positioned in front of the door; in front of it will be placed the altar for the burnt offering. Next would come the outside hangings that form the outer court.

Then the tabernacle and all that is in it is to be anointed with the special anointing oil to declare it clean and holy before God.

Ex. 40:10 And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy.

Ex. 40:11 And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it.

To emphasize the importance of the anointing process, the LORD details again that the altar for burnt offering, the vessels used in association with this altar, the laver, and its pedestal are all to be anointed.

Ex. 40:12 And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water.

Ex. 40:13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Ex. 40:14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats:

Ex. 40:15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

Aaron and his sons are to be washed with water and clothed appropriately before ministering before the LORD in the tabernacle. The priests and their clothing were to be anointed before assuming their duties as priests. This anointing would establish this family as an everlasting priesthood for coming generations. (Our anointing with the Holy Spirit establishes us as part of an everlasting priesthood as well.)

My daughter-in-law made a good observation. The priests were ministering to God—not the people. That should be our mindset as well. How can I serve God as a wife, mom, employee, employer, etc.?

Ex. 40:16 Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he.

Everything that the LORD told Moses to do—he did.

Ex. 40:17 And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up.

Ex. 40:18 And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars.

Ex. 40:19 And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Now it is confirmed that it is the first month of the second year (of being delivered from Egypt) on the first day of the month that the tabernacle is put up. All the hangings, boards, sockets, bars and pillars are set. Then the other layers of goat hair, ram skins and badger skins are layered over the whole as protection—“as the LORD commanded Moses.”

As is often the case in scripture, we are now given a more detailed account of the above summary of actions taken in putting the tabernacle into position.

Ex. 40:20 And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:

Ex. 40:21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses.

After the shell of the tabernacle proper has been established, the furnishings are placed in position. The tablets of testimony are placed in the ark. The staves are put in position on the ark and the mercy seat is placed on the top of the ark—“as the LORD commanded Moses.”

Ex. 40:22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail.

Ex. 40:23 And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The veil that separates the Holy of Holies containing the ark is in place. On the north side of the area outside this veil was placed the table of shewbread—"as the LORD commanded Moses."

Ex. 40:24 And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward.

Ex. 40:25 And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Against = opposite, in front of

The candlestick is placed on the south side of the area outside the veil opposite the table of shewbread, and the lamps were lit—"as the LORD commanded Moses."

Ex. 40:26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the vail:

Ex. 40:27 And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses.

In front of the veil was placed the golden altar for incense, and sweet incense was burned on it—"as the LORD commanded Moses."

Ex. 40:28 And he set up the hanging *at* the door of the tabernacle.

Ex. 40:29 And he put the altar of burnt offering *by* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the LORD commanded Moses.

The hangings for the entry to the tabernacle were put in place. The altar for burnt offerings was placed by the door to the tabernacle, and the burnt offerings and meat offerings were offered—"as the LORD commanded Moses."

Ex. 40:30 And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash *withal*.

Ex. 40:31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat:

Ex. 40:32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses.

The laver filled with water was placed between the tabernacle and the altar. Moses and Aaron and Aaron's sons washed their hands and feet at the laver when they went into the tabernacle and when they came to serve at the altar—"as the LORD commanded Moses."

Ex. 40:33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

The courtyard perimeter is established surrounding the tabernacle and the altar to complete the structure.

Ex. 40:34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

Ex. 40:35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

All the work has been completed “as the LORD commanded.” The LORD then acknowledges His acceptance of their work by descending in a cloud of glory to fill the tabernacle. No one, not even Moses, could enter the tabernacle when the cloud was in position and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

Even Moses didn’t have the freedom to go in and out of the LORD’s presence at will. He was a man with a sin nature just like us. He was given special times of fellowship with God as His chosen representative before the people, but always as God’s invitation. We, on the other hand, have an open invitation to approach the throne of grace.

Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Ex. 40:36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys:

Ex. 40:37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.

Ex. 40:38 For the cloud of the LORD *was* upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

God gave direction to the children of Israel through the positioning of the cloud. When the cloud lifted from the tabernacle, the Israelites prepared to travel. When the cloud became stationary, they made camp. The glory of the LORD appeared as a cloud by day and as fire by night. It was an unmistakable sign to the Israelites of God’s presence in their midst and His direction throughout all their journeys.

Summary thoughts:

1. There is only one entry to the tabernacle just as Jesus is the only way to salvation and entering God’s presence today.
John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
2. The altar for burnt offerings was the first thing you came to when approaching the entry to the tabernacle. Sacrifice of innocent blood is necessary before sinful man can approach God.
Hebrews 10:19-22 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
3. The laver of water is the next place you come to when approaching the entry to the tabernacle. Cleansing is necessary before sinful man can approach God.
Psalms 24:3-4 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart....

4. The priests represented the people before God. They could not enter the tabernacle without stopping at the first two stations and then putting on the proper clothing. As believers, we are priests before God.

1Pet. 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

We must also be clothed appropriately to approach the Father. We are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus.

Is. 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.

The priests are also anointed before entering the tabernacle. We too are anointed with the Holy Spirit before being allowed in the throne room.

1John 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

4. When the priest finally enters the holy place, he sees three distinct items: the candlestick, the table of shewbread and the altar of incense. These all depict truth about our Savior. He is the light of the world, and as His children we should reflect that light.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Matt. 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

5. The table was always to have bread on it and the lamps on the candlestick were always to be lit. Jesus is always available for our spiritual food and our spiritual enlightenment besides supplying our physical needs. There is never a time so dark or empty that He is not there at our bidding.

John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

6. The altar of incense is representative of our prayers to God. Notice that the incense was a sweet aroma, a pleasing thing, before God.

Psa. 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as* incense; *and* the lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice

Rev. 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Rev. 8:4 And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

7. The position of this altar is directly in front of the throne of God separated only by a veil. When Jesus died on that cross, that veil was

torn leaving absolutely nothing between God and the prayers of His saints. Not only that, Jesus serves as our intercessor.

Rom. 8:34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

8. The ripping of the veil was also a statement to man that Jesus' sacrifice in payment for our sins was acceptable to God. No other sacrifice is needed.
9. Everything associated with God's presence was pure, holy, and beautiful.
10. Donations for the construction of the tabernacle were only accepted from those who were of a willing heart. God will never force His fellowship with us.

2Cor. 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Rev. 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.