

This lesson speeds through five chapters detailing the actual physical construction of the tabernacle, the ark, and all the other items associated with the tabernacle. The final verses of Exodus describe the dedication of the tabernacle for the worship of the LORD, signified by the presence of the LORD in a cloud that covered the tabernacle as the glory of the LORD filled it.

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#### Exodus 36:4-6

4 And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; 5 And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. 6 And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing.

In verses 1-3, Moses calls for Bezaleel, Aholiab, and any “wise” (skilled) men that the LORD had gifted and that were willing to help to come and perform the work of building the tabernacle, the ark, and all the other things that the LORD had commanded to be made. Moses gave them the materials that had been donated (Ex. 25:1-8) and the people continued to bring additional donations for the work every morning. However, the men doing the work soon discovered that the people had already brought much more than what was needed to complete the work and they notified Moses. Moses then passed the word to the people that no more offerings of materials were needed.

**Exodus 36:5-38:** The men proceed to construct the tabernacle according to the instructions that the LORD gave Moses. Inside the tabernacle were two areas separated by a veil. When the priest entered the tabernacle, he was in the area called “the holy place.” In this area was the candlestick, the table of shewbread and the altar of incense. A veil separated this area from the one called “the most holy place” or “the holy of holies.” This is where the ark stood and the high priest could only enter this area once a year on the Day of Atonement, when he entered to offer blood on the mercy seat (on top of the ark) blood from the sacrifice that had been offered for the sins committed by the people over the past year.

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#### Exodus 37:1-2

1 And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it: 2 And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about.

Bezaleel follows the instructions given to Moses (Ex. 25:10-22) to the letter. Bezaleel either personally built the ark, did so with assistance from the other volunteers, or oversaw its construction while the volunteers did the work. If he worked as overseer, only working on tasks that needed his skill, it would free him up to oversee the construction of the other items in the project.

**Verses 3-16:** Verses 3-9 complete the description of the construction of the ark. The construction of the table of shewbread is covered in vs. 10-16, including the dishes, bowls, covers, spoons, etc. to be used with it. These are also made according to the LORD’s instructions (Ex. 25:23-30). The ark was placed behind the veil in the holy of holies.

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17 And he made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, were of the same:

**“And he made”** – Bezaleel is credited with making the candlestick, as well as the other items. Most likely he oversaw each building project or else he was the primary craftsmen with others helping under his guidance.

**“the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, were of the same”** – As with all the other objects made with gold, the candlestick was made of pure gold, reflecting the purity of the LORD’s holiness. The candlestick was not cast from a mold but instead was shaped by a hammer. The candlestick illuminated the the holy place so the priest could see as he ministered there.

**Verses 18-24:** These verses describe the specifics of the candlestick. As with the other items, the candlestick was made according to the instructions from the LORD (Ex. 25:31-40).

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25 And he made the incense altar of shittim wood: the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit; it was foursquare; and two cubits was the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same.

The altar of incense was also placed within the holy place, and was where the priest would burn incense morning and evening so that there was always a sweet smell ascending to the LORD.

**Verses 26-29:** The description of the construction of the altar of incense continues and of the incense that would be burnt upon it. As before, these were made according to the instructions from the LORD (Ex. 30:1-10, 22-28).

**Exodus 38:1-23:** These verses describe the construction of the altar of burnt offerings and all the utensils needed for its use (v. 1-7), the brazen laver (v. 8), the curtains, pillars and associated hardware for assembling the courtyard around the tabernacle (v. 9-20). Verses 21-23 summarize the construction and identified the two men whom the LORD gifted to be able to take the lead in the work (Bezaleel and Aholiab).

**Exodus 38:24-25**

24 All the gold that was occupied for the work in all the work of the holy *place*, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 25 And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary:

Moses records the amount of gold and silver used to build the tabernacle and all the other objects associated with the worship of the LORD. Talents and shekels are weight measurements and commentators estimate a talent to be about 70 lbs and a shekel to be about half an ounce. Doing the math, the making of everything the LORD commanded consumed just over a ton of gold and almost four tons of silver. The present day values of gold and silver would put the cost at well over \$13 million.

**Verses 26-31:** These verses summarize how the silver was used, how much brass was used (almost 3 tons) and what the brass was used to make.

**Exodus 39:1-31:** These verses describe the garments made for the priests, particularly the high priest. Included is the construction of the breastplate that the high priest wore when ministering before the LORD in the tabernacle. It was inlaid with twelve precious stones, each representing a tribe of Israel.

**Exodus 39:32**

32 Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

This verse states that the work was completed according to the instructions that the LORD gave to Moses. The children of Israel were obedient in giving the materials needed and they performed the work required to build the tabernacle, ark and all the other items commanded by the LORD to be constructed.

**Exodus 39:33-43:** The workers bring everything they have made to Moses for his approval. Moses inspected what they had made and when he saw that it was all done according to the instructions of the LORD, he gave his approval by blessing them.

**Exodus 40:1-33:** The LORD instructs Moses to erect the newly constructed tabernacle and then set the ark and all the other items in their places in and around the tabernacle. He also instructs him to consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests, establishing his family line as the priestly line. The tabernacle was erected on the first day of the first month of the second year after they left Egypt, just before the first anniversary (the passover later that month).

**Exodus 40:34-35**

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

**“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation”** – The cloud that represented the presence of the LORD engulfed the tabernacle. They had been following the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night (and would continue to do so until they reached the promised land). There are other times in scripture when the presence of the LORD was manifested by a cloud. Two such instances are when the presence of the LORD was seen at the dedication of Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 8:10-12) and also when the disciples saw this cloud on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:5). The tabernacle is called “the tent of the congregation” because the tabernacle represented the earthly dwelling place of the LORD among His people. He was the God of all the congregation.

**“and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle”** – The LORD showed His approval of the work that had been done by filling the tabernacle with His glory. The LORD would dwell between the cherubim above the mercy seat, as He promised (**Ex. 25:22** “*And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel*”).

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.

The presence of the LORD was so intense that Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle despite his close relationship with the LORD. A similar thing happened at the dedication of Solomon’s temple (**1 Kings 8:10-11** “*And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD*”).

**Exodus 40:36-38:** These verses describe how the LORD led them through the wilderness. As long as the cloud covered the tabernacle then Israel was to remain where they were. However, if the cloud rose up from the tabernacle then they knew they were to break camp and follow the cloud as it led them to the next location.