**The Tabernacle**

**A Bible Story From**

**Exodus 26:1–27:21; 35:1–40:38**

**Bible Story Number: 1010620**

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**Bible Story**

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**Background**

God made a profound promise to Abraham (called a covenant):

I will bless you and make you the father of a great nation.

I will make you famous throughout history.

I will protect your allies and punish your enemies.

I will bless the entire world through your descendants.

This promise (covenant) was passed on to Isaac and Jacob. God reconfirmed His promise to the descendents of Abraham. The nation of Israel continued to be God’s chosen people.

The Israelites (descendents of Jacob) moved to Egypt as a part of God’s plan. God used what Joseph’s brothers intended as evil as a way to bless Joseph and rescue the entire family.

After the tenth plague that God sent on the Egyptian people, Pharaoh finally let the Israelites leave. They had been in Egypt 430 years. The day they left, there were approximately 600,000 foot soldiers in the Israelites army. The total number of people was much larger because this did not include their families.

The Ten Commandments are familiar to many people, regardless of their background of biblical knowledge. However, this common knowledge is not always accurate or complete. Group leaders should be aware that an individual’s knowledge about the existence of the Ten Commandments does not always mean they understand their meaning.

**Story from the Bible**

**Exodus 26:1–27:21; 35:1–40:38**

This is what the Bible says.

God gave detailed instructions for building the tabernacle. It was to be mobile and move with the Israelite people.

He began by telling them to make ten curtains. He told them to make them out of finely spun linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn. Each curtain was to be forty-two feet long and six feet wide with cherubim worked into it.

There were to be two sets of five curtains joined together. Each set was to have fifty loops of blue yarn on the outermost edges. These were to line up together with the loops on the other set. He told them to make fifty gold clasps and join the curtains together with the clasps so that the tabernacle made a single unit.

He then told them to make eleven curtains, forty-five feet long and six feet wide to cover the tabernacle. He told them to join five into one curtain and six into the other. They were to fold the sixth curtain double at the front of the tent. Each set was to have fifty loops on the edge and be connected to the other curtain with fifty bronze clasps. This would make a single unit. The extra material was for a flap, hanging down over the back of the tabernacle. This would leave a half-yard on each side and fully cover the tabernacle. The tent should then be covered with ram skins dyed red and then covered with manatee skins.

He then told them to make twenty planks for the south side, twenty planks for the north side, six planks for the west side, and two planks for the back corners. Each plank was to be made of acacia wood, fifteen feet long and twenty-seven inches wide. Each plank was to have two silver bases. The planks were to be connected together with two stakes. The corner planks were to be paired at the bottom and joined together at the top in a single ring.

The instructions for the planks included five crossbars of acacia wood on each of the three sides. The planks and crossbars were to be overlaid with gold. Holders for each crossbar were to be rings made of gold. God told Moses the tabernacle was to be built according to the plan God had shown him on the mountain.

God told them to make a veil out of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely spun linen. It was to have the design of cherubim worked into it. It was to hang by gold hooks from four gold-plated posts made of acacia wood. The posts were to have four silver bases. The veil was to hang under the clasps to separate the holy place from the most holy place. The ark of the testimony was to be placed behind the veil in the most holy place and the mercy seat was to be placed on top of the ark of the testimony. The table was to be placed on the north side of the holy place and the lamp stand on the south side.

The entrance to the tent was to have a screen embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely spun linen. The screen was to hang by gold hooks from five acacia wood posts overlaid with gold. The posts were to be supported by five bronze bases.

God also gave detailed instructions for the construction of the altar of burnt offering and the poles that would be used to carry it. He also gave detailed instructions about the tools to be used with it.

He described how the courtyard around the tabernacle was to be made, including its dimensions. It would form a rectangle one hundred fifty feet long and seventy-five feet wide. It was to be made by hanging a seven and a half foot curtain made of finely spun linen, with silver hooks and bands. Twenty acacia wood posts with bronze bases formed each of the long sides on the north and south. The west side was made with ten posts and ten bases. The tent pegs were to be made of bronze.

The east side was to be also seventy-five feet but included the entrance. There were to be two twenty-two and a half foot extensions from each of the two corners. The same kind of curtain was to hang from three posts, each with its corresponding base. The entrance was to have a thirty-foot screen made of fine linen, embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet yarn. It was to hang from four posts, each with its corresponding base.

God gave specific instructions to them to make all the other things needed for the tabernacle and the priests. His instructions were specific.

He also told Moses to command the Israelites to bring pure clear olive oil for the lamp. The priests were to keep it burning every day from evening until morning.

Moses spoke to the Israelites and told them all that God had said. Everyone was given the opportunity to give an offering to God. Each person whose heart was willing gave. They collected gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn; fine linen and goat hair; ram skins dyed red and manatee skins; acacia wood; oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx with gemstones to mount on the priest’s ephod and breast piece.

God named specific people—Bezalel and Oholiab—who He had gifted as skilled craftsmen and artists, to make all the things needed. They were filled with God’s Spirit, and God gave them wisdom, understanding and ability. They began the work and made everything according to God’s instructions. Others worked with them to make everything just as God had instructed.

The people were so moved that they continued to bring offerings for the tabernacle morning after morning. The workmen reported to Moses that they had more than enough to complete everything God had commanded. So Moses had a proclamation sent throughout the camp to tell the people they had all they needed and that the people were to stop bringing offerings for the tabernacle.

The artist and skilled craftsmen made everything just as God had instructed.

That concludes this story from the Bible.

**Retelling the Story**

Let’s review this story by retelling it as a group. We want to retell it as faithfully as we can to the story from the Bible. We do not want to add to it or leave out anything important. Who will get us started?

**Questions**

* Why do you think God gave such detailed instructions for building the tabernacle?
* Who were the primary craftsmen and where did their talent come from?
* How was the construction paid for?
* Were the Israelites free to not give to the construction project?
* How much did the Israelites give?
* Why do you think it is important that Moses had to tell the people to stop giving?
* What did you like about this story?
* What did you not like about this story?
* What did you learn about God from this story?

**Prayer**

Prayer is more than a way to end the session. It is time to talk to God. Public prayer is a model for others. Boldly ask God to guide participants to use the Bible story with others. Ask God to give you and the participant’s insight and understanding as you think about this biblical event.