

Women in the Word
Bronze Altar and Bronze Laver

Exodus 27:1-8; 30:17-21; 38:1-8 // October 19, 2017

THE
BLUEPRINT
GOD'S HOME ON EARTH

1. Both God's intent and His expectation regarding His relationship with Israel is expressed fully in Exodus 25:8. Read this verse and record what God intends to do.

Also record what God expects His followers to do.

God reveals in this verse an expectation that His followers will prepare for fellowship with Him. Share some of the ways we prepare ourselves and our environments when we want fellowship with friends and family.

2. The Courtyard area of the Tabernacle was the first place one would enter in order to approach God. It contained two significant items: The Altar of Burnt Offering, also called the Bronze Altar; and the Bronze Laver, or basin. Read Exodus 27:1-8 and write a brief description of the altar.
3. The altar would be used for sacrifices. To fully understand the need for sacrifices, read the following verses and record what you learn about God's view of sin and sinners.

Psalm 5:4-6

Romans 1:18

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

4. While God's justice required death and separation from all sin and unholiness, His grace allowed for a substitution. Read Leviticus 17:11 and explain why animals were placed on the altar.

5. With this understanding of the sacrificial system, imagine yourself entering the courtyard with your own animal. With your hand resting on the animal's head, your animal is killed and sacrificed. Consider and record the emotions you might experience.

We clearly see the actions required when we approach a holy God, but what attitudes in our heart and mind also need to be present?

6. Referencing Exodus 40:6 and the artistic renderings in your study packet, note the exact placement of the altar within the courtyard. Because this is their first step in approaching God, what do you think is significant about the placement of the altar?
7. The book of Leviticus details the many offerings that God required. These were to be regular and ongoing sacrifices with no permanent outcome, but they pointed to a future, perfect sacrifice. Read the following verses and record your insights about the perfect sacrifice.

Ephesians 5:2

Ephesians 1:7-8

Hebrews 9:24-26

Hebrews 10:11-14

8. Read about the actual construction of the altar in Exodus 38:1-7. Do you see any discrepancy from God's original blueprint in chapter 27?

In view of this, what can we learn about our approach to God?

9. Imagine the courtyard again with the ongoing, repetitive process of sinner after sinner bringing animals to be sacrificed. What would you see, hear, smell, touch and experience in that place?

When something becomes saturated and stained with blood, what must be done to return it to a pure state?

10. Read Exodus 30:17-21 and 38:8 which describe the plans and the completion of the Bronze Laver, or Bronze Basin. Describe the basin.

When and why would Aaron and his sons use this basin?

According to 30:21, how long would they continue this process?

According to 30:20, what penalty would they experience if they didn't wash?

11. Ritual cleansing shows God's intolerance for sin that stains us. Read the following verses and record what God values most in us.

Matthew 5:8

Psalm 73:1

Psalm 51:10

12. The Bronze Laver was a symbol representing the purification that had already taken place. What water-filled symbol do we use today that also symbolizes cleansing and new life?

God clearly desires a heart that is purified from sin, but mere water has no power to do this. Read Hebrews 9:13-14 and Ephesians 1:7 and record the only way to be pure and clean before God.

13. The Bronze Laver shows that God takes sin seriously and we should too. The daily discipline of confession is an ongoing practice that enhances our fellowship with God. Stop now and pray a prayer of confession to God, asking Him to forgive you and wash you.

Record your thoughts and emotions as you consider God hearing your confession and washing away the stains on your life.

14. Write out your personal prayer request in a few words to share with your small group.

Women in the Word

Garments for the Priests

Exodus 28:1-43; 39:1-31 // October 26, 2017

THE
BLUEPRINT
GOD'S HOME ON EARTH

1. As women, we spend a great deal of time and money on what we wear. When it comes to clothing and accessories, what are the most important factors in your fashion decisions? What is your favorite article of clothing? Please explain.

2. Read Exodus 28:1-3. What were the most important factors in the design of the priestly garments?

According to verse 3, who was to make the priests' garments and what was the purpose of the garments they were to make?

3. Continue by reading Exodus 28:4-5. List the specific garments they are to make for the priests.

What materials were to be used to make the garments?

4. The priests wore an elaborate apron-like garment called an ephod. The ephod was perhaps the most important item of the priestly clothing. Read Exodus 28:6-8 to learn more about the ephod. What colors were used to make the priest's ephod?

5. Exodus 39:3 gives more information about the materials used to make the priests' garments. What specific instructions are given concerning the gold used in the weave of the fabric?

Pure gold throughout the Scriptures speaks of deity. In your own words, describe the possible significance of weaving pure gold into the priests' garments. Refer to Colossians 1:16-17 for insight.

6. Read Exodus 28:9-14. The ephod was made of two pieces, front and back, held together on each shoulder by a jeweled golden clasp. Describe the two stones that would be used to attach the ephod at the shoulders.

According to verse 12, what was the importance of the onyx stones that Aaron wore on his shoulders?

Compare and contrast the importance of the onyx stones on Aaron's shoulders seen in verse 12 with what is recorded about Jesus in Isaiah 53:4 and 1 Peter 2:24.

7. On top of the ephod, the priest would wear the breastplate of judgment. Read Exodus 28:15-29. Of all the design details, which detail stands out to you? Explain.

In your own words describe the significance of the 12 stones attached to the breastplate. Look at Deuteronomy 7:6 and Isaiah 43:4 for insight.

8. With the 12 precious stones placed on the breastplate, the 12 tribes of Israel were close to Aaron's heart as he represented them before God in the Tabernacle. As Christians, we are close to Christ's heart as He represents us before God. John 3:16 tells us that God loves us so much He sent His only Son to die in our place, so we can fellowship with Him. What do these additional portions of Scripture tell us about how precious we are to God?

Ephesians 2:4-8

1 Peter 2:9

1 John 3:1

9. According to Exodus 28:30, Urim and Thummim were placed inside the breastplate of judgment. Urim and Thummim were used throughout the Old Testament as a way for the High Priest to discern God's will for the nation of Israel. What does Psalm 119:105 and 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 tell us about discerning God's will in our lives today?

10. Under the ephod the High Priest was to wear a blue robe. Describe the design details of this robe found in Exodus 28:31-35.

Why were bells included in the hem of the robe?

Describe the different emotions the Israelites may have felt hearing these bells as the High Priest performed his duties in the Tabernacle.

11. Continue by reading Exodus 28:36-38. The High Priest wore a headdress known as a miter. What was engraved on the miter?

According to verse 38 what was the significance of the engraved miter?

12. The last five verses of Exodus 28 describe the garments worn by the priests (not the High Priest). How do the garments of the priests differ from the garments of the High Priest?

13. Like God's blueprint for the Tabernacle, the design for the priestly garments was very detailed and very symbolic. Every element was crafted with excellence as it displayed the very character of God. Ultimately, only one High Priest would be "Holy to The Lord" and would be clothed in righteousness. His name is Jesus and by our faith in Him, we are made righteous before God. Galatians 3:27 says, "for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Read Ephesians 6:10-17 and record the garments we are to put on daily.

14. What elements of God's character do you see reflected in the High Priest's garments? Which one has the most meaning to you?

15. Write out your personal prayer request in a few words to share with your small group.

Women in the Word
Consecration of the Priests

Exodus 29:1-46; 30:22-33 // November 2, 2017

THE
BLUEPRINT
GOD'S HOME ON EARTH

1. What words or thoughts come to mind when you see or hear the word “priest”? Please jot them down. Does the idea of a priest seem familiar or foreign to you?
2. Read Exodus 29:1-9. According to verses 1 and 9, for what purpose has God set aside Aaron and his sons?

Before they could enter the priesthood, Aaron and his sons were to be consecrated, or set apart for God’s holy purposes. According to verse 4, the ceremony would take place outside the Tent of Meeting, or Tabernacle. Why do you think their consecration would happen before they began their priestly duties?

3. Read about the anointing oil in Exodus 30:22-33. What words are used to describe this oil in verse 25?

What is one use of the oil mentioned in verse 30?

What restrictions for the oil are given in verses 32-33?

4. Reread Exodus 29:4-9 carefully. List the steps that begin this ceremony. What do you think was important or meaningful about each step?

What does the word “ordain” mean? How long did God intend Aaron and his descendants to serve the nation of Israel as priests?

Put yourself in the place of these men. What would you be feeling or thinking as this ceremony is taking place? What truths about God would you be telling yourself in these moments?

5. Read Exodus 29:10-14. A bull is the first of three animals that will be sacrificed during the ordination of the priests. What does verse 14 tell us about the purpose of the sacrifice? Look back at verse 10. For whom is the bull being sacrificed?

Why was this sacrifice necessary before the men acted as intercessors between God and Israel? See Leviticus 1:4 and Hebrews 9:22.

What was to be done with the blood of the bull? What was to be done with the fat, liver and kidneys? What was to be done with the flesh, skin and dung? How much of the bull would be left after these things had taken place?

What altar is God referring to in Exodus 29:12-13? Where was the altar located within the Tabernacle Courtyard? See Exodus 40:6-7.

6. Read Exodus 29:15-28. Now two rams are sacrificed as part of this ordination. In verse 20, where is the blood placed on Aaron and his sons? Since Aaron and his sons were to serve God, what do you think this might represent?

Look again at verse 21. What will be the result of the anointing of oil and the sprinkling of blood on Aaron and his sons? Why is this so important?

7. Read Exodus 29:29-37. How many days did it take to complete the ordination of Aaron and his sons? See verse 35.

In verse 36, we learn that a bull was sacrificed on each of these days as a sin offering for atonement. In the Old Testament sacrificial system, to atone meant to purify and make holy to God. In the New Testament, how was this accomplished once and for all instead of in an incomplete and ongoing way? Please read Romans 3:21-26; 5:6-9.

Read the following verses and, in your own words, list some of the awesome blessings that are ours once we have forgiveness of sins and fellowship with God: John 11:25; Romans 15:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17-18; Galatians 3:26 and Ephesians 3:11-12.

8. Read Exodus 29:38-44. What will be part of the daily duties of the priests after the week of consecration?

What is the result of this service according to verses 42-43?

9. Read Exodus 29:45-46. How could Israel's knowledge of their God and His relationship with them be a witness to the nations around them?

In what ways can your relationship with God be a witness to others?

10. Read 1 Peter 2:9 along with Hebrews 13:15-16. How does God describe Christ followers today? List some ways you serve the Lord and offer "sacrifices" today.

11. Write out your personal prayer request in a few words to share with your small group.

Women in the Word
Artisans and Offerings

Exodus 31:1-11; 35:4-35; 36:1-7 // November 9, 2017

THE
BLUEPRINT
GOD'S HOME ON EARTH

1. Acts 20:35 tells us that Jesus once spoke these words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Share an example where this has been proven true in your life. Remember that there are many things we give that may not be monetary.

How did our Savior demonstrate the truth of His own words? Read Mark 10:45.

What does 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 and 2 Corinthians 9:7 teach us about the attitudes that must accompany godly giving?

How did Jesus take these attitudes to the cross? Read John 10:17-18a and Hebrews 12:2.

2. Read Exodus 31:1-6. God, the Divine Designer, appointed two men to head up the building of the Tabernacle. What are their names and what are the names of their tribes?

God gave Bezalel wonderful gifts to complete the task at hand. Make a list of these gifts.

What lesson can we learn from these verses when considering overwhelming tasks that God may place in our lives?

Write out Philippians 4:13 along with one or two of the large responsibilities that are currently part of your life. How will you accomplish your tasks?

3. Read Exodus 31:7-11 and envision the Israelites working together under the guidance of Bezalel and Oholiab to build the Tabernacle according to God's detailed blueprint. What attitudes and actions would be necessary to complete such a great endeavor together?

God also calls His children today to work together to build His Church so we can be a light in a dark world. Read the following verses and summarize God's blueprint for His Church so that we might complete such a great endeavor together.

Ephesians 4:1-3, 15-16

Colossians 3:12-17

4. In Exodus 35, we read that Moses approached the Israelites with God's command for their involvement in the construction of the Tabernacle. Read Exodus 35:4-9. Who is God calling to contribute to the building of His dwelling place according to verse 4?

What character trait is God specifically looking for in those who will donate to God's Tabernacle? Why would this be important?

What was accomplished in the early Church by this same attitude? Read Acts 2:44-47.

How has the generous spirit of others built you up spiritually?

5. Exodus 35:10-19 explains the duties of the skilled craftsmen. Read these verses. What does Exodus 36:1-2 teach us about these skilled craftsmen?

How are these truths still important for a healthy church today? Read Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Peter 4:10-11.

6. Read Exodus 35:30-35 to learn more about Bezalel and Oholiab. According to verse 34, what is a necessary practice for a gifted workman? Why would this be essential when considering the building of the Tabernacle?
7. After Moses shared God's command for contributions to be given for the Tabernacle, we read about the response of the people in Exodus 35:20-29. Read these verses. If you were writing a book about this occasion, what would be the title of your book?

What phrases do we find throughout these verses that shed light on the reasons the people contributed?

Think about the different ways each of the contributions would be used. If you were an Israelite, which of the contributions listed would you be inclined to contribute? Why?

8. Read Exodus 36:2-7. What do we learn about the importance of generosity in these verses?

Read 2 Corinthians 8:9 and explain the generosity of Jesus Christ.

9. Write out your personal prayer request in a few words to share with your small group.

Women in the Word
Tabernacle Completed

Exodus 39:32-43; 40:1-38 // November 16, 2017

THE
BLUEPRINT
GOD'S HOME ON EARTH

1. Think about a time you completed a major project. Describe what that felt like and how you marked the occasion.

2. Read Exodus 31:12-17 where God ends the instruction to Moses by reminding him of the Sabbath law. Now read Exodus 35:1-3. When Moses gives the Israelites God's instructions for the Tabernacle, how does he begin?

Why do you think the Sabbath law was so important to God and His people?

Although we live under grace, how might the principles of this law benefit you and your relationship with the Lord?

3. Exodus 39:32 makes an important statement concerning the Tabernacle. Record what you learn from this one verse.

4. Read Exodus 39:33-41. Describe what is happening in these verses.

Compare Exodus 39:33-41 to Exodus 35:10-19. What observations can you make? How might you apply them to your everyday life?

5. Read Exodus 39:42-43 and visualize the scene described here. As Moses inspects the work accomplished by the people, to what standard does he hold them?

How does Moses convey God's favor on their accomplishment?

What are some words that describe what the Israelites might be feeling now?

6. Compare times in your life when you lived life your way versus following God's blueprint completely as the Israelites did in building the Tabernacle. What did you learn from each experience?

My way –

His way –

What are some of the blessings you have received from adhering to God's standards/blueprint in your life?

7. In Exodus 39, the people assembled the completed parts of the Tabernacle as God had commanded them. Now read Exodus 40:1-8. What is the next responsibility that God gives Moses?

According to Exodus 40:2, how many days will it take Moses to finish the job given to him?

How would this be helpful for the nation of Israel as they traveled through the wilderness?

8. Read Exodus 40:9-16. How do these instructions relate to Exodus 30:25-31?

What purpose does this serve as God prepares to move into His new home?

9. Read Exodus 40:17-33 and picture Moses as he erects the Tabernacle. What statement is repeated in verses 19, 21, 23, 25-26, 29 and 32 that gives us insight into Moses as he works?

10. As Moses erected the Tabernacle it was visible evidence that he had taken God's blueprint seriously and followed it completely. How is the blueprint of God's Word visible in the way you live your life?

11. As Moses does everything as the Lord commands, what role do you see him fulfilling in Exodus 40:22-29? See Exodus 28:1 and 30:7-8.

Who would perform these duties eventually?

12. Exodus 40:34-38 is a dramatic conclusion to the story of the Exodus. Describe how God fulfills His promise from Exodus 29:45.

Although Moses has seen the glory of the Lord before and has spent 80 days on Mount Sinai with Him, he is not allowed to welcome God in person to His new home. What can you conclude about the strength of God's presence in His new dwelling place?

13. Our journey with Moses and the Tabernacle ends with God inhabiting His new home in the midst of His people. He has taken them from slavery to freedom and will go with them to the place He has prepared for them. As you think back on the Tabernacle, what are some of the lessons you learned as we discovered how the Tabernacle points to the blessing of our Lord Jesus dwelling in our hearts, taking us from the slavery of sin to freedom in Christ?

14. Write out your personal prayer request in a few words to share with your small group.