

3ABN SABBATH SCHOOL PANEL
013 - LESSON – Thursday – September 24, 2025

GOD’S PRESENCE IN THE TABERNACLE

Exodus 40:1-38 (NKJV) “(1) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: (2) “On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. (3) You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and partition off the ark with the veil. (4) You shall bring in the table and arrange the things that are to be set in order on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and light its lamps. (5) You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. (6) Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. (7) And you shall set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. (8) You shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen at the court gate. (9) “And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy. (10) You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy. (11) And you shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it. (12) “Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. (13) You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. (14) And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. (15) You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.” (16) Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did. (17) And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up. (18) So Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and raised up its pillars. (19) And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (20) He took the Testimony and put it into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. (21) And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (22) He put the table in the tabernacle of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil; (23) and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (24) He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; (25) and he lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (26) He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil; (27) and he burned sweet incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (28) He hung up the screen at the door of the tabernacle. (29) And he put the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (30) He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing; (31) and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet with water from it. (32) Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses. (33) And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses

finished the work. (34) Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (35) And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (36) Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. (37) But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. (38) For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”

How did the Israelites discern God’s presence?

The final chapter of Exodus (*Exodus 40*) describes the dedication of the tabernacle and the gift of the Decalogue. The tabernacle’s dedication was the culminating event of Israel at Sinai.

God’s glory is His holiness, His character, and His loving presence, which is goodness itself

1. God’s Glory will be seen through those connected to him.

- a. **Exodus 3:5 (NKJV)** “Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.”
- b. **Exodus 33:18-19 (NKJV)** “(18) And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.” (19) Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

His presence filled the tabernacle and was visible as the cloud, the Shekinah glory.

- **Jewish tradition:**

In Judaism, the Shekinah is understood as the divine presence that dwells among the Israelites, especially in the tabernacle and temple. It's often associated with the glory of God, as seen in the pillar of cloud and fire that guided the Israelites in the wilderness.

- **Christian perspective:**

Christians also use the concept of Shekinah glory to describe God's dwelling among His people, particularly through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. They believe that Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God's glory, and that believers can experience God's presence through the Holy Spirit who dwells within them.

- **Symbolic representation:**

The Shekinah glory is often symbolized by a cloud, a pillar of cloud and fire, or a radiant light, representing God's presence and glory.

The book of Exodus ends with the emphasis on God’s guiding presence, in the cloud of the Lord by day, and in the cloud of fire by night. In a very real and powerful way, the Hebrew people were to experience not just the reality of God but also His close and abiding presence as He led them.

Moses set up the tabernacle on the first day of the first month in the second year (*Exod. 40:2, 17*). He also consecrated everything—including Aaron and his sons to the priesthood (*Exod. 40:9, 13–15*)—with anointing oil. He went through the Most Holy Place, the Holy Place, and the courtyard, dedicating it all to the Lord. Through this process, he inaugurated the services for the whole sanctuary (*also see Num. 7:1*). Only during the inauguration of the tabernacle was Moses able to enter the Most Holy Place; thereafter, the High Priest alone could minister there each year on the Day of Atonement (*Lev. 16:2, 17*).

God's filling the tabernacle with His presence (*Exod. 40:34*) was the grand climax to events that began with the birth of Moses and continued with the defeat of the Egyptian gods during the 10 plagues, with the escape from Egypt, with the defeat of the Egyptian army, and, finally, with God's revelation on Mount Sinai.

2. When God is in our hearts it will be revealed in our lives:

- a. **Exodus 40:2, 17 (NKJV) “On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. (17) And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up.”**

The Tabernacle of God

What are ways that, even now, you can experience the presence of God? Why is it important that you do so??

What is the difference between the Tabernacle and the Temple? —

Tabernacle:

- **Nature:** A portable, tent-like structure designed to house the presence of God.
- **Purpose:** To be a dwelling place for God among the Israelites, guiding their journey.
- **Materials:** Constructed from tents, skins, and other portable materials.
- **Location:** Moved with the Israelites during their travels in the wilderness.
- **Symbolism:** Represented God's presence and the Israelites' covenant with him.
- **Lifespan:** Temporary, superseded by the temple in Jerusalem.

Temple:

- **Nature:** A permanent, stone structure built in Jerusalem.
- **Purpose:** To be a central place of worship and sacrifice for the Israelites.
- **Materials:** Built from stone and other permanent materials.
- **Location:** Located in Jerusalem, a fixed and prominent place of worship.
- **Symbolism:** Represented God's eternal dwelling among his people.
- **Lifespan:** Durable, although eventually destroyed and rebuilt.

The Temple is the body:

Jesus: John 2:19-21 (NKJV) “(19) Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (20) Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to

build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” (21) But He was speaking of the temple of His body.”

We are individually the temple of God:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NKJV) “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (20) For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

We are collectively the Temple of God:

Ephesians 2:19-22 (NKJV) “(19) Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (20) having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, (21) in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, (22) in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

We are responsible for the misuse and abuse of our bodies:

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NKJV) “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (17) If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.”

We are responsible for keeping our bodies out of fellowship with darkness:

2 Corinthians 6:16 (NKJV) “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “*I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.*””

There will be no need of a Temple in Heaven:

Revelation 21:22-23 (NKJV) “(22) But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. (23) The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.”