

**Date** : 26th April 2026  
**Theme** : The Tabernacle – Part 2.  
**Topic** : How do we worship God in His house?  
**Passage** : Exodus 29:44-49  
**Key Verse** : *The Lord said to Moses,<sup>2</sup> Tell the Israelites to bring Me an offering...<sup>8</sup> “Then have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them... Exodus 25:2, 8 niv*

## Introduction

The journey of faith, from Genesis and Exodus right through Leviticus, is a narrative of how man, in his sinful nature, was separated from God. God desired to restore mankind's relationship with Him. The deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and their appointment with God at Mount Sinai shows how worship can be restored God's way.

- God's appointment with His people was at Mount Sinai. *Exodus 19-40*  
God said *...on eagles' wings I have brought you to Myself. Exodus 19:4*, God's purpose was to make them a kingdom of priests (to serve and worship God) and be a holy nation.
- God's invitation to them to enter into a covenant relationship was based on both the Blood Covenant and the Book Covenant. They needed detailed instructions to approach God. What kind of instructions were necessary for them to worship Him His way, not in the way they had learnt in Egypt?
- His desire to dwell in their midst (Tabernacle).  
*...Then have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them... Exodus 25:8*  
But how would God transform the mindset of a group of slaves, whose whole understanding of the divine was based on Egyptian idolatry and false gods?.

## 1. God's plan / instructions for man for worship.

- The place of worship was the Tabernacle — God's appointed place for corporate worship and His Presence to be accessible to the people. Before this, God had met Moses in the Tent of meeting.
- His blueprint for the Tabernacle was spelt out in great detail.  
Exodus 25-31 detailed the architectural blueprint of the Tabernacle — three sections with one inner section, called the Most Holy Place — which housed the Ark of the Covenant (a golden box with angelic patterns, signifying judgment, on it). The Ark was where God's Presence would dwell with man on earth.

Now, sinful man could approach God's holiness safely, following the instructions God gave.

### a) Question: How can a holy God dwell among an unholy people?

A holy God can "break out" as a consuming fire because He is a God of justice and judgement. God desires people who worship Him in spirit and in truth.

*...who of us can dwell with the consuming fire?*

*...who of us can dwell with the everlasting burning? Isaiah 33:14*

To answer this question, Exodus and Leviticus spell out the detail how to do so.

- **Exodus** provides the details of the Tabernacle construction (the place for God to dwell).  
Exodus chapters 25-31 Detailed blueprints, its furniture and priestly garments.  
Exodus chapters 35-40 Meticulous carrying out of the instructions.

- **Leviticus** provides the laws (the procedure to make God's dwelling possible).  
A how-to guide to approach God in worship, bridging the gap between God and people.

## b) Why is the Tabernacle called God's sanctuary?

*...Have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them... Exodus 25:1,8*

- Sanctuary = be holy, being the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.  
The sanctuary testifies to the holiness of God, more than its structure.  
The Ark's cover represented the throne of God and symbolised God's Presence.
- God's active dwelling *...that I may dwell among them... Exodus 25:8*.  
When completed, Yahweh would come to inhabit *Exodus 40:34-38*.
- Aaron, as High Priest, wore a diadem with the engraving...*Holiness to the Lord Exodus 25:36*. It signified that his authority and service was to uphold God's holiness, not to do as he wished.

## 2. What was the pattern for worship set up by God?

- Place** — at the Tabernacle to meet God's Presence.
- People** — covenanters gather corporately to meet with God.
- Period** — on the appointed day of the Sabbath.
- Paraphernalia** — they point to the Person of worship  
3 sets of curtains: at the entrance to the compound, the Holy place and The Most Holy place. Cherubims embroidered on all curtains of purple, blue, red and white.
- Protocol** — the authorization of persons coming before Him.  
Though all priests were equal in standing, their roles were not.  
God's Kingdom has authority structures.
- Procedure** — the Tabernacle layout gives a visual presentation of the order of worship.  
First, the entrance curtains, then the brazen altar, the laver, the holy place, the veil and finally the Most Holy place.

### 2a) Place: What happened when there was no Tabernacle or instructions?

#### **Worship of Golden Calf Exodus 32**

What were the consequences when covenanters worshipped God their own way?

The Lord instructed in *Exodus 29:8 Build a sanctuary for Me*. But before this could materialise, the Israelites had built an altar to an idol they had seen in Egypt, the golden calf. The Israelites demanded Aaron *...make us gods...*

- The people gathered to worship the idol their own way, celebrating licentiously to a false god made from a mould. They were beyond control (revelry = serious chaos).  
They were unrestrained, committing acts to their shame *Exodus 32:25*
- God was so angry. He called them a stiff-necked people and declared that My Presence would not go with you.  
3,000 people were killed, a plague broke out.  
This may seem like a small consequence. However, without God's presence, the enemy would occupy that place.  
With the sanctuary, God would dwell among them. *Exodus 25:8*.

## 2b) People

God used the term *stiff-necked* on a people who had entered into Covenant relationships with Him through the Blood Covenant and the Book Covenant *Exodus 24:7-8*. They had earlier on covenanted to serve, obey and worship God. *Exodus 23:24,25*

These God-worshippers were His treasured possession, a royal priesthood and a holy nation. They had desired to follow God's way and were given the instructions in *Exodus 20-40 & Leviticus*.

- Without detailed instructions, they would emulate heathen practices offensive to God.
- Why did God call His people a **stiff-necked** people?  
Can 'Christian' worshippers become stiff-necked?  
What's God's response to stiff-necked people?  
He would forsake them, have nothing to do with them, not go with them.

## 2c) Period: How serious is God about His people keeping the Sabbath?

For us, keeping the Sabbath is observing the Lord's Day.

- Why the death penalty for Sabbath violators?  
Does this seem too harsh to our "modern" day thinking?  
Is this consequence still in force is the question many ask? One thing is clear, God is dead serious that we make ourselves available to Him on the appointed day.
- What is God's purpose for repeating this commandment? *Exodus 31:14,15*  
It has to do with treating Him with honour as He would with us as His treasured possession. Keeping the Sabbath shows that we respect God as holy. The alternative is treating the sacred as common. We are fulfilling our role as a holy nation when the Sabbath is holy to God and holy to us.
- What are God's reasons?
  - A sign of our covenant relationship with Him.
  - Fulfilling our part as spelt out in the Covenant of the Book, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment.
  - Distinguishing us as a nation of priests, ministering to God's worthiness.
- How should we keep the Sabbath?  
Do worship His way. Keep it holy.  
How do we keep it holy? *Isaiah 58:13-14* states ...if you keep...from doing as you please on My holy day...then I will.....
- The worse form of dishonour is giving excuses for breaking the Lord's Day.  
Breaking it tells God, we have other things more important than Him. It's like 'dating' Him when convenient, without the covenant of faithfulness to put Him first.

## 2d) Paraphernalia (covered in last week sermon 19/4/26)

## 2e) Protocol - authorization

**How did Nadab and Abihu dishonour God? *Leviticus 10***

They did not worship God's way even though they had been appointed by God. They ignored spiritual protocol by offering to God unauthorised fire.

- Let's examine the scenario.
  - Leviticus 9 showed that the Tabernacle had been put in place.
  - When worship started, the Lord honoured them by coming to them in great glory.
  - Moses and Aaron were in charge.
  
- Nadab and Abihu decided to do their own thing; what only Aaron was authorised. There were strict protocol on how to approach God's Presence. Having seen God's glory, they disregarded the instructions given earlier about who was to offer incense. The instructions that only the High Priest could do so on a specified day, at a specified place with coal from the brazen altar.

**2f) Procedure: Choosing our own way to worship is unacceptable to God.**

- i) When we do it our way, it's an attitude problem.  
 What reasons did God give for their cavalier attitude in worship? *Leviticus 10:3*
- They did not regard the Lord as holy. Instead they had regarded God as common.
  - They refused to honour God before the people. Opposite of honouring is insulting.
  - They were there to assist Moses in a corporate worship. Instead, they hijacked the worship and misled worshippers before the presence of God.
- ii) What should they have done?  
 Honouring the Lord from their hearts, attitude and actions to show that they treated God with honour and holiness.

iii) What kind of behaviour show honour? My application

**Respect for His Word — His covenant Book.**

Listen to the preaching instead of talking or playing with mobiles.  
 Not treating His Word as 'common'.  
 Have a holy regard to the teaching of God's Word.

**Check our offering. *Exodus 31:1***

Is it commensurate with something worthy of the Most High God?  
 Will you offer to a Guest of Honour something of low value?  
 Will you offer small change or leftovers?

**In worship.**

Use spiritual songs to praise His Name.  
 If we are just tolerating praise time, this is not honouring God.  
 Spectating is not participating. The Psalmist wrote ...enter His courts with praise....

**Application:**

**Appraise your Sabbath keeping based on the criteria in 2c?**

**Refer to Isaiah 58:13, 14.**