

The Tabernacle at Mount Sinai

Exodus 35:4–40:38

Bible Memory Verse

Psalm 24:7 NIV

One thing I ask of the Lord, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

Bible Story

The tabernacle was one of the most interesting things in Israelite history. Tabernacle means tent and is referred to as the Tent of Meeting. This special dwelling place would facilitate the meeting between the LORD God and man—specifically the Israelites. The tabernacle held the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of Showbread, the Lampstand, the Altar of Incense, the Altar of Burnt Offering, the wash basin, the courtyard, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place. The tabernacle was placed in the center of the Israelite camp, with all twelve tribes encamped all around it—three tribes on each side, like a compass. The Ark was generally thought to be the most important part of the tabernacle for it was holy and beheld the presence of God among the cherubim on the seat. The Ark contained the tablets of stone, which held the covenant, the staff of Aaron that had budded, and a jar of manna from the wilderness. There were proper and exact procedures how to handle and carry the Ark when moving it. In addition, the tabernacle also has specific instructions when transporting it between places where the Lord led. The Levites were in charge of this task.

From this point on in the narrative of Scripture, the Israelites are bound by the covenant of God at Mount Sinai and are bearers of the glory of the Lord in the tabernacle. This becomes crucial in all their endeavors—whether they are obedient or disobedient. We will see what role the ark and the tabernacle and the covenant plays in the history of God's working with the nation of Israel as a vehicle for world redemption.

It is interesting to note that further on in the story, King David wants to replace the “tabernacle” with a grand temple to house the LORD. God never asks for this and even when He gets it, the permanent, grand temple ends up being destroyed time after time.

Interesting isn't it? It seems that perhaps God never wanted a permanent, grand temple to live in. It seems He was more interested in living in people's hearts when Jesus "tabernacled" with us (dwelt among us). It's almost as if God knew what would be coming, and kindly requested to be in a "temporary" dwelling place.

Life Application

Jesus Christ is the actual manifestation of the glory of the Lord and he has dwelt here among us—tabernacled. He has now tabernacled in our hearts, for our bodies are the temple of the Lord. We each carry a temple, a place that is holy to God and where his glory dwells, and that is in our hearts.

- Does your heart carry the glory of the Lord?
- Are you a follower and a believer in Jesus Christ?
- Does he live in your heart?
- Does he reign there as your Lord?

Is it not amazing that God's temple, his holy temple, is right inside of us; in our hearts?!

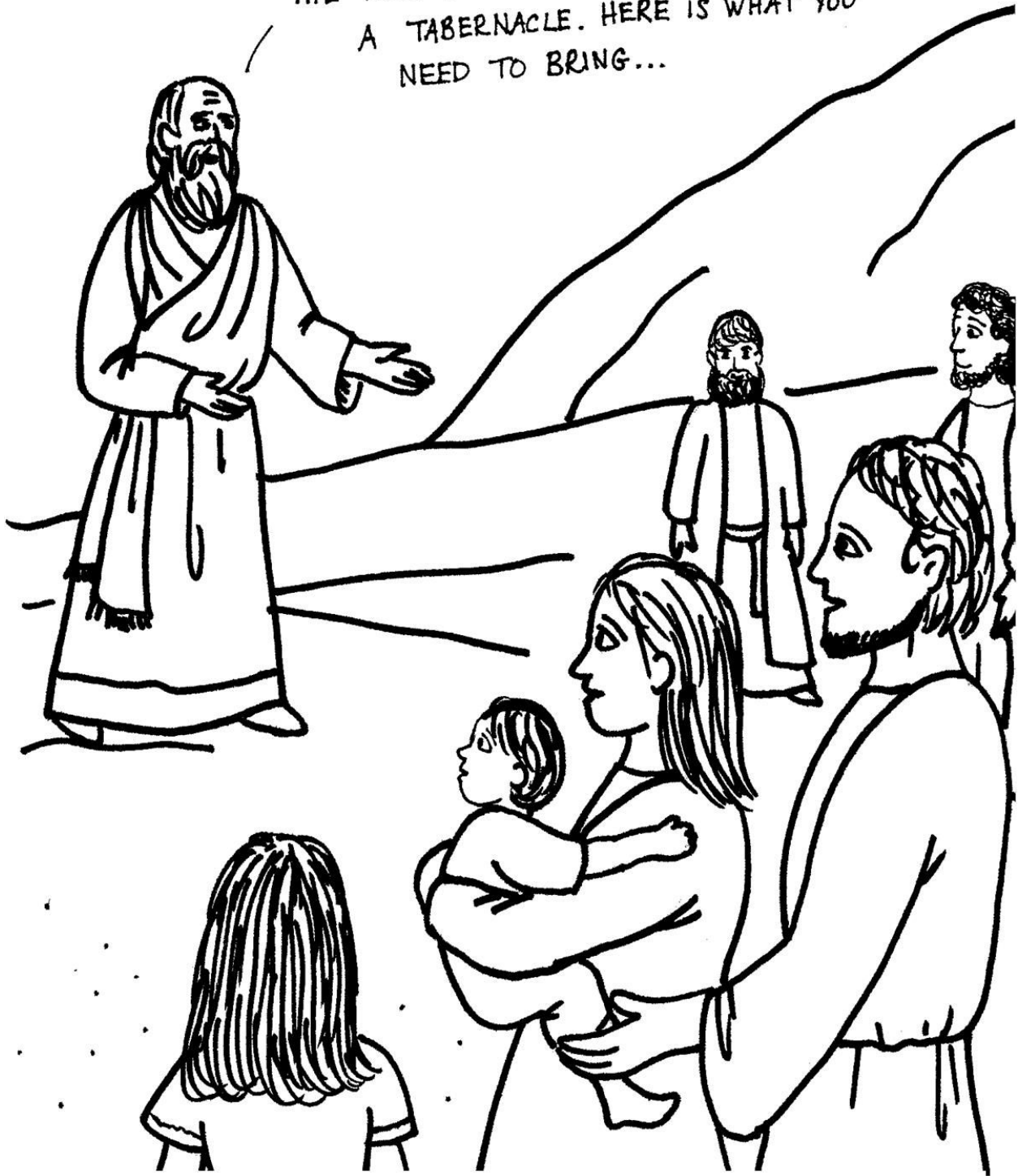
Review Questions

1. What is the tabernacle? A tent.
2. What is a tabernacle for? To meet and mediate with the LORD God
3. What is in the tabernacle? Name the various things in the Tabernacle. Ark of the Covenant, the Table of Showbread, the Lampstand, the Altar of Incense, the Altar of Burnt Offering, the wash basin, the courtyard, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place
4. Who is in charge of the tabernacle? The Levites
5. Why do you think the tabernacle was so important?

Coloring Sheet

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THE LORD NEEDS EVERYONE'S HELP MAKING
A TABERNACLE. HERE IS WHAT YOU
NEED TO BRING...



Mount Sinai : Tabernacle