



THE  
**Tabernacle**  
EXPERIENCE

WELCOME TO

THE

# Tabernacle

EXPERIENCE

You are about to embark on a journey of a lifetime. A journey through a life size Tabernacle of The Wilderness. Your guide: The Lord God Himself.

We invite you to relax, settle in and take your time as you read through this booklet of a brief biblical history leading up to the Tabernacle of the Wilderness.

Scripture confirms that it is God's desire to dwell with man and provide restoration. The Tabernacle is evidence of His great desire.

You will discover that all scripture points to and finds its fulfillment in Christ, even within the Courtyard walls of The Tabernacle.

Just a few notes before you begin your journey:

- The ticket you received will ensure your place in line.
- You will be called to begin your audio journey according to the number on your ticket.
- The audio journey is 47 minutes.
- You will be paired with a friend or family member.
- Each pair will begin their journey 90 seconds after the other.
- To calculate your wait time subtract your number from the last number called. Each number represents approximately one minute.
- Kindly turn off your cell phones
- Photos are not permitted as it would be a distraction to others. You are welcome to take photos prior to opening hours.
- If you have small children please be respectful of others who are on their journey.
- Strollers are permitted within the courtyard walls but they are not permitted in the tent.
- If you will be reading this Booklet to children we suggest you read Pages 6, 7, 11, 12 and 14.

And now we ask that you approach The Tabernacle Experience with a sense of awe and reverence.

Thank you,

The Tabernacle Experience Group

# WHAT WAS GOD'S ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR HUMANS?

When God created humans, He made them in His own image, forming them from the dust of the ground and breathing into them His own breath of life. Humans are a composite: part earth (nature) and part spirit. We were made to survive on planet Earth, but we were also equipped with a capacity for relationship with God

(Gen. 1:26-30; 2:7, 15).

God placed the first humans in a garden paradise and gave them the responsibility of tending it. He also met with them in the garden and spoke to them directly. The ideal relationship with God entails the kind of intimacy they experienced with Him in the garden. Intimacy was the key theme of life in the Garden of Eden. The first couple enjoyed intimacy with God -their Creator- intimacy with the created world around them, and intimacy with each other. "The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame" (Gen. 2:25). Intimate relationship and communication was God's original design for humans.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO GOD'S ORIGINAL DESIGN?

Could humans live with God if doing so required them to surrender themselves to His will? If so, they would enjoy intimacy with Him forever.

The man and woman were given simple instructions: Enjoy the fruit of every plant and tree except one. Take care of the Garden, God told them, it's yours, but you "must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17).

There is no record of how long Adam and Eve lived in this ideal situation, but one day Eve was seduced by the enticing promise of the serpent. He told her a godlike knowledge was hers if she went against God's command and ate the forbidden fruit. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve, the representative human beings, failed the test. Their failure is called The Fall. The whole human race suffered the consequence of their actions and fell from their privileged status with God.

The new theme of Genesis became alienation. Adam and Eve were alienated from God, who banished them from Eden and His presence; alienated from the world of nature, which no longer fed them as generously as before (Gen. 3:17-19); and they were alienated from each other (Gen. 3:7, 16). Alienation replaced intimacy, and the tranquil life of the Garden was lost forever.

## HOW DID THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL BECOME THE SLAVES OF EGYPT?

Time passed, and God had His hand in the flow of history as it did. He produced certain events with the purpose of leading people to salvation. This salvation includes the forgiveness of sin, repairing the damages of The Fall and restoring us to intimacy with Him. This plan reached its climax in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In developing a history of salvation, God chose one family and its patriarch, Abraham. From the descendants of Abraham a small nation was formed. Abraham and his clan lived in tents as Bedouins in the arid land of Canaan (present day Israel). His great-grandson, Joseph, was betrayed by his ten older brothers and sold to traders on their way to Egypt. God worked through a series of events that resulted in Joseph becoming the Grand Vizier of Egypt (Gen. 41-49).

When famine spread from Egypt to Mesopotamia, the brothers of Joseph had to travel to Egypt to purchase grain. They were eventually reunited with Joseph and the whole clan migrated to Egypt in order to survive. Since they were well cared for in Egypt there was no reason for them to return to Canaan.

However, within a few generations the Egyptians had forgotten Joseph and the fact that he had saved their nation. The descendants of the Israelites who had immigrated to Egypt were forced into slavery. As the Israelites increased in number, the Egyptians became uneasy about their growing strength and so began a campaign of oppression against them (Ex. 1).

## HOW DID GOD ENABLE THE ISRAELITES TO ESCAPE FROM EGYPT?

God intervened on Israel's behalf in what is perhaps the most famous and dramatic escape story the world has ever known. God brought a series of plagues against Egypt, breaking down their resistance to His demand: "Let My people go." Through this radical deliverance of the slave people, God sent a message to the world regarding Himself: His power is unrivaled and He is unique among all gods.

The final plague on Egypt was the sudden death of the oldest son in every family. In order to protect the Israelites from this plague, God commanded each family to perform a sacred ritual that called for the sacrifice of a lamb. The blood of the lamb was splashed on the door frames of their homes with a leafy branch of hyssop. Because death passed over the homes where the doors were marked with blood, sparing the family within, the commemoration of this event is called Passover (Ex. 12:1-13, 21-23).

## WHAT IS THE TABERNACLE?

Once the Israelites were free of Egypt, God instructed them to construct a national shrine that could travel with them on their journeys. The word Tabernacle simply means a dwelling. The idea behind it was that God would have His own tent among their tents. God would cause the glory of His presence to reside within the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was God's "dwelling" among His people (Ex. 25:8-9).

But the Tabernacle is also known by other names. It is God's sanctuary (sacred place); the tent of meeting (because God met with His people there); and the tent of testimony (because the ark of the covenant, which contained the testimony of God's relationship with Israel was stored in the Tabernacle-engraved on stone tablets).

The Tabernacle was Israel's national shrine and the place where God revealed His presence in a visible form (His radiant glory).



## WHERE DID MOSES RECEIVE THE PLANS FOR THE TABERNACLE?

When Israel was in the desert, they came to Mount Sinai (also called Horeb). God called Moses up the mountain into a dark cloud, which covered the summit and was constantly flashing with lightning. It was there on the mountain that God revealed to Moses the layout of the Tabernacle. Every detail was very important so God emphasized that Moses make sure it was built “exactly like the pattern” which He was shown (Ex. 25:9).

## HOW WAS THIS SLAVE NATION ABLE TO CONSTRUCT SUCH AN EXPENSIVE STRUCTURE?

Before the Israelites left Egypt, they asked their Egyptian neighbors for "articles of gold and silver" and so they effectively "plundered the Egyptians" when they made their escape (Ex. 12:35-36). When God gave Moses the plans for the Tabernacle, He told him to have the people of Israel bring an offering of all the valuables that they had brought with them from Egypt to construct the tent and its furniture (Ex. 25:1-7). The Israelites gave so generously that they had to be told to stop giving because the work crew had enough to finish the project (Ex. 36:3-7).

## WHAT ROLE DID ARTISTIC DESIGN HAVE IN THE TABERNACLE?

Some Christians hold the view that God is opposed to paintings and sculpture because of the prohibition against making an "idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath" (Ex. 20:4 ). But an idol is different from a piece of art. An idol is an object that people worship while art has its place in worship as it is an expression of God given skills. (Ex. 20:15)

In fact, God commissioned certain people to use their artistic skills - skills He gave them through His Spirit- to make beautiful designs and even pieces of art for the Tabernacle (Ex. 31 :1-5). Included in those pieces of art were the sculptures of two cherubim (a class of angels who serve as guardians of God's holiness) and tapestry-like curtains with cherubim woven into their design (Ex. 36:8).

Thus God the Creator, who in His wisdom and artistic skill, designed the universe in all its beauty and gave certain artists the ability to make the Tabernacle beautiful. The glory of God revealed in nature was echoed in the handiwork of those who constructed the Tabernacle. Their art brought praise to God, the Grand Artist.

## HOW WAS THE TABERNACLE TRANSPORTED FROM ONE CAMPSITE TO ANOTHER?

Of the 12 tribes of Israel only one tribe, the tribe of Levi, was devoted to the task of tearing down, transporting and setting up the Tabernacle. There were three main clans in the tribe of Levi, and each clan was given their respective jobs (Nu. 3-4 ).

The tribe of Levi was chosen because they had distinguished themselves through their loyalty to God at Mount Sinai (Ex. 32:25-26, 29; Numbers 3:5-9).

Some parts of the Tabernacle could be transported in carts such as the curtains, the post, and the ropes (Nu. 3:23-26, 36-37). The interior articles like the ark and the altars had to be carried on the shoulders of the Levites (Nu. 7:9). Whenever the Levites are mentioned in the Old Testament it is in reference to their calling to serve God and the people of God. Their service included teaching the people God's law and helping with the worship in the Tabernacle. (De. 17:9-11; 33:8-11). The Levites served in music and singing during the Temple period.

## WHAT TOOK PLACE INSIDE THE TABERNACLE?

The Tabernacle was the center of Israel's spiritual life. In fact, it was pitched in the middle of their encampment with three tribes camped to the north, three to the south, three to the east and three to the west all encircling the Tabernacle (Nu. 2:1-33). God was at the heart of the nation, and Israel lived in orientation to Him and His worship.

The first priest designated to tend to the Tabernacle was Aaron, the brother of Moses. Only his descendants were set apart as the ordained staff' in the Tabernacle. They were Israel's professional clergy in regard to sacrifice and the ministry of God. They were responsible for handling all of the ritual interactions between God and His people. They offered the various sacrifices, set out the bread every week, burned the incense, kept the oil lamps lit, kept the wicks trimmed, kept the fires burning on the altars, kept the Tabernacle clean and carried it everywhere Israel went. They were mediators between God and the people.

The Levites actually camped on all 4 sides of the Tabernacle, creating another barrier between God and man.

The primary worship of the Tabernacle was sacrificial. Sacrifices were offered every day in the morning and evening, every Sabbath, every new moon and during the great feasts. Sacrifice was also made for ritual purity, for atonement of sin and for thanksgiving and praise.

There was only one High Priest. He was set apart from the other priests in several ways including his unique clothing. One important distinction is that he was the only human allowed in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle, and he could go in there only once a year. This day is referred to as the Day of

Atonement. The High Priest took the blood of the sacrifice into the Most Holy Place in front of the Ark.

## HOW DID GOD REVEAL HIS PRESENCE IN THE TABERNACLE?

God revealed His presence in the Tabernacle in several ways. First, there was a cloud that God used to lead Israel from Egypt through the desert. That cloud represented God's presence with the people and provided them shade from the blistering desert sun. When the Tabernacle was completed (Ex. 40:34-35), the cloud descended on the Tabernacle. From then on the cloud remained over the Tabernacle. At night the cloud appeared as fire (Ex. 40:36-38) and provided warmth from the chilly desert nights (Psalm 105:39). Secondly, God's glory (a radiance or shining light) appeared in the Tabernacle on several occasions (i.e., Le. 9:23). Third, God spoke to Moses from over the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:22; Le. 16:2), which served as a throne for His divine presence.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TABERNACLE?

After wandering in the Sinai Desert for 40 years, Israel entered the Promised Land and gave the Tabernacle a more permanent home in Shiloh. Eventually the Tabernacle was moved south to Judah where it stood until the time of King David. During David's reign, the Tabernacle is mentioned numerous times in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. King David desired to give the LORD a permanent home, and the LORD honored his request and gave him the detailed plans to build the Temple. David collected all the materials to build the Temple and had everything assembled and prepared for his son, Solomon. In 2 Chronicles chapter 1, Solomon goes to Gibeon. Solomon led the entire assembly to the hill at Gibeon where God's Tabernacle was located. This was the Tabernacle that Moses, the LORD'S servant, had constructed in the wilderness. David had already moved the Ark of God from Kiriath Jearim to the special tent he had prepared for it in Jerusalem. There in front of the Tabernacle, Solomon went up to the bronze altar in the LORD'S presence and sacrificed one thousand burnt offerings on it. After David died, Solomon built the temple. The last mention of the Tabernacle is in 1 Kings 8 where Solomon summoned the leaders of all the tribes and families of Israel to assemble in Jerusalem. They were to bring the Ark of the LORD'S covenant from its location in the City of David (also known as Zion) to its new place in the Temple. Then the priests and Levites carried the Ark of the LORD with the Tabernacle and all its sacred utensils up to the Temple.



## A NOTE FROM THE FOUNDER OF THE TABERNACLE:

My fellow travelers,

When the children of Israel escaped bondage from Egypt, Moses was instructed by The LORD to build The Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was the dwelling place for God and a place for worship and sacrifice. At the direction of the LORD, this vagabond nation transported the Tabernacle as they wandered in the Sinai Desert for 40 years. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land they were instructed by God to give the Tabernacle of the Wilderness a more permanent home in Shiloh.

In the year 1996, my first trip to Israel, I was humbled to stand in the field of Shiloh to worship and give thanks to my Lord. As one would expect, this journey to The Holy Land was impressionable. Among the many historical and spiritually significant sites, our LORD chose to reveal himself to me in a forsaken, rock-laden field where the town of Shiloh once thrived.

During my tour our group settled in at Shiloh. On that particularly warm autumn day, this barren field became our place of worship. We gathered about our Pastor Chuck Smith Jr. as he began sharing the familiar story of the young boy Samuel, who had been promised to the service of the LORD by his mother, Hannah. The young boy lived in Shiloh and served at the Tabernacle under the direction of the Priest, Eli. Our

pastor began reading the scripture: "Now in those days messages from the LORD were very rare...while Samuel was sleeping the LORD called to Samuel, 'Samuel! Samuel!' he thought it was Eli who called his name and replied, 'Here I am'. The LORD called Samuel again and Samuel, still thinking it was Eli replied, 'Here I am.' When the LORD called to Samuel the third time, at the instruction of Eli, Samuel replied, 'Here I am LORD your servant is listening.'" At that moment our Pastor's voice faded and the cry of my own heart resounded in my heart and ears. With head in hands, I cried aloud to the LORD. 'Give me ears like Samuel. I desire to hear from YOU!' Immediately deep within my being I heard, 'Jeanne'. Lifting my head I responded, 'Yes?' Once again, 'Jeanne'. was this the LORD? Reluctantly I whispered, 'Here I am LORD, your servant is listening.' Silence...I waited... Silence. I leaned forward and tilted my head as if to ensure better reception. Silence.. Was this it? The message was simply my name? Yet like Samuel, my sleep had been disturbed. The LORD had awakened my soul & spirit just at the call of my name. I restrained from skipping back to our tour bus, yet found it quite impossible to hide the schoolgirl grin. He called my name! Now what? I knew for certain a comma followed 'Jeanne,' when would I hear the completed sentence? What would the message be?

In regards to Shiloh, my quiet times with the LORD remained just that; quiet. While attending our Women's Bible Study my co-leader inquired about our upcoming women's retreat. Jokingly she suggested since Israel made quite an impression on me that I should take all of them to Israel. While pondering this

impossible task I 'heard' a whisper from within, 'Bring Israel to them, build my Tabernacle". This time my reply did not echo that of Samuel's nor did it echo my reply to the LORD 2 years earlier in the field at Shiloh. With all due respect I whispered, 'Excuse me?' Once again I distinctly heard, ' Build my Tabernacle.' I jumped to my feet. This was it! This was the completed sentence that began in Shiloh years before and it was to be the theme of our women's retreat! With a heart filled with joy and expectation I responded, 'Here I am LORD, your servant is listening!"

His Tabernacle? I really wasn't quite sure what I had just said yes to. I looked around our immense sanctuary wondering if the Tabernacle was bigger than this? Or smaller than a breadbox? I began the game of multiple questions, yet He had just one answer, 'Build my Tabernacle.' I rushed straightway to my husband's office. I flung open his door and announced 'We're going to build the Tabernacle for the women's retreat.' 'What? ', He replied. 'It's only four weeks away.' 'I know, are you ready for the adventure?' His smile and the slow shake of his head from side to side gave me the answer I was looking for, 'You can count on me'. I spent precious sleepless nights traveling through the Scriptures with our High Priest, Jesus. He led me within the walls of the Courtyard, ushered me into the Holy Place and solemnly beckoned me beyond the Curtain to worship Him in the Holy of Holies. At every turn He revealed Himself in the mystery of His Tabernacle.

Faithful friends embraced the project. I received the blessing and endorsement of my pastor and together we wrote the details of each aspect of the Tabernacle. I handed over my scribbled drawings and measurements of the Tabernacle furnishings to my husband, Craig, and to our dear friend, Dan. The Tabernacle of the Wilderness stood in all its glory within the confines of a deserted run down tennis court within weeks.

Something spiritually significant happened when we set aside meager elements and designated them 'Holy unto the LORD'. Sheets of plywood, pieces of cardboard, blankets marked for clearance, cans and cans of gold spray paint, a simple rented tent, all these items transcended their earthly functions and became Holy for His intention.

As you embark on this unforgettable journey, reach out to Him. Place your hand in the hand of the Master Architect and allow Him to give you the grand tour of His home. You will find that He is quite the host and He is extremely fond of your company.

The journey is powerful, so hold on tight!

Jeanne Whittaker,  
Founder of The Tabernacle Experience

\* All measurements of this Tabernacle are based on the descriptions we find in the Bible in the book of Exodus.

\* According to Scripture The Tabernacle Proper measured 15' in height. The Tabernacle Experience Proper measures 11'.5 in height. Otherwise all other dimensions are accurate.

\* The Bible does not mention the dimensions of the Lampstand or The Laver.

The Tabernacle Experience is a non-profit ministry of

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