
The Tent and the Presence

Exodus 39:33-40:38

Introduction Quality assurance is an interesting and challenging field of study and work...

- Quality testing built in a design stages...
- Quality testing of individual components...
- Quality testing of integration...
- Quality testing of the whole under the strain and stress of use in the real world...
- Quality testing of any changes made being careful to pay attention to cascading consequences...

It is one thing to design something as though perfection is attainable. It is another to design in such a way that it is functional, leaving some of the construction to the ingenuity of the builders. We have noticed this in our own building. Too little detail and the builders are not sure. Too much detail and the builders are prevented from solving problems in the process.

We have seen the Tabernacle's design given through God's instruction. We have been watching the components, furniture and utensils being built. Now, it is time to put it all together. How will it proceed? That is where we are today. We are at the culmination of the book of Exodus. Israel has been brought out of their bondage. They have been made into a nation by the covenant treaty with God. The next step in God's redemptive plan is about to unfold.

The Work Examined

(39:33-43)

The work of making each piece has now been completed. The day of assembly has arrived.

The Parts Delivered

(v.33-41)

³³ Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its utensils, its hooks, its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; ³⁴ the covering of tanned rams' skins and goatskins, and the veil of the screen; ³⁵ the ark of the testimony with its poles and the mercy seat; ³⁶ the table with all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; ³⁷ the lampstand of pure gold and its lamps with the lamps set and all its utensils, and the oil for the light; ³⁸ the golden altar, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the entrance of the tent; ³⁹ the bronze altar, and its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the basin and its stand; ⁴⁰ the hangings of the court, its pillars, and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court, its cords, and its pegs; and all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; ⁴¹ the finely worked garments for ministering in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons for their service as priests.

Moses had been given all the instructions and specifications on what to build. He had relayed that to the Spirit-enabled workmen. Now, they bring all the pieces to Moses for inspection.

This inventory is a listing of all the pieces, furniture and utensils used in the Tabernacle. Every piece is completed by the workmen and brought to the site.

Imagine the scene...

The Work Certified

(v.42-43a)

⁴² According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had done all the work. ⁴³ And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it.

The work was not only brought to Moses but was examined by Moses. He checked to see that it was made exactly as the Lord had commanded. I would assume that Moses checked each piece against the instructions. This would mean its materials, manufacture and dimensions.

Moses certifies not only the work done but also the obedience of the people. Can you see Moses nodding with approval as he holds up each piece?

The People Blessed

(v.43b)

Then Moses blessed them.

Once every piece was approved, Moses turns to the people. There they stand, a covenant breaking, golden calf worshipping people. They have repented of their sins. They have been shown the amazing mercy and grace of God. He has renewed His covenant with them. He has committed to go with them for the sake of Moses. In the detailed work of this ministry they have obeyed God. What their obedience has produced has been examined and approved.

So, Moses blessed them. What a marvelous moment. What a sight! Eighty year old hands raised in strength, joy and blessing. Nearly a million people shouting in both relief and joy...

Christ has been approved by God. On several occasions, God the Father spoke His approval of His Son's obedience and work. The final great stamp of God's approval on Christ is in the resurrection. By raising Jesus from the dead, God the Father publicly set His stamp of approval on the completed work of Christ on the cross.

Our own work of ministry is also being examined and hopefully, approved by God. There will come a day when we will all stand before Jesus. There our work and ministry will be tested and approved. While we may be blessed in this life as a result of obedience in ministry, we will then receive a reward, a crown commensurate with the blessing of God.

And none, not Israel on the plains that day, not us in our ministry now nor any believer standing before Christ on that day will boast in ourselves...

The Tabernacle Erected

(40:1-33)

I have worked with my son on a couple of carpentry projects. One of them was this pulpit. This was made as three major components: the two side pieces and the top. Once we had made some of the individual components, we began putting them together. That day has finally arrived. The Tabernacle is going to be erected and all its pieces put into place.

With Divine Instruction

(v.1-15)

At each point, God has given instructions on how to accomplish what He required. No less now. The Tabernacle will be erected with Divine instruction.

Concerning its Assembly

(v.1-8)

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. ³ And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. ⁴ And you shall bring in the table and arrange it, and you shall bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. ⁵ And you shall put the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. ⁶ You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, ⁷ and place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. ⁸ And you shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court.

The date of its construction is given. Exactly one year to the day of their celebrating the Passover and their exodus from Egypt, the Tabernacle was to be erected.

The exact order of its erection is also given. First the tent itself is to be erected. Then the Ark of the Covenant is to be placed in the inner room. Then the veil is to be hung. after that, the table, the lampstand and the altar of incense are to be placed in the outer room. Only after everything is in the tent is the doorway or screen to be hung in its place. Next, the altar and basin are to be set in their places in the area in front of the tent. Then, the fence around the courtyard is to be erected and staked in place. Finally, the gate or screen is set up.

Concerning its Anointing

(v.9-15)

⁹ "Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture, so that it may become holy. ¹⁰ You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, so that the altar may become most holy. ¹¹ You shall also anoint the basin and its stand, and consecrate it. ¹² Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall wash them with water ¹³ and put on Aaron the holy garments. And you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. ¹⁴ You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, ¹⁵ and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests. And their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."

The instructions related to the anointing of the tabernacle are given. The anointing is to consecrate or to sanctify the Tabernacle, its furniture, its utensils and its priests. It sets it all aside from common use. It marks them out, once for all, as God's, as His own place, possession and priests. The instruc-

tions are specific for each part of the Tabernacle. Not only is the whole set apart by the anointing, each piece is as well.

The Lord Jesus Christ is set apart by God and publicly identified as the Son He loves and the One in whom He is well pleased. He does this first at His baptism through the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Him and God's public declaration. He does it at other times as well. Even greater, Jesus is the "anointed one". This is what Christ means. It means, the Messiah or the Anointed One. He is God's anointed One, sent into the world to bring us our redemption, our righteousness and our covenant blessings through His obedient life and sacrificial death.

We are also sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit. We have been set apart as God's by the inward dwelling of the Holy Spirit. He is the One who applies Christ, our sanctification, to us. He is the one who sets us apart from the old, regenerates and quickens us so that we are now alive in the new.

So God has instructed them on the preparation and consecration of His dwelling place.

With Obedient Implementation (v.16-33)

So Moses sets out to obey God and carry out the instructions given.

¹⁶ This Moses did; according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did. ¹⁷ In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. ¹⁸ Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. ¹⁹ And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁰ He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. ²¹ And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²² He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, ²³ and arranged the bread on it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁴ He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, ²⁵ and set up the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁶ He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, ²⁷ and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁸ He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. ²⁹ And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ³⁰ He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, ³¹ with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. ³² When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, as the LORD commanded Moses. ³³ And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.

Now he erects the Tabernacle exactly as God instructed. Note how very detailed Moses' obedience is. He sets out to do exactly what God requires. He records it for us in extensive detail. He has examined and certified the work of the craftsmen to be sure that each piece was made as God designed and revealed. Now, he himself obeys God in exacting detail.

So Moses finished the work. This is parallel to Moses blessing the people. They were obedient and they were blessed. Moses is obedient and the work is finished.

We need to hear this sort of example for us today. Too much of our obedience to God is casual. Too much of our work in ministry is casual and uncaredful. If we expect all that blessing involves in God's approval, in our own joy and in the good effect of our obedience and ministry, by grace we need to plan ably, work hard and do well.

The Glory Exhibited

(40:34-38)

Now the great moment comes. All their expectations are now going to be fulfilled.

In its Descent

(v.34-35)

³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

It is hard for us to imagine this scene. Around the now completed Tabernacle gather around a million people. The screen in front of the gate is set in place. Each piece of furniture and the Tabernacle itself has been consecrated.. The priests are gathered, turbans, faces and beards glistening with the anointing oil. Their hands and feet are freshly washed. Moses steps back, hands raised.

Suddenly from the top of the fenced and fearsome mountain, the mighty pillar of cloud and fire forms. It descends down from Sinai and shrouds the new tent of meeting. With a mighty illuminating glow, the glory of God fills the tabernacle. The smoke kept the glory from blinding everyone. The glory signified that God was there. Because of its marvelous presence, Moses could not enter the Tabernacle.

In its Direction

(v.36-37)

³⁶ Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. ³⁷ But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up.

The cloud dwelt on the Tabernacle and it led in the direction they were to take. When it would rise up from the tent, the camp was to be struck, the Tabernacle taken down and packed for travel. Then, it would lead out and the nation was to follow as it traveled. The glory of God in the pillar of fire and smoke gave direction to the people of God.

In its Duration

(v.38)

³⁸ For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.

The glory of God was on the Tabernacle through all their journeys. At this point, no one would have expected it to be a long journey. But after their disobedience, that became forty years of chastening in the wilderness. But even then, God continued to dwell with them and to direct their paths.

Conclusion**The glory on the Temple – 2 Chronicles 5:7-14, NLT.**

⁷ Then the priests carried the Ark of the LORD's Covenant into the inner sanctuary of the Temple—the Most Holy Place—and placed it beneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁸ The cherubim spread their wings over the Ark, forming a canopy over the Ark and its carrying poles. ⁹ These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Temple's main room—the Holy Place—but not from the outside. They are still there to this day. ¹⁰ Nothing was in the Ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Mount Sinai, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel when they left Egypt.

¹¹ Then the priests left the Holy Place. All the priests who were present had purified themselves, whether or not they were on duty that day. ¹² And the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and all their sons and brothers—were dressed in fine linen robes and stood at the east side of the altar playing cymbals, lyres, and harps. They were joined by 120 priests who were playing trumpets. ¹³ The trumpeters and singers performed together in unison to praise and give thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices and praised the LORD with these words: "He is good! His faithful love endures forever!"

At that moment a thick cloud filled the Temple of the LORD. ¹⁴ The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple of God.

The future glory – Haggai 2:1-9, ESV

In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, ² "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all the remnant of the people, and say, ³ 'Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How do you see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes? ⁴ Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts, ⁵ according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not. ⁶ For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. ⁷ And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. ⁸ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. ⁹ The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.'"

The glory among men – John 1:9-14, ESV

⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The glory that summons – Hebrews 12:25-29, ESV

²⁵ See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. ²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." ²⁷ This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

See, then, that you hear, heed and do not refuse the God who speaks through and with such great glory. We have the glory of God radiating from the face of Christ. That glory no long is associated with a fenced and fearsome mountain, but rather a throne of grace and a living way. Having there our King and having received an unshakable kingdom, let us then offer to God worship that is acceptable. May the glory of God dwell with us. May the glory of God direct us. May we offer Him our whole persons and our joyful praises.

