

Notes on Parshah Terumah Exodus 25:1-27:17

BUILDING A SANCTUARY IN THE WILDERNESS

Terumah begins the building the sanctuary in the wilderness for sacrifices and the house the 10 commandments.

God has Moses ask the people for gifts (Terumah) to build the sanctuary. The people comply but God wants only those who do it from the heart.

God gives details to Moses on how to construct the sanctuary in great detail.

MAKING OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Torah gives detail of building a wooden box to be covered in gold to hold the tablets of the commandments.

The lid should be solid gold and have two cherubim (angels) as decoration facing each other.

The ark should be made with hooks for polls so it could be carried when the people move and not be touched.

God tells Moses God will speak to him from the ark.

SACRED FURNITURE

More furniture is described including a table to hold special breads, a menorah (lamp) of seven branches out of pure gold. God told Moses he will be shown a model.

Details of the items inside the sanctuary and the actual structure including a tent of meeting for the Holy of Holies (the inner most chamber) are discussed.

HOLY SPACE

God's instructions are designed to create a holy space to worship in the wilderness. It also is designed to be portable to move with the people.

The details of the building of this sanctuary are so good the object could be built today that would match what the Israelites would have had.

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HOUSE OF GOD

The building of the sanctuary in the wilderness is said that it will be a place for God to dwell among the people. It is a physical representation of God's presence but is not seen as a god as an idol would. The people of Israel seem to be balancing their history of seeing the grand buildings of the gods of Egypt and the invisible God of Abraham and Sarah.