

Introduction...

1. We've heard God mention using skilled craftsmen several times in the course of his instructions.
  - Where was Moses going to find men with these particular skills?
  - The Israelites were skilled laborers but they had probably never attempted anything so exacting and intricate.
2. In the Chapter 31, the Lord tells Moses where he can find the skilled workman he will need to construct all that the Lord specified.

## Chapter 31

### V. BLUEPRINT and CONSTRUCTION of tabernacle, Chapters 25 — 40 (a pattern and picture of Christ)

#### B. Workmen for tabernacle — Sabbath a sign to Israel, 31

### Verses 1 - 11...

Even while Moses is on the mountain receiving these instructions, the Lord has already selected and equipped the men Moses will need to accomplish this work.

1. **First...** the Lord selects Bezalel, who is the grandson of Hur.
  - You will remember that Hur is the name of the one of the men who held up Moses hands in the battle against Amalek.
  - Now his grandson has been selected to lead all the construction of the tabernacle.
  - The Lord has not only selected this man but equipped him for the duties he will be assigned
    - This man will have the ability to design in metal, to cut stone and to carve wood.
    - These are the basic building materials in the tabernacle.
    - And with his skills, he will oversee all the work.
2. **Secondly...** the Lord will raise up Oholiab to work under Bezalel.
  - Plus the Lord will raise up other craftsman to work along these men.
  - Collectively, the camp of Israel will find every construction talent they require to obey God's instructions.

### Spiritual Application for Today...

By these words of assurance God gave Moses, we can take away *three essential lessons* concerning our service to the Lord.

**First...** God chooses men to serve Him

- Bezalel and Oholiab were never asked to enlist in God's work crew
- At this point they don't even know they've been selected, do they?
- Moses will have to deliver this news to them when he returns, and I suspect they might be surprised to hear it.
  - Leadership among God's people is a privilege and it can take various forms.
  - But it comes from the Lord, and when it comes, it's an offer you can't refuse...literally.

- Men are called to acknowledge the call of God.
  - First... we recognize it in ourselves and respond in obedience.
  - Secondly... we recognize it in others and respect that calling as from the Lord.

**Second**... when the call comes, we can't allow our fears or doubts to become an excuse for not obeying God's call.

- The instructions God gave to Moses give every impression that neither of these men were skilled artisans prior to the Lord's call
  - The sense of the passage is that God had equipped these men specifically for this task.
  - We should imagine they were surprised themselves to discover they could perform these duties.
  - I wonder if they hesitated to follow Moses' orders when they first heard the news?
- But like Moses himself, scripture demonstrates that the one God calls, He will also equip for that calling.
  - These men couldn't use their previous inexperience as an excuse.
- They had all the experience they needed, because God gave them that expertise supernaturally by the Holy Spirit.

### **Spitirtual Application for Today...**

- 1) We are given gifts at the point of salvation which become our means to serve and glorify God.
  - So these men couldn't have refused their assignment on the basis of skills or preparation.
  - Neither can we turn our backs on the Lord's call simply because we lack the pedigree or training we assume is necessary.
  - We will work for the Lord using the gifts and talents He has given us.
- 2) Remember, God isn't in the habit of calling qualified men who can then glorify Him by the use of their skills.
  - Rather, He equips unqualified men to glorify Him by their obedience.

**Third**... God raises men up to work in partnerships of one kind or another.

- Just like God brought Moses the 70 elders, now he's bringing two craftsmen and a host of others to join in the work.
- When the work matters to God, He will ensure the resources are there to get that work accomplished.
  - He'll bring the materials, the expertise, the hands and the feet.
  - Each person who is called must labor, certainly, but the work will never languish for the want of supply.
  - Now, having set forth how the work will be accomplished, the Lord returns briefly to the topic of the Sabbath.

## Verses 12 - 17...

As Moses' forty days on the mountain comes to a close, the Lord reminds Moses of His instructions concerning the sabbath. **First Reason** ...Moses is told the Sabbath instruction, which the Lord had previously given were now to be a *sign for the covenant*.

- Every covenant included a sign of some kind.
  - A covenant was similar to a contract, in that it was a solemn agreement between parties
  - Like any agreement, the parties needed some kind of memorial or evidence that a covenant exists.
  - Like a signature on a contract, the sign of a covenant reminded both parties that the agreement was in force.
- We've seen signs in earlier covenants.
  - The sign of the Noahic covenant was the rainbow.
  - The sign of the Abrahamic covenant was circumcision.
  - And now we're told that the sign of the Mosaic covenant between the Lord and the people of Israel would be the Sabbath day itself.
- As long as this covenant remains in effect between the Lord and Israel, the requirement for the Sabbath remains in effect.
- Even though the Messiah has come and fulfilled the Law for believers, the nation of Israel is still observing a Sabbath.
- Indicating that the covenant is still in effect for that nation.
- As you may know from the End of Days messages, that the Mosaic covenant is the cause for the Jews experiencing Tribulation in a future day.
  - And its result is a glorified nation that will finally embrace their Messiah.
  - Furthermore, we learn something about our New Covenant when we consider the sign of the Old Covenant.

## Spititual Application for Today...

- 1) The sign given in the New Covenant is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in every new believer
  - Like all covenants, the New Covenant is forever, and therefore so is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
  - But that indwelling is also called the circumcision of the heart in scripture.  
**Colossians 2:9-12**
- 2) **What does it mean that our covenant has as its sign a type of circumcision?**
  - It teaches us that the New Covenant is connected to the Abrahamic covenant, not the Mosaic covenant.
  - Abraham's covenant included a promise to produce a seed that would bless all the nations on the earth.
    - Jesus was that Seed and that blessing was the New Covenant described in **Jeremiah 31**
    - We are being invited into the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant even while Israel is still waiting for it.
- 3) Paul describes this temporary reversal of fortune in Romans 11
  - He taught that the Gentiles are being grafted into the promise given to Abraham while Israel has been hardened for a time.

- And as we enter into the New Covenant, we receive the sign of the New Covenant, which is the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the circumcision of the heart.
- Spiritually speaking, the Holy Spirit cuts away the veil over our heart that original sin deposited, thereby allowing us to know the Lord.
- Like the foreskin removed in physical circumcision upon Abraham's entrance into his covenant.
- But the Mosaic Covenant plays no part in our relationship with Christ, since He fulfilled that covenant on our behalf.
  - We trace our salvation to a promise given to Abraham
  - Not to a covenant given to Israel through Moses
- As Paul taught in Galatians...Gal. 3:17-19

**Second Reason** ...the Sabbath is discussed at this point in Exodus is to help us see an important connection between the tabernacle and the Creation story.

1. In Vs.17... the Lord repeats that the Sabbath was to be observed because the Lord Himself rested after the six days of Creation.
  - The Lord wants us to see a connection between those two moments.
  - And there is a strong connection.
2. If we look at the creation account and the time of Israel at the mountain, we find a long list of parallels.
  - In both cases the subjects of the stories is how God made a way for fellowship with man
    - In Creation, the Lord created the world and made a Garden and created Man in the garden for fellowship.
    - In the wilderness, God created a covenant and made a tabernacle, and created Israel for fellowship.
  - In both cases, the Lord's Spirit is said to be involved in the Creation process
    - In Genesis, the Spirit of God is central to formation of the Creation and the breath of man.
    - In Exodus, the Spirit empowers the workmen to build the structures.
  - In both cases, the narrative progresses through seven stages, each one beginning with the words, "And the Lord said".
  - In Creation, God made Adam and Woman according to a specific pattern, which was the likeness of God.
    - The Tabernacle was made according to a specific pattern, which is the tabernacle in Heaven.
  - The Garden contained gold, and precious jewels, and Cherubim guarded it.
    - The tabernacle contained gold and precious stones and Cherubim guarded the mercy seat.
  - When the work was finished in Creation, the Lord inspected it and pronounced a blessing upon it ("very good").
    - When the tabernacle is finished in chapter 39, the Lord has Moses inspect it and pronounce a blessing.

- God rested on the seventh day of Creation
  - And now the Lord is reminding the Israelites that they must rest on the seventh day, even while they work to build the tabernacle.

***Why does God want us to make this connection?***

3. The answer comes from one more important comparison between the Creation account and Israel's time in the wilderness.
  - After the Creation was finished, the Man and Woman fell to disobedience because of an animal that tempted them to sin.
    - When Adam and Woman fell they violated the terms of the covenant they were given in the Garden.
    - They were told not to eat of the fruit, and so long as they obeyed that command, they could enjoy the fellowship God established for them.
  - But when they disobeyed, they violated the covenant and they suffered a great penalty.
    - That penalty involved both an immediate consequence and a long term consequence.
    - Immediately they suffered the penalty of leaving the place God prepared for them
    - In the future they would suffer the penalty of the curse, when their physical bodies died.
4. In the same way, there will be a fall following the establishment of the covenant between Israel and the Lord.
  - They nation of Israel will be tempted into sin by Satan hiding in the image of an animal
  - And by their fall, the nation will violate the most important and most basic of the commandments in the Law.
  - They will break the covenant and they will suffer a great penalty.
    - The penalty will include both an immediate consequence and a long term consequence
    - The Lord will pronounce immediate punishment and long term punishment.
    - In fact, the covenant itself has provision for curses against Israel for their failure to keep the terms of the covenant.
    - We study that rebellion next in chapters 32-34, but first we need to set the stage for the transition of Moses leaving the mountain.

**Verses 18...**

1. Moses has been on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.
  - That time period corresponds to chapters 24-31
  - While Moses has been on the mountain, the people of Israel have lacked their leader
  - And without the leader, they begin to revert to old thinking and old behaviors

# Chapter 32

## V. BLUEPRINT and CONSTRUCTION of tabernacle, Chapters 25 — 40 (a pattern and picture of Christ)

C. Golden calf — broken law — Moses' intercession, second tables of the Law, 32 - 35

### Verses 1 - 6...

We remember that when Moses went up the mountain that Joshua accompanied him half way.

1. So both of these men have been away from the camp for forty days.
  - How did the Lord sustain these men during those forty days?
  - The same way the Lord sustained the nation of Israel...manna
  - Every morning the manna has been coming reliably.
2. But while they've been gone, the nation has become impatient.
  - The text says they encouraged Aaron, who had been left in charge, to make a golden calf idol for the nation.
    - They say they don't know what happened to Moses .
    - As if to suggest he isn't coming back.
  - But why does Moses' absence lead the nation to want a golden calf of all things?
    - Realistically, how do they expect a golden calf to lead them anywhere?
    - There is more going on here than meets the eye.
    - And it makes their sin even more troubling.
    - And it will lead to another connection to the Creation story in the Garden.
    - First, let's take note of what Aaron does in response to their request.
3. Later we're going to hear him retell this story to Moses in a creative way.
  - We'll wait until then to consider Aaron's role in this plan.
  - For now we'll just examine **Aaron's actions**...
    - First...*** he directs all the people to produce gold by giving up the gold in their ears.
      - Perhaps Aaron thought this would cause the people to rethink their commitment to the plan, since they were being asked to give up substantial wealth.
      - Whatever he may have thought, the people didn't hesitate .
      - The text says that they tore off their rings and handed them to Moses.
    - Second...*** Aaron melted them down, and fashioned the gold into a golden calf.
      - Then he built an altar before the calf.
        - And of course an altar implies that they performed a sacrifice before the calf.
        - And in v.6 we see the offerings taking place.
    - Third...*** Aaron announces that a feast will take place tomorrow in honor of the Lord.
      - Aaron tells Israel that this calf was the Lord who lead Israel out of Egypt.
      - Israel is not worshipping the calf as if it were a different god.
        - They are worshipping the true God, Jehovah.
      - They have created a graven image of God.
        - Remember the purpose of this calf: to replace Moses.
        - Moses was the visible representative of God.
        - Since Moses was gone, the people wanted someone or something else visible to replace Moses as God's representative.