

God's Craftsmen

Compiled by Paul R. Blake

Introduction:

- A. God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle and put the Ark of the Covenant et al inside. Have you ever asked the question: Who did the work?
- B. Exodus 31:1-11, 35:30-35
- C. What was the tabernacle?

1. To call it simply a tent is like saying Jesus was just a good teacher

2. The court of the tabernacle was a rectangular space, measuring 100 by 50 cubits (150 x 75 feet), screened off by curtains of fine twisted linen, 5 cubits high (7.5 feet), 100 cubits long on the north and south sides, 50 on the east and 15 on the west, and 20 cubits on either side of the entrance. The entrance was closed by a hanging of fine twisted linen, embroidered in violet, purple, and scarlet and "twice dyed" on a white background. All these curtains were stretched from sixty pillars, one pillar assigned to every five cubits of curtain. These pillars of setim wood (shittim) stood on bases (sockets) of brass and were held in position by means of cords fastened to brass pegs which were stuck in the ground; the pillars ended in a capital (head) with a band or necking to hang the curtain overlaid with silver. East of the entrance were found successively: the altar of burnt offerings, the brass laver, and the tabernacle itself. It consisted of curtains and a wooden framework. The whole structure measured 30 by 10 cubits (45 x 15 feet), and was divided into two sections; the one to the west, the "Holy Place", containing the altar of incense, the golden candlestick, and the table of shewbread; and the other, the "Holy of Holies", containing the Ark of the Covenant with the propitiatory surface, inner contents, and the cherubim. These sections were respectively 20 and 10 cubits long.

The wooden framework was made up of 48 massive boards of setim wood, measuring 10 by 1.5 cubits, (15 x 2.3 feet) placed side by side fastened with tongue in groove tenons. This means a weight of about 7 tons, overlaid with gold; the lower part of the uprights were sunk into silver sockets or bases; additionally, five wooden bars, passing through rings attached to the frames, ran along the sides. On the west, the frames were replaced with five pillars of setim wood overlaid with gold, sunk in brass bases, and crowned with golden capitals. Four pillars of the same workmanship, with silver bases, separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

Two pieces of tapestry joined by golden rings was spread over the whole framework; each piece of tapestry consisted of five strips, 28 by 4 cubits, fitted together by loops. Covering this curtain was another woven of goats' hair (the ordinary tent material) fitted in somewhat similarly, was calculated to cover the inside curtain on the north, east, and south sides and to hang down doubled on the west side. Two outer coverings, one of dyed rams' skin and one of badger's skin (porpoise, dugong, other sea creature; term does not translate; implies unattractive) protected the whole structure. A veil of the same tapestry as the inner curtain, hooked from the four pillars mentioned above, completed the separation of the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. (jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14184-tabernacle)

3. Inside were ornate and skillfully constructed items of furniture. In the courtyard was a bronze laver for the priests to use in ritual washing. There was a large altar for burnt offerings on a raised platform with a ramp. Inside the Holy place were the

menorah, table of showbread, and the altar of incense. Inside the Holiest place was the ark of the covenant.

D. Who made these things?

I. THE CRAFTSMEN

A. Bezalel, (bit' zell ell') which means "In the shadow of God" or "under the protection of God." He was the son of Uri, which means "light"; the grandson of Hur, the man who helped Aaron hold up Moses hands so that Israel would prevail against Amalek

1. May have been a student of those who were the architects and builders of Raamses and Pithom, the treasure cities the children of Israel built while enslaved in Egypt (Ex. 1:11).

B. Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan." Aholiab signifies "The Tent of the Father." Ahisamach means "Brother of Support."

1. Bezalel was of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab was of the tribe of Dan. Judah was often in the lead, and Dan often brought up the rear. Craftsmen from both ends of the nation

II. THE CALLING

A. Qualifications and standards were set by the Lord.

1. They were to do what God had commanded Moses; God did not even address them; He spoke to Moses

2. They needed to do it according to all that He commanded

a. They were not permitted to decide materials, design, or construction; they were governed by word of God - Ex. 31:3, 11

b. Regardless of how skilled they were, Bezalel and Aholiab were under the authority of Moses.

B. They were chosen and empowered by God

1. They did not put themselves forward, nor did their personal skills qualify them for the work God planned for them; nor did Moses choose them

2. Ex. 31:3-6; Luke 24:44-45; Gal. 1:15-16

3. God never calls someone to the work without outfitting him

C. They were to share the work with others

1. They were to teach others - Ex. 35:34

III. THE COMPLETION

A. Moses got the credit.

1. It is said eight times, "As the Lord commanded Moses," or "So Moses finished the work" - Ex. 40:33

2. The essence of true service is in obedience, not reward - Ex. 31:11

3. Bezalel and Ahoilab were not permitted to choose what instructions they would keep; they did what they were told - John 6:38

B. They worked together - Ex. 38:22-23

1. While all gifts are not alike, the gifted must be likeminded

2. Not all gifts are alike, but God uses the gifted in like manner - Acts 9:39

3. Some have leadership, others followship, but all must remember their discipleship
 4. We glorify God most when we are unambitiously content to fill our own place, when we are not envious of the gifts given to others.
- C. They were honest workers - Ex. 36:1-7

Conclusion:

- A. Did you know the works of Bezalel and Aholiah before this lesson?
 1. Would you serve the Lord with such integrity when it is likely that no one will know and that very few will care?
- B. Many leave a legacy of works, good or bad, and are remembered for it
 1. Luke 17:32 - Remember Lot's wife
 2. Heb. 11:4 - (Abel) He being dead still speaks
- C. But what if you do a good or even great work, and no one knows?
 1. Heb. 6:10; Mark 9:41
 2. Use your abilities. Even the most unlikely of talents can be used in God's service.