

Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2021 11:27 AM
Subject: Tuesday Nite's MOB Study on Exodus 31

"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen!" (Hebrews 13:20-21)

Last week we saw, in Exodus 30, the LORD's instructions to Moses on the mountain, for making the last two pieces of furnishings for the tabernacle complex, and also a special "anointing oil" that was to be used to anoint Aaron and his sons--in order that they might minister as priests before the LORD. And to anoint, as well all the furnishings and utensils of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle itself, as part of the consecration ceremony.

The Altar of Incense was to be positioned in the Holy Place, just outside the veil leading into the Holy of Holies where God would appear between the Cherubim, in a "shekinah glory," over the Mercy Seat which covered the Ark of the Testimony. Thus, the altar would be the last piece of furniture to which the priest would come before entering into the Holy of Holies, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, to sprinkle the blood of a sin offering, along with incense, on the Mercy Seat, to make atonement for the sins of the people!

Aaron and the priests to follow were to burn incense on the altar continually before the LORD throughout the generations, just as they were to offer continual sacrifices on the Altar of Burnt Offering. The incense was to be made with a special formula, devised by the LORD Himself, and offered up as a "sweet-smelling aroma, most holy to Him"! It would symbolize the prayers of God's people, ascending to Him as the smoke of the incense ascended in the sanctuary!

The Laver of Water was to be placed in the outer courtyard behind the Altar of Burnt Offering, at the entrance to the tabernacle, and used to wash the hands and feet of the priest before entering the tabernacle--signifying the importance of "cleanliness and purification before service"--and symbolizing the need to have our sin "washed away"!

The "anointing oil"--to be made with the finest of spices--was also to be "holy to the LORD" throughout the generations of His people, with the act of anointing becoming a symbol for us of the Holy Spirit who would come to indwell, and "set apart," and empower, believers for service!

And with that, the instructions from the LORD for the building of the tabernacle and all its furnishings, as well as for the making of the garments for the priests, was completed--all of which was spoken by Moses to the people, and given for us, in great detail, in Exodus 25-30! But then the question, that must have been on the minds of the sons of Israel: How in the world was all this to be done?

And that's the question our lesson Tuesday night, on Exodus 31, answers, beginning with these words:

"Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship! And behold, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill, that they may make all that I have commanded you!"

Wow! So that's it!

Interestingly, Bezalel was the grandson of Miriam (according to Josephus), the sister of Moses and Aaron--and his name means "In the shadow of God"! Oholiab's name means "the father is my tent"! The Lord called them by name (names are important to God!), and appointed them, and "filled them with the Spirit of God"--enabling them to fulfill the mission to which they were called!

But they wouldn't be doing it alone! The LORD said to Moses (in Exodus 31:6) that "...in the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill, that they may make all that I have commanded you" And then He sums up again each of the things they were to make (the elaborate details of which were given, and we learned all about--much to our amazement, and chagrin--in chapters 25-30)!

Remember some of the details given for making the "tent of meeting" (or the tabernacle), for example in Exodus 26, which was to include four layers of "fine twisted linen with blue and purple and scarlet material...with images of cherubim woven into them, joined with clasps of gold...over boards of acacia wood standing upright and fitted together with tenons and supported with sockets of silver and rings of gold"! Or the holy garments of Aaron and his sons, discussed in Exodus 28, including the "breastpiece and ephod, and robe, and tunic, and turban and sash," to be made of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen...with gold chains, and the breastpiece mounted with twelve of the most precious stones in the world...including ruby and sapphire and diamond...set in gold filigree..."! With everything to be made in strict conformance with the "pattern" given to Moses on the mountain! Wow!

So how could Bezalel and Oholiab, along with others "appointed," ever hope to be able to accomplish such an "impossible mission"? They obviously must have been "gifted" by birth and prepared to some extent by training and experience in Egypt (just like Moses was prepared, by God, in the "court of Pharaoh" and through his relationship with Jethro, his father-in-law). But eventual fulfillment of the mission would only be able to be explained by the "enabling Spirit of God," working in them, as clearly stated in our text!

Constable notes the parallel between God's work of creation and the work of the sons of Israel's work in building the tabernacle! Just as God did His work of creation by means of His Spirit (Genesis 1:2), so "Bezalel and Oholiab & Co" were to do their work--and could only do it--by God's enabling Spirit!

Interesting that the LORD would conclude His instructions for all the work of building the tabernacle, and everything associated with it, with a reminder for the people to "cease from their

labor"--despite the heavy demands for carrying out the work--to "observe His sabbaths of complete rest," noting the parallel to the creation story, with God completing His work of creation "in six day...and ceasing from labor on the seventh day"! And with His related promise, later in Hebrews 4, for us, as believers, to be able to "enter His rest" (which MacArthur defines as a "spiritual rest," offering us peace, and confidence in our salvation, and reliance on His strength, and assurance of a future heavenly home)!

And so, the lesson begs the question: Does God still work in the same way He worked with the sons of Israel, calling people, and preparing them, giving them special "gifts" (ala I Corinthians 12), and enabling them to be used and involved with Him in accomplishing things that are impossible to explain other than that they represent a special work of a sovereign God in their lives? The Bible cites many examples of His workings in the past, as well as great promises throughout the Scriptures that we can claim! To cite a few...

The "word of the Lord" came to Jeremiah, in prison during the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and he prayed (in Jeremiah 32:17): "Ah, Lord God! Behold, you have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by your outstretched arm; and nothing is too hard for You!" Then it came a second time, and the Lord said, "Call unto Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know!" (Jeremiah 33:3)

The apostle Paul, who saw God work in so many wondrous ways, wrote this, in Ephesians 3:20: "Now unto Him who is able to do far more abundantly (KJVs says "exceedingly abundantly") beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen!"

Psalm 90:16, attributed to a prayer of Moses, says, "And let the beauty (favor) of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it!" (KJV)

Jesus assured His disciples, in Matthew 19:26, that while some things are impossible for man, "all things are possible with God"! And Paul would add (in Philippians 4:13), "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!" (Which brings to mind the words of that old Christian chorus: "Only believe...only believe! All things are possible, only believe!")

And that brings us back to our memory verse, for this lesson, which basically gives us the "the rest of the story" for Exodus 31! "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever, Amen! (Hebrews 13:20-21)

May God equip us, and enable us, as "Men of the Word," to do His will this week--and to "rest" on His promises!

Lowell