

The People Contribute Willingly for the Tabernacle and the Work Begins

Exodus 35-36

Exodus 35 - *“Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, “These are the words which the Lord has commanded you to do: ² Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. ³ You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day.”*

⁴ And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, “This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying: ⁵ ‘Take from among you an offering to the Lord. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the Lord: gold, silver, and bronze; ⁶ blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats’ hair; ⁷ ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; ⁸ oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; ⁹ onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.

¹⁰ ‘All who are gifted artisans among you shall come and make all that the Lord has commanded: ¹¹ the tabernacle, its tent, its covering, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; ¹² the ark and its poles, with the mercy seat, and the veil of the covering; ¹³ the table and its poles, all its utensils, and the showbread; ¹⁴ also the lampstand for the light, its utensils, its lamps, and the oil for the light; ¹⁵ the incense altar, its poles, the anointing oil, the sweet incense, and the screen for the door at the entrance of the tabernacle; ¹⁶ the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles, all its utensils, and the laver and its base; ¹⁷ the hangings of the court, its pillars, their sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; ¹⁸ the pegs of the tabernacle, the pegs of the court, and their cords; ¹⁹ the garments of ministry, for ministering in the holy place—the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.’ ”

²⁰ And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. ²¹ Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and they brought the Lord’s offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. ²² They came, both men and women, as many as had a willing heart, and brought earrings and nose rings, rings and necklaces, all jewelry of gold, that is, every man who made an offering of gold to the Lord. ²³ And every man, with whom was found blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats’ hair, red skins of rams, and badger skins, brought them. ²⁴ Everyone who offered an offering of silver or bronze brought the Lord’s offering. And everyone with whom was found acacia wood for any work of the service, brought it. ²⁵ All the women who were gifted artisans spun yarn with their hands, and brought what they had spun, of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. ²⁶ And all the women whose hearts stirred with wisdom spun yarn of goats’ hair. ²⁷ The rulers brought onyx stones, and the stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate, ²⁸ and spices and oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. ²⁹ The children of Israel brought a freewill offering to the Lord, all the men and women whose hearts were willing to bring material for all kinds of work which the Lord, by the hand of Moses, had commanded to be done.

³⁰ And Moses said to the children of Israel, “See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; ³¹ and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner

of workmanship, ³² to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, ³³ in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship.

³⁴ “And He has put in his heart the ability to teach, in him and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. ³⁵ He has filled them with skill to do all manner of work of the engraver and the designer and the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine linen, and of the weaver—those who do every work and those who design artistic works.”

Exodus 36 – “And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the Lord has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the Lord has commanded.”

² Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, everyone whose heart ^[b]was stirred, to come and do the work. ³ And they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. ⁴ Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, ⁵ and they spoke to Moses, saying, “The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded us to do.”

⁶ So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, “Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary.” And the people were restrained from bringing, ⁷ for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done—indeed too much.

⁸ Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked on the tabernacle made ten curtains woven of fine linen, and of blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim they made them. ⁹ The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the curtains were all the same size. ¹⁰ And he coupled five curtains to one another, and the other five curtains he coupled to one another. ¹¹ He made loops of blue yarn on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of one set; likewise he did on the outer edge of the other curtain of the second set. ¹² Fifty loops he made on one curtain, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain on the end of the second set; the loops held one curtain to another. ¹³ And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains to one another with the clasps, that it might be one tabernacle. ¹⁴ He made curtains of goats' hair for the tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains. ¹⁵ The length of each curtain was thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the eleven curtains were the same size. ¹⁶ He coupled five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. ¹⁷ And he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain of the second set. ¹⁸ He also made fifty bronze clasps to couple the tent together, that it might be one. ¹⁹ Then he made a covering for the tent of ram skins dyed red, and a covering of ^[c]badger skins above that.

²⁰ For the tabernacle he made boards of acacia wood, standing upright. ²¹ The length of each board was ten cubits, and the width of each board a cubit and a half. ²² Each board had two tenons for binding one to another. Thus he made for all the boards of the tabernacle. ²³ And he made boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. ²⁴ Forty sockets of silver he made to go under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. ²⁵ And for the other side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made twenty boards ²⁶ and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. ²⁷ For the west side of the tabernacle he made six boards. ²⁸ He also made two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. ²⁹ And they were coupled at the bottom and coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus

he made both of them for the two corners. ³⁰ So there were eight boards and their sockets—sixteen sockets of silver—two sockets under each of the boards.

³¹ And he made bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, ³² five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle on the far side westward. ³³ And he made the middle bar to pass through the boards from one end to the other. ³⁴ He overlaid the boards with gold, made their rings of gold to be holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

³⁵ And he made a veil of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen; it was worked with an artistic design of cherubim. ³⁶ He made for it four pillars of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold, with their hooks of gold; and he cast four sockets of silver for them.

³⁷ He also made a screen for the tabernacle door, of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver, ³⁸ and its five pillars with their hooks. And he overlaid their capitals and their rings with gold, but their five sockets were bronze.”

Background Notes

In Exodus 34 we saw that God, in His grace, renewed the Mosaic Covenant with the people of Israel. Once again, He promised to “go before His people” and to dwell in their midst. He promised to perform miracles and to drive the enemy out of the land that He had given to Abraham.

Now in Exodus 35 -- and right on to the end of the book of Exodus -- we have the details of the construction of the Tabernacle, the “House of the Lord.”. The instructions for the building of the Tabernacle were given in Exodus 25-31, and chapters 35-40 record the actual construction. However, before the work began, two important matters were taken up:

1. A reminder to keep the Sabbath (35:1-3).

Even when they were doing the work of the Lord, they were to rest and worship the Lord on the Sabbath. “Worship comes before work” is the biblical principle here —and it even comes before work for the Lord! In fact, it’s as we worship the Lord that our desire to serve Him grows. It’s as we worship Him that we are strengthened to do His work. Without worship of the Lord, our so-called “Christian service” may only be for our own self-glory.

2. The collection of materials and services (35:20-36:7).

Before the actual work of constructing the Tabernacle could begin, a second important subject was the collection of goods and commitment of services for the work. The work of the Lord takes money and skill, and that’s what we have, starting in Exodus 35:4 and right on through Exodus 36:7.

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord's House should be supported by the Lord's people (35:4-36:7).

Back in Exodus 25 the Lord directed Moses to tell the people of Israel that a collection of materials would be taken for the construction of the Tabernacle. In chapter 35 that collection was made, and the giving was totally voluntary, just as God instructed. *"Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and every whose spirit was willing, and they brought the LORD'S offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garment"(v21). And, "The children of Israel brought a freewill offering to the LORD, all the men and women whose hearts were willing to bring material for all kinds of work which the LORD, by the hand of Moses, had commanded to be done"(v29).*

This is the way the work of the Lord should be supported today. We should feel a responsibility to support the work of the Lord and the House of the Lord – but **no one** should be forced or manipulated to give!

Notice that the people gave both goods and services—not goods **or** services, but goods **and** services! If you had some oil, or some gold or silver or bronze, or some precious stones, or some wood, or some material woven of linen or goats' hair, you brought it to the Lord. [Goats' hair? Why goats' hair? That was one of the woven coverings of the Tabernacle!] No percentage for giving was given here, but it seems that these willing people gave at a lot more than 10%! And remember – all of this giving was in addition to their regular required giving under the Law.

Whatever skills the people had were also offered to the Lord. *"All the women who were gifted artisans spun yarn with their hands, and brought what they had spun, of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine linen" (v25).*

At the end of chapter 35 and the beginning of chapter 36, Bezalel and Aholiab are mentioned again. Remember them from chapter 31? They were filled with the Spirit *"in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship [craftsmanship]" (31:3 and 35:31).* These men were to be the leaders of all the skilled men and women who worked on the Tabernacle.

God also gave Bezalel and Aholiab the desire and ability to teach what they knew to other skilled people (35:34). These men didn't hoard all their God-given knowledge and skill! They shared it willingly with others, and they taught others. We, too, should, teach others whatever insights and wisdom and skills the Lord gives us. The Lord gives us the talents and skills and gifts and material possessions -- and we have the responsibility to give it and use it in support of the work of the Lord.

In Exodus 36:5-7 we see that the people were so willing to give of their money and material possessions that Moses had to issue a "restraining order" so that the people would not bring any more! Can you imagine? Moses had to say, "We have enough! Don't bring any more money or material—we have plenty!" Has this ever happened in the history of the Church? I can tell you one thing for sure, "Growing Christian Ministries" has not sent out a restraining letter yet! But you never know—it could happen! That would be a great day. The Lord's people should support the Lord's House.

2. The Lord's House should follow the Lord's pattern (36:8-38).

In Exodus 36:8-19 the covering curtains of the Tabernacle was made. In verses 20-34 the gold-covered boards for the structure of the Tabernacle were made. In verses 35-38 the inner and outer veils of the Tabernacle were made. After you read these verses, if you're not aware of the context, you'll think that you're reading a section of Exodus that you've already read before! That's because the wording in Exodus 36 is very similar to what we studied back in Exodus 26. The difference is that in Exodus 26 the detailed instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle items were given, and in Exodus 36 the actual construction of these items took place. The fact that the wording is so similar emphasizes the fact that the people were following all the details of the pattern that the Lord gave for the Tabernacle and its furnishings. They were not adding to the pattern with their own ideas, nor were they taking away from the pattern because they thought certain details were not necessary. No! They were following all the details of the pattern, just as God gave it!

And so should we. God has given instructions in the New Testament of how the Church - the "house of the Lord" today - should be set up and how it should function. We have a responsibility to follow the details of the pattern. Scriptures clearly teach that every local church should have a plurality of elders for church government (Titus 1). The Scriptures clearly teach that the priesthood of **all** believers should be practiced in the Church (I Corinthians 12). The Scriptures clearly teach that the spiritual authority structure in the Church should be male (I Timothy 2). Many churches today have departed from the pattern given in the Word of God. The Lord's House should follow the Lord's pattern.

Practical Application

Even you can design a tent peg!

In Exodus 35:18 the required pegs of the Tabernacle and the courtyard are described. Verse 10 says that the people made all the items of the Tabernacle -- including the tent pegs!

Exodus 27 says that all the pegs were to be made of bronze. Now let me ask you -- do you think you could design a tent peg out of bronze? I think you could. How about a bar of bronze 12 inches long? Shape one end to a point, put a notch near the other end—PRESTO! You've got a tent peg!

Do you see the practical application? Maybe you're thinking that you don't have much skill or talent to dedicate to the Lord. Listen—God is pleased when you use whatever gift He has given you to serve Him. Remember - if it weren't for the tent pegs, the whole place would have fallen down! And even you can design a tent peg!