

Week 16

Exodus 31:12 – 40

(Sabbath, 10 Commandments, Golden Calf)

Sunday (Exodus 31:12-18)

Sabbath Observance

31:12 The Lord said to Moses, 31:13 “Tell the Israelites, ‘Surely you must keep my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. 31:14 So you must keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for you. Everyone who defiles it must surely be put to death; indeed, if anyone does any work on it, then that person will be cut off from among his people. 31:15 Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord; anyone who does work on the Sabbath day must surely be put to death. 31:16 The Israelites must keep the Sabbath by observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. 31:17 It is a sign between me and the Israelites forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

31:18 He gave Moses two tablets of testimony when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, tablets of stone written by the finger of God.

PRAYER

Lord, You design our priorities and worship so that we are prioritized to focus on You, Your perfection, and Your desire to perfect us. May I be found humble and teachable.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God re-emphasized the importance of the Sabbath in the OT covenant with the Israelites *“Six days work may be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord ...”*

He continued with an explanation as to why the Sabbath was holy *“It is a sign between me and the Israelites forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”*

It is important to note the NET translators clarification that “rested” refers to the cessation of the original unique Creation, not because God was tired, nor that He never acted upon His Creation again. It is also important to note that “was refreshed” may be better rendered with an eye toward the Creation-phrase “And He saw that it was good.” [See [Gen. 1:4, 31, 2:1-3](#)]

And with the lengthy completion of His instructions to Moses “*He gave Moses two tablets of testimony when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, tablets of stone written by the finger of God.*”

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

We need to rest from worldly distractions so that we may focus on the Lord God apart from the busyness and noise of day to day life.

DISCUSS

Why do you suppose the Lord God imposed this rather than trusting the Israelites to make time for Him on their own?

REFLECT

The Israelites had not previously demonstrated much patience, and they had been through 400 years of slavery in a pagan nation.

SHARE

When have you struggled with making time for the Lord God?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you are too busy for the Lord God.

ACT

I will humbly confess that I have been remiss in making time for the Lord, both on a daily basis and for a special weekly time together with other believers. I will take a hard look at my schedule and make certain that I schedule Him in first.

Be Specific _____

Monday (Exodus 32:1-18)

The Sin of the Golden Calf

32:1 When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Get up, make us gods that will go before us. As for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him!"

32:2 So Aaron said to them, "Break off the gold earrings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."

32:3 So all the people broke off the gold earrings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron.

32:4 He accepted the gold from them, fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molten calf. Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

32:5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow will be a feast to the Lord."

32:6 So they got up early on the next day and offered up burnt offerings and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.

32:7 The Lord spoke to Moses: "Go quickly, descend, because your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have acted corruptly.

32:8 They have quickly turned aside from the way that I commanded them – they have made for themselves a molten calf and have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt."

32:9 Then the Lord said to Moses: "I have seen this people. Look what a stiff-necked people they are!

32:10 So now, leave me alone so that my anger can burn against them and I can destroy them, and I will make from you a great nation."

32:11 But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your anger burn against your people, whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

32:12 Why should the Egyptians say, 'For evil he led them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger, and relent of this evil against your people.

32:13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel your servants, to whom you swore by yourself and told them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken about I will give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever.'"

32:14 Then the Lord relented over the evil that he had said he would do to his people.

32:15 Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands. The tablets were written on both sides – they were written on the front and on the back.

32:16 Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

32:17 When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "It is the sound of war in the camp!"

32:18 Moses said, "It is not the sound of those who shout for victory, nor is it the sound of those who cry because they are overcome, but the sound of singing I hear."

PRAYER

Lord, when times in this flesh in this fallen world are tough and I am afraid of the uncertain and the unknown may I never be found making an idol of anyone or anything.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Aaron was challenged by the Israelites to make for them an idol as they believed that Moses may be dead or somehow imprisoned on the mountain and they were frightened.

He agreed and asked them to bring the gold from their earrings, much of which was plundered from the Egyptians, and given that there were over a million people there was enough gold for a molten calf.

The people chanted that this was their god (or gods) who brought them out of Egypt and so Aaron built an altar to which they brought peace offerings and then they danced and sang.

The Lord God saw what they had done and instructed Moses to leave the mountain as He was contemplating the destruction of the Israelites.

Moses, sensing the righteous anger and the justice of His punishment, appealed to His grace in order that a testimony of God's greatness might be had in the world rather than One Who led His people out of Egypt only to destroy them a few months later at the mountain.

The Lord chose His sovereign option of grace over His sovereign right to law and relented from His righteous anger.

As Moses descended from the mountain Joshua met him where he had been waiting. As they traveled further down they heard sounds from the valley; Joshua took them to be sounds of war, Moses knew them to be the sounds of a sinful people singing in their corruption.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The Israelites were a primitive people only months free from 400 years of captivity in Egypt. They had been surrounded by pagans and still lacked a clear understanding of God.

DISCUSS

How heartsick the Lord God must have been, and Moses as well, for the Israelites to rebel so soon – and for His chosen high priest Aaron to be a party to their idolatry?

REFLECT

The people were confused and frightened and wanted something that they could see and touch rather than a God Who was at a distance from them and generally appeared in frighteningly powerful ways.

SHARE

When have you longed for a more visible indication of the presence of God?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you may have idols in your life.

ACT

Today I will humbly confess those things that function as idols in my life. They may be money or power, position or title, gifts and talents that I use to bring glory to me rather than to God. They may be celebrities, politicians, sports stars, entertainers, rebels, or pompous religious leaders. They may be habits or hobbies, peccadillos or possessions, temptations or traditions. I will repent of them, turn away from them, and rather partner with the Holy Spirit to keep my eyes upon God-alone.

Be Specific _____

Tuesday (Exodus 32:19 – 33:6)

32:19 When he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses became extremely angry. He threw the tablets from his hands and broke them to pieces at the bottom of the mountain. 32:20 He took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire, ground it to powder, poured it out on the water, and made the Israelites drink it.

32:21 Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought on them so great a sin?" 32:22 Aaron said, "Do not let your anger burn hot, my lord; you know these people, that they tend to evil. 32:23 They said to me, 'Make us gods that will go before us, for as for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.' 32:24 So I said to them, 'Whoever has gold, break it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and this calf came out."

32:25 Moses saw that the people were running wild, for Aaron had let them get completely out of control, causing derision from their enemies. 32:26 So Moses stood at the entrance of the camp and said, "Whoever is for the Lord, come to me." All the Levites gathered around him, 32:27 and he said to them, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Each man fasten his sword on his side, and go back and forth from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and each one kill his brother, his friend, and his neighbor.'"

32:28 The Levites did what Moses ordered, and that day about three thousand men of the people died. 32:29 Moses said, "You have been consecrated today for the Lord, for each of you was against his son or against his brother, so he has given a blessing to you today."

32:30 The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a very serious sin, but now I will go up to the Lord – perhaps I can make atonement on behalf of your sin."

32:31 So Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Alas, this people has committed a very serious sin, and they have made for themselves gods of gold. 32:32 But now, if you will forgive their sin..., but if not, wipe me out from your book that you have written.” 32:33 The Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me – that person I will wipe out of my book. 32:34 So now go, lead the people to the place I have spoken to you about. See, my angel will go before you. But on the day that I punish, I will indeed punish them for their sin.”

32:35 And the Lord sent a plague on the people because they had made the calf – the one Aaron made.

33:1 The Lord said to Moses, “Go up from here, you and the people whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’

33:2 I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

33:3 Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go up among you, for you are a stiff-necked people, and I might destroy you on the way.”

33:4 When the people heard this troubling word they mourned; no one put on his ornaments.

33:5 For the Lord had said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If I went up among you for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments, that I may know what I should do to you.’”

33:6 So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments by Mount Horeb.

PRAYER

Lord, the sin of rebellion is serious; may Your Holy Spirit keep me from such a sin.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Moses was angry when he saw what the Israelites, and Aaron, had done and in his anger he smashed the two tablets of the commandments on the rocks.

Moses burned the golden calf and ground it to powder, cast it on the water, then required the Israelites to drink it. [The NET translators suggest that this was a “bitter waters” test where those who were guilty of inciting the idolatry would become ill.]

Moses challenged Aaron for his complicity and he blamed the people and then lied and suggested that the gold, once cast into the fire, came out as the calf.

Aaron, a priest and not a leader, had allowed the people to become drunk and crazed so Moses stood in the middle of the Israelites and summoned all who were faithful to the Lord God to gather near to him – and all of the Levites (the priestly tribe) did so. Note: Moses would have been calling to the adult males.

Moses then instructed the Levites to strap on their swords and to go out into the crazed Israelites and to kill their brother, friend, and neighbor. They killed 3,000 people. [The NET translators suggest that they may have identified the guilty due to their illness from the powered gold/bitter waters test.]

Moses informed them that they had been God's hands of punishment and would be blessed for their obedience, however difficult it must have been.

Moses then informed the people that he would then return to the Lord God on the mountain and seek atonement so that He would not destroy them.

Moses appealed to God and even said that if He was to destroy all of the Israelites then he would choose to be destroyed with them.

The Lord God replied that He knew who was guilty and that they would be judged on the day of judgment. [Note: The NET Cross-Reference goes to David and Bathsheba where God delivered His punishment in the future with the death of their firstborn who was conceived in the terrible sin of adultery and murder.]

God then brought an undefined (in the text) plague, in addition to the 3,000 executed by the Levitical priests, upon the Israelites (presumably those who were guilty of inciting the idolatry).

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The Lord God chose Aaron to be the high priest not for his leadership skills but for his servant's heart.

DISCUSS

Aaron spoke rightly when he declared that the Israelites were prone toward evil. Is it clear why God needed to draw a proverbial line in the sand with a people numbering over a million? Did they not need to fear Him and to therefore be repelled by the temptation to worship idols?

REFLECT

How different are we? When we are confused and/or frightened do we not often seek out the familiar and whatever other sources of comfort or power we can find?

SHARE

When have you found yourself caught up in the emotional reactions of people around you and made some choices to participate in their ill-conceived actions and/or words that you later regretted?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you have stood with the Lord God against the majority, and/or have gone with the crowd.

ACT

Today I will celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit which empowered me to stand with the Lord God instead of the majority, and/or I will repent of going with the crowd and commit to partner with the Holy Spirit in maturing to a higher level of maturity and courage.

Be Specific _____

Wednesday (Exodus 33:7-23)

The Presence of the Lord

33:7 Moses took the tent and pitched it outside the camp, at a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. Anyone seeking the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting that was outside the camp.

33:8 And when Moses went out to the tent, all the people would get up and stand at the entrance to their tents and watch Moses until he entered the tent. 33:9 And whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. 33:10 When all the people would see the pillar of cloud standing at the

entrance of the tent, all the people, each one at the entrance of his own tent, would rise and worship. 33:11 The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, the way a person speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his servant, Joshua son of Nun, a young man, did not leave the tent.

33:12 Moses said to the Lord, "See, you have been saying to me, 'Bring this people up,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. But you said, 'I know you by name, and also you have found favor in my sight.' 33:13 Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your way, that I may know you, that I may continue to find favor in your sight. And see that this nation is your people."

33:14 And the Lord said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

33:15 And Moses said to him, "If your presence does not go with us, do not take us up from here. 33:16 For how will it be known then that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not by your going with us, so that we will be distinguished, I and your people, from all the people who are on the face of the earth?"

33:17 The Lord said to Moses, "I will do this thing also that you have requested, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

33:18 And Moses said, "Show me your glory."

33:19 And the Lord said, "I will make all my goodness pass before your face, and I will proclaim the Lord by name before you; I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." 33:20 But he added, "You cannot see my face, for no one can see me and live." 33:21 The Lord said, "Here is a place by me; you will station yourself on a rock. 33:22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and will cover you with my hand while I pass by. 33:23 Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back, but my face must not be seen."

PRAYER

Lord, You were righteously angry but You found a way to maintain community with Your chosen people through Moses. Thank You that Your loving grace continues today!

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Moses set up a tent between the camp and the tabernacle where he served as the intermediary for the people with God. God met with Moses there.

Moses appealed to God to renew His presence among the people. [The NET translators observe the link back to 32:10 where God prompts Moses with a reference to the Abrahamic covenant while at the same time telling Moses to leave Him because His justice desired to punish the people. So Moses took advantage of the opening for reconciliation that God provided.]

Moses asked to see more of the presence of God than he had previously. God agreed but clarified that Moses could only see a shadow of His passing as no man may see God, in his fallen state prior to Heaven, and live.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Moses served as a bridge between a righteously indignant God Whose justice demanded severe punishment but Whose grace tempered that judgment.

DISCUSS

Despite their chronic complaining and rebellion the Israelites had transitioned from dependent upon the power of the Egyptians to the power of God. Imagine their fear that out in the wilderness, surrounded by enemies, that the Lord God – their protector - might suddenly abandon them?

REFLECT

God still chooses to send an angel to clear the land of non-Israelite tribes because no matter how the Israelites violated their side of the covenantal agreement God was always faithful to His.

SHARE

When have you desperately cried-out to the Lord God, knowing that your sin had created a barrier to your fellowship with the Holy Spirit, repenting of that sin, and seeking reconciliation and restoration of intimacy with God?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where something you value may be an instrument of rebellion.

ACT

Today I will prayerfully receive the message of the Holy Spirit, through the Word, through an elder-confirmed (“elder”: a mature believer, as defined in the NT), and through His answer to prayer directly to me. I will remove from my environment that thing, or those things, that have become tools of rebellion. In the case of the Israelites it had been their gold “ornaments”. In my case it could be a computer that needs strong filters, clothing and/or other fashion items that draw too much attention to the body, a group with whom I associate who lead me away from God, a phone that is used dangerously while driving or to communicate in a non-edifying manner, resources that enable me to cheat or deceive, etc. I will partner with the Holy Spirit to fill the vacuum of what I remove with something edifying.

Be Specific _____

Thursday (Exodus 34:1 – 35:3)

The New Tablets of the Covenant

34:1 The Lord said to Moses, “Cut out two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you smashed. 34:2 Be prepared in the morning, and go up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and station yourself for me there on the top of the mountain. 34:3 No one is to come up with you; do not let anyone be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks or the herds may graze in front of that mountain.” 34:4 So Moses cut out two tablets of stone like the first; early in the morning he went up to Mount Sinai, just as the Lord had commanded him, and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.

34:5 The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the Lord by name. 34:6 The Lord passed by before him and proclaimed: “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness, 34:7 keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. But he by no means leaves the guilty unpunished, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children and children’s children, to the third and fourth generation.”

34:8 Moses quickly bowed to the ground and worshiped 34:9 and said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, let my Lord go among us, for we are a stiff-necked people; pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

34:10 He said, “See, I am going to make a covenant before all your people. I will do wonders such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. All the people among whom you live will see the work of the Lord, for it is a fearful thing that I am doing with you.

34:11 “Obey what I am commanding you this day. I am going to drive out before you the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 34:12 Be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it become a snare among you. 34:13 Rather you must destroy their altars, smash their images, and cut down their Asherah poles. 34:14 For you must not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. 34:15 Be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone invites you, you will eat from his sacrifice; 34:16 and you then take his daughters for your sons, and when his daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will make your sons prostitute themselves to their gods as well. 34:17 You must not make yourselves molten gods.

34:18 “You must keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you; do this at the appointed time of the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out of Egypt.

34:19 “Every firstborn of the womb belongs to me, even every firstborn of your cattle that is a male, whether ox or sheep. 34:20 Now the firstling of a donkey you may redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then break its neck. You must redeem all the firstborn of your sons.

“No one will appear before me empty-handed.

34:21 “On six days you may labor, but on the seventh day you must rest; even at the time of plowing and of harvest you are to rest.

34:22 “You must observe the Feast of Weeks – the firstfruits of the harvest of wheat – and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year. 34:23 At three times in the year all your men must appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. 34:24 For I will drive out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; no one will covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year.

34:25 “You must not offer the blood of my sacrifice with yeast; the sacrifice from the feast of Passover must not remain until the following morning.

34:26 “The first of the firstfruits of your soil you must bring to the house of the Lord your God.

You must not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

34:27 The Lord said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” 34:28 So he was there with the Lord forty days

and forty nights; he did not eat bread, and he did not drink water. He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

The Radiant Face of Moses

34:29 Now when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand – when he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. 34:30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to approach him. 34:31 But Moses called to them, so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and Moses spoke to them. 34:32 After this all the Israelites approached, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken to him on Mount Sinai. 34:33 When Moses finished speaking with them, he would put a veil on his face. 34:34 But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out. Then he would come out and tell the Israelites what he had been commanded. 34:35 When the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with the Lord.

Sabbath Regulations

35:1 Moses assembled the whole community of the Israelites and said to them, “These are the things that the Lord has commanded you to do. 35:2 In six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there must be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of complete rest to the Lord. Anyone who does work on it will be put to death. 35:3 You must not kindle a fire in any of your homes on the Sabbath day.”

PRAYER

Lord, thank You Lord for your patience and forgiveness and grace – the ancient Israelites are not the only ones who need it – I do as well.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God instructed Moses to cut new tablets of stone for Him to etch with the commandments to replace those Moses had smashed.

He then proclaimed His name to Moses “The Lord, the Lord,” which the NET translators render also as “I am that I am”, which is the same name that He previously gave to Moses when He first called him to the Exodus mission and Moses had asked how he should identify God to the people.

He then added the detail "... the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness, keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. But he by no means leaves the guilty unpunished, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children and children's children, to the third and fourth generation." Note that the NET translators explain that "slow to anger" means that God refrains from immediate judgment to allow time for repentance.

He then not only agreed to renew His covenant with the Israelites but prophesied greater miracles.

He repeated the terms of the covenant and the words of the commandments were recorded on the replacement set of tablets. Moses remained with God for 40 days and nights and was completely sustained by God as he did not take food or water.

Moses came down from the mountain and the glow on his face, from nearness to the Lord God frightened the people, but they drew near when he called them and he shared what God had said.

The NET translators observe that there is a different sequential order in the renewed covenant than was in the pre-idolatry covenant "It is the artistic design that puts the filling of the Spirit section (31:1-11) prior to the Sabbath laws (31:12-18) before the idolatry section, and then after the renewal there is the Sabbath reminder (35:1-3) before the filling of the Spirit material (35:21)"

The Lord God required, and communicated to the Israelites once again through Moses, the importance of the Sabbath rest. It may be helpful to think of the Sabbath rest as resting from the world and in the Lord God. The people were not to be immobile on the Sabbath; they did not rest from eating or drinking, walking or talking, breathing or loving, healing or helping – all activities that may have been used in their day-to-day worldly work – it was that during the Sabbath rest all things were intentionally focused on God and all things that were a distraction from that were forbidden.

A fire in the fireplace or oven was not a problem on the Sabbath but kindling one anew was – because the process of kindling was too distracting – people were expected to be prepared for the Sabbath so that such activities were unnecessary. The fire should have been tended in such a manner prior to the Sabbath that it may need to be fed but not newly kindled. Given the change of weather and the poorly insulated Bedouin-like portable homes of the Israelites there would be times when they would need heat against the cold (potentially below freezing during Winter nights in the desert).

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

God always keeps His word even when His children are rebellious. It was important that the Israelites plan for the Sabbath so they were not engaging in forbidden activities on that day. They had already been taught this by the Lord God in the gathering of Manna – since He had provided that for several months in double-portion on Friday to be gathered for both Friday and Saturday.

DISCUSS

How else could the sovereign God of Creation and beyond identify Himself except in reference to Himself? Jesus would use a similar phrase “Before Moses I Am” to identify Himself. Would treatment of injuries or the ill, birthing of a baby, defending the nation from attack, managing a disaster such as a flood, or other activity be suspended on the Sabbath?

REFLECT

Moses surrendered himself utterly to God, relying upon Him for sustenance without food or water. God’s presence imprinted a visible glow upon his face. David and his men picked grain and ate it on the Sabbath and Jesus referred to that when He was challenged by the religious authorities for healing on the Sabbath. Clearly the intent of the Sabbath rest is not immobility but rather a highly-intentional and minimally-distracted emphasis upon what the Lord God specified for the days activities.

SHARE

When have you tried to explain God to someone who persisted in trying to stuff Him into a man-sized box and ended up saying “He is defined by Himself, there is no comparison.”? When have you observed the people of God responding to a need in such an overwhelming manner that they had to be asked to cease?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you one way that God has expressed His character in your life “... the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness, keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” and to show you where you need to be more intentional about time apart with God and/or where your resources and talents may be used to meet needs among believers.

ACT

Today I will share and celebrate with a fellow believer the way(s) that God has expressed His character in my life. I will prayerfully review my daily and weekly schedule for regular times apart with God, as well as a weekly time apart with God gathered-together with believers. I will also prayerfully seek opportunities to being the resources and talents God has given me to bless fellow believers.

Be Specific _____

Friday (**Exodus 35:4 – 36:7**)

Willing Workers

35:4 Moses spoke to the whole community of the Israelites, “This is the word that the Lord has commanded: 35:5 ‘Take an offering for the Lord. Let everyone who has a willing heart bring an offering to the Lord: gold, silver, bronze, 35:6 blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, fine linen, goat’s hair, 35:7 ram skins dyed red, fine leather, acacia wood, 35:8 olive oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, 35:9 onyx stones, and other gems for mounting on the ephod and the breastpiece.

35:10 Every skilled person among you is to come and make all that the Lord has commanded: 35:11 the tabernacle with its tent, its covering, its clasps, its frames, its crossbars, its posts, and its bases; 35:12 the ark, with its poles, the atonement lid, and the special curtain that conceals it; 35:13 the table with its poles and all its vessels, and the Bread of the Presence; 35:14 the lampstand for the light and its accessories, its lamps, and oil for the light; 35:15 and the altar of incense with its poles, the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense; the hanging for the door at the entrance of the tabernacle; 35:16 the altar for the burnt offering with its bronze grating that is on it, its poles, and all its utensils; the large basin and its pedestal; 35:17 the hangings of the courtyard, its posts and its bases, and the curtain for the gateway to the courtyard; 35:18 tent pegs for the tabernacle and tent pegs for the courtyard and their ropes; 35:19 the woven garments for serving in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons to minister as priests.”

35:20 So the whole community of the Israelites went out from the presence of Moses.

35:21 Everyone whose heart stirred him to action and everyone whose spirit was willing came and brought the offering for the Lord for the work of the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments.

35:22 They came, men and women alike, all who had willing hearts. They brought brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments, all kinds of gold jewelry, and everyone came who waved a wave offering of gold to the Lord.

35:23 Everyone who had blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, fine linen, goats' hair, ram skins dyed red, or fine leather brought them. 35:24 Everyone making an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the Lord, and everyone who had acacia wood for any work of the service brought it. 35:25 Every woman who was skilled spun with her hands and brought what she had spun, blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, or fine linen, 35:26 and all the women whose heart stirred them to action and who were skilled spun goats' hair.

35:27 The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted for the ephod and the breastpiece, 35:28 and spices and olive oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense.

35:29 The Israelites brought a freewill offering to the Lord, every man and woman whose heart was willing to bring materials for all the work that the Lord through Moses had commanded them to do.

35:30 Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 35:31 He has filled him with the Spirit of God – with skill, with understanding, with knowledge, and in all kinds of work, 35:32 to design artistic designs, to work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, 35:33 and in cutting stones for their setting, and in cutting wood, to do work in every artistic craft. 35:34 And he has put it in his heart to teach, he and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35:35 He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as craftsmen, as designers, as embroiderers in blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and in fine linen, and as weavers. They are craftsmen in all the work and artistic designers.

36:1 So Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person in whom the Lord has put skill and ability to know how to do all the work for the service of the sanctuary are to do the work according to all that the Lord has commanded."

36:2 Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person in whom the Lord had put skill – everyone whose heart stirred him to volunteer to do the work, 36:3 and they received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to do the work for the service of the sanctuary, and they still continued to bring him a freewill offering each morning. 36:4 So all the skilled people who were doing all the work on the sanctuary came from the work they were doing 36:5 and told Moses, "The people are bringing much more than is needed for the completion of the work which the Lord commanded us to do!"

36:6 Moses instructed them to take his message throughout the camp, saying, “Let no man or woman do any more work for the offering for the sanctuary.” So the people were restrained from bringing any more. 36:7 Now the materials were more than enough for them to do all the work.

PRAYER

Lord, You allowed everyone, male or female, to have a part in the construction of Your Tabernacle. May I be found useful in Your service today.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

All of the people were encouraged to bring resources and talents to the construction of the tabernacle, they were motivated by the Holy Spirit (as they responded rightly), and they were gifted with resources and talents by God.

The response among the Israelites was so overwhelming that in verses 36:5-7 Moses had to ask them to stop as the project had more than it needed.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

“All generous giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or the slightest hint of change.” ([James 1:17](#))

DISCUSS

Why do you think the text was carefully qualified with the phrases “willing spirits”, “willing hearts”, “freewill offering”?

REFLECT

Each of the artisans received their gifts from the Lord God.

SHARE

When have you observed the people of God responding to a need in such an overwhelming manner that they had to be asked to cease?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you have a gift or a resource which He desires to use somewhere in His ministry.

ACT

Today I will adjust my schedule, and perhaps my attitude, so that the gifts He has given me may be used in His service.

Be Specific _____

Saturday (Exodus 36:8 - 40)

The Building of the Tabernacle

36:8 All the skilled among those who were doing the work made the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet; they were made with cherubim that were the work of an artistic designer. 36:9 The length of one curtain was forty-two feet, and the width of one curtain was six feet – the same size for each of the curtains. 36:10 He joined five of the curtains to one another, and the other five curtains he joined to one another. 36:11 He made loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in the first set; he did the same along the edge of the end curtain in the second set. 36:12 He made fifty loops on the first curtain, and he made fifty loops on the end curtain that was in the second set, with the loops opposite one another. 36:13 He made fifty gold clasps and joined the curtains together to one another with the clasps, so that the tabernacle was a unit.

36:14 He made curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains.

36:15 The length of one curtain was forty-five feet, and the width of one curtain was six feet – one size for all eleven curtains. 36:16 He joined five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. 36:17 He made fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in the first set and fifty loops along the edge of the curtain that joined the second set. 36:18 He made fifty bronze clasps to join the tent together so that it might be a unit. 36:19 He made a covering for the tent out of ram skins dyed red and over that a covering of fine leather.

36:20 He made the frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood as uprights. 36:21 The length of each frame was fifteen feet, the width of each frame was two and a quarter feet, 36:22 with two projections per frame parallel one to another. He made all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. 36:23 So he made frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side. 36:24 He made forty silver bases under the twenty frames – two bases under the first frame for its two projections, and likewise two bases under the next frame for its two projections, 36:25 and for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made twenty frames 36:26 and their forty

silver bases, two bases under the first frame and two bases under the next frame. 36:27 And for the back of the tabernacle on the west he made six frames. 36:28 He made two frames for the corners of the tabernacle on the back. 36:29 At the two corners they were doubled at the lower end and finished together at the top in one ring. So he did for both. 36:30 So there were eight frames and their silver bases, sixteen bases, two bases under each frame.

36:31 He made bars of acacia wood, five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle 36:32 and five bars for the frames on the second side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the tabernacle for the back side on the west. 36:33 He made the middle bar to reach from end to end in the center of the frames. 36:34 He overlaid the frames with gold and made their rings of gold to provide places for the bars, and he overlaid the bars with gold.

36:35 He made the special curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen; he made it with cherubim, the work of an artistic designer. 36:36 He made for it four posts of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, with gold hooks, and he cast for them four silver bases.

36:37 He made a hanging for the entrance of the tent of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer, 36:38 and its five posts and their hooks. He overlaid their tops and their bands with gold, but their five bases were bronze.

The Making of the Ark

37:1 Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; its length was three feet nine inches, its width two feet three inches, and its height two feet three inches. 37:2 He overlaid it with pure gold, inside and out, and he made a surrounding border of gold for it. 37:3 He cast four gold rings for it that he put on its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other side. 37:4 He made poles of acacia wood, overlaid them with gold, 37:5 and put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark in order to carry the ark.

37:6 He made an atonement lid of pure gold; its length was three feet nine inches, and its width was two feet three inches. 37:7 He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered metal on the two ends of the atonement lid, 37:8 one cherub on one end and one cherub on the other end. He made the cherubim from the atonement lid on its two ends. 37:9 The cherubim were spreading their wings upward, overshadowing the atonement lid with their wings. The cherubim faced each other, looking toward the atonement lid.

The Making of the Table

37:10 He made the table of acacia wood; its length was three feet, its width one foot six inches, and its height two feet three inches. 37:11 He overlaid it with pure gold, and he made a surrounding border of gold for it. 37:12 He made a surrounding frame for it about three inches wide, and he made a surrounding border of gold for its frame. 37:13 He cast four gold rings for it and attached the rings at the four corners where its four legs were. 37:14 The rings were close to the frame to provide places for the poles to carry the table. 37:15 He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, to carry the table. 37:16 He made the vessels which were on the table out of pure gold, its plates, its ladles, its pitchers, and its bowls, to be used in pouring out offerings.

The Making of the Lampstand

37:17 He made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand of hammered metal; its base and its shaft, its cups, its buds, and its blossoms were from the same piece. 37:18 Six branches were extending from its sides, three branches of the lampstand from one side of it, and three branches of the lampstand from the other side of it. 37:19 Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on the first branch, and three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on the next branch, and the same for the six branches that were extending from the lampstand. 37:20 On the lampstand there were four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms, 37:21 with a bud under the first two branches from it, and a bud under the next two branches from it, and a bud under the third two branches from it; according to the six branches that extended from it. 37:22 Their buds and their branches were of one piece; all of it was one hammered piece of pure gold. 37:23 He made its seven lamps, its trimmers, and its trays of pure gold. 37:24 He made the lampstand and all its accessories with seventy-five pounds of pure gold.

The Making of the Altar of Incense

37:25 He made the incense altar of acacia wood. Its length was a foot and a half and its width a foot and a half – a square – and its height was three feet. Its horns were of one piece with it. 37:26 He overlaid it with pure gold – its top, its four walls, and its horns – and he made a surrounding border of gold for it. 37:27 He also made two gold rings for it under its border, on its two sides, on opposite sides, as places for poles to carry it with. 37:28 He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.

37:29 He made the sacred anointing oil and the pure fragrant incense, the work of a perfumer.

The Making of the Altar for the Burnt Offering

38:1 He made the altar for the burnt offering of acacia wood seven feet six inches long and seven feet six inches wide – it was square – and its height was four feet six inches. 38:2 He made its horns on its four corners; its horns were part of it, and he overlaid it with bronze. 38:3 He made all the utensils of the altar – the pots, the shovels, the tossing bowls, the meat hooks, and the fire pans – he made all its utensils of bronze. 38:4 He made a grating for the altar, a network of bronze under its ledge, halfway up from the bottom. 38:5 He cast four rings for the four corners of the bronze grating, to provide places for the poles. 38:6 He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. 38:7 He put the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to carry it. He made the altar hollow, out of boards.

38:8 He made the large basin of bronze and its pedestal of bronze from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

The Construction of the Courtyard

38:9 He made the courtyard. For the south side the hangings of the courtyard were of fine twisted linen, one hundred fifty feet long, 38:10 with their twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. 38:11 For the north side the hangings were one hundred fifty feet, with their twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. 38:12 For the west side there were hangings seventy-five feet long, with their ten posts and their ten bases, with the hooks of the posts and their bands of silver. 38:13 For the east side, toward the sunrise, it was seventy-five feet wide, 38:14 with hangings on one side of the gate that were twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases, 38:15 and for the second side of the gate of the courtyard, just like the other, the hangings were twenty-two and a half feet long, with their three posts and their three bases. 38:16 All the hangings around the courtyard were of fine twisted linen. 38:17 The bases for the posts were bronze. The hooks of the posts and their bands were silver, their tops were overlaid with silver, and all the posts of the courtyard had silver bands. 38:18 The curtain for the gate of the courtyard was of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer. It was thirty feet long, and like the hangings in the courtyard, it was seven and a half feet high, 38:19 with four posts and their four bronze bases. Their hooks and their bands were silver, and their tops were overlaid with silver. 38:20 All the tent pegs of the tabernacle and of the courtyard all around were bronze.

The Materials of the Construction

38:21 This is the inventory of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, which was counted by the order of Moses, being the work of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest. 38:22 Now Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made everything

that the Lord had commanded Moses; 38:23 and with him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an artisan, a designer, and an embroiderer in blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine linen.

38:24 All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary (namely, the gold of the wave offering) was twenty-nine talents and 730 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel.

38:25 The silver of those who were numbered of the community was one hundred talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel, 38:26 one beka per person, that is, a half shekel, according to the sanctuary shekel, for everyone who crossed over to those numbered, from twenty years old or older, 603,550 in all. 38:27 The one hundred talents of silver were used for casting the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the special curtain – one hundred bases for one hundred talents, one talent per base. 38:28 From the remaining 1,775 shekels he made hooks for the posts, overlaid their tops, and made bands for them.

38:29 The bronze of the wave offering was seventy talents and 2,400 shekels. 38:30 With it he made the bases for the door of the tent of meeting, the bronze altar, the bronze grating for it, and all the utensils of the altar, 38:31 the bases for the courtyard all around, the bases for the gate of the courtyard, all the tent pegs of the tabernacle, and all the tent pegs of the courtyard all around.

The Making of the Priestly Garments

39:1 From the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn they made woven garments for serving in the sanctuary; they made holy garments that were for Aaron, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Ephod

39:2 He made the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twisted linen. 39:3 They hammered the gold into thin sheets and cut it into narrow strips to weave them into the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and into the fine linen, the work of an artistic designer. 39:4 They made shoulder pieces for it, attached to two of its corners, so it could be joined together. 39:5 The artistically woven waistband of the ephod that was on it was like it, of one piece with it, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

39:6 They set the onyx stones in gold filigree settings, engraved as with the engravings of a seal with the names of the sons of Israel. 39:7 He put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as stones of memorial for the Israelites, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Breastpiece of Decision

39:8 He made the breastpiece, the work of an artistic designer, in the same fashion as the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twisted linen. 39:9 It was square – they made the breastpiece doubled, nine inches long and nine inches wide when doubled. 39:10 They set on it four rows of stones: a row with a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl – the first row; 39:11 and the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald; 39:12 and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 39:13 and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in gold filigree settings. 39:14 The stones were for the names of the sons of Israel, twelve, corresponding to the number of their names. Each name corresponding to one of the twelve tribes was like the engravings of a seal.

39:15 They made for the breastpiece braided chains like cords of pure gold, 39:16 and they made two gold filigree settings and two gold rings, and they attached the two rings to the upper two ends of the breastpiece. 39:17 They attached the two gold chains to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece; 39:18 the other two ends of the two chains they attached to the two settings, and they attached them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it. 39:19 They made two rings of gold and put them on the other two ends of the breastpiece on its edge, which is on the inner side of the ephod. 39:20 They made two more gold rings and attached them to the bottom of the two shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the juncture above the waistband of the ephod. 39:21 They tied the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod by blue cord, so that it was above the waistband of the ephod, so that the breastpiece would not be loose from the ephod, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Other Garments

39:22 He made the robe of the ephod completely blue, the work of a weaver. 39:23 There was an opening in the center of the robe, like the opening of a collar, with an edge all around the opening so that it could not be torn. 39:24 They made pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and twisted linen around the hem of the robe. 39:25 They made bells of pure gold and attached the bells between the pomegranates around the hem of the robe between the pomegranates. 39:26 There was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe, to be used in ministering, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

39:27 They made tunics of fine linen – the work of a weaver, for Aaron and for his sons – 39:28 and the turban of fine linen, the headbands of fine linen, and the undergarments of fine twisted linen. 39:29 The sash was of fine twisted linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, the work of an embroiderer, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. 39:30 They made a plate, the holy diadem, of pure gold and wrote on it an inscription, as on the engravings of a seal, “Holiness to the Lord.”

39:31 They attached to it a blue cord, to attach it to the turban above, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Moses Inspects the Sanctuary

39:32 So all the work of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was completed, and the Israelites did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses – they did it exactly so. 39:33 They brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings, clasps, frames, bars, posts, and bases; 39:34 and the coverings of ram skins dyed red, the covering of fine leather, and the protecting curtain; 39:35 the ark of the testimony and its poles, and the atonement lid; 39:36 the table, all its utensils, and the Bread of the Presence; 39:37 the pure lampstand, its lamps, with the lamps set in order, and all its accessories, and oil for the light; 39:38 and the gold altar, and the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense; and the curtain for the entrance to the tent; 39:39 the bronze altar and its bronze grating, its poles, and all its utensils; the large basin with its pedestal; 39:40 the hangings of the courtyard, its posts and its bases, and the curtain for the gateway of the courtyard, its ropes and its tent pegs, and all the furnishings for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; 39:41 the woven garments for serving in the sanctuary, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons to minister as priests.

39:42 The Israelites did all the work according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses. 39:43 Moses inspected all the work – and they had done it just as the Lord had commanded – they had done it exactly – and Moses blessed them.

Setting Up the Sanctuary

40:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 40:2 “On the first day of the first month you are to set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. 40:3 You are to place the ark of the testimony in it and shield the ark with the special curtain. 40:4 You are to bring in the table and set out the things that belong on it; then you are to bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. 40:5 You are to put the gold altar for incense in front of the ark of the testimony and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle. 40:6 You are to put the altar for the burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. 40:7 You are to put the large basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it. 40:8 You are to set up the courtyard around it and put the curtain at the gate of the courtyard. 40:9 And take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and sanctify it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy. 40:10 Then you are to anoint the altar for the burnt offering with all its utensils; you are to sanctify the altar, and it will be the most holy altar. 40:11 You must also anoint the large basin and its pedestal, and you are to sanctify it.

40:12 "You are to bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and wash them with water. 40:13 Then you are to clothe Aaron with the holy garments and anoint him and sanctify him so that he may minister as my priest. 40:14 You are to bring his sons and clothe them with tunics 40:15 and anoint them just as you anointed their father, so that they may minister as my priests; their anointing will make them a priesthood that will continue throughout their generations." 40:16 This is what Moses did, according to all the Lord had commanded him – so he did.

40:17 So the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month, in the second year. 40:18 When Moses set up the tabernacle and put its bases in place, he set up its frames, attached its bars, and set up its posts. 40:19 Then he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the Lord had commanded Moses. 40:20 He took the testimony and put it in the ark, attached the poles to the ark, and then put the atonement lid on the ark. 40:21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung the protecting curtain, and shielded the ark of the testimony from view, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:22 And he put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the curtain. 40:23 And he set the bread in order on it before the Lord, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:24 And he put the lampstand in the tent of meeting opposite the table, on the south side of the tabernacle. 40:25 Then he set up the lamps before the Lord, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:26 And he put the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the curtain, 40:27 and he burned fragrant incense on it, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:28 Then he put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle. 40:29 He also put the altar for the burnt offering by the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the meal offering, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:30 Then he put the large basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing. 40:31 Moses and Aaron and his sons would wash their hands and their feet from it. 40:32 Whenever they entered the tent of meeting, and whenever they approached the altar, they would wash, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

40:33 And he set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and the altar, and put the curtain at the gate of the courtyard. So Moses finished the work.

40:34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 40:35 Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 40:36 But when the cloud was lifted up from the tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on all their journeys; 40:37 but if the cloud was not lifted up, then they would not journey further until the day it was lifted up. 40:38 For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, but fire would be on it at night, in plain view of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

PRAYER

Lord, when You call someone You equip them for excellence. May I give myself fully to Your service so that You might equip me to serve You in some small way with excellence. You have tolerated so much rebellion and been un-endingly patient with us, may my life be a sacrifice to You as the ancient Israelites sacrificed to build Your desert tabernacle. May the words of my mouth and the works of my hands be of such excellence that they proclaim your royal Lordship in and over me. You set your people free and created a means for them to commune with You, and You did the same for me. Please find me humbled and grateful.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God called and equipped Bezalel to be His “artistic designer” with oversight for the highly-detailed construction of the Tabernacle.

The NET search tool finds the name Bezalel in 22 locations in the Bible text:

Exo: 31:2 35:30 35:31 35:34 36:1 36:2 36:8 36:10 37:1 37:6 37:10 37:15 37:25 38:1 38:22 38:23 38:30 39:2 39:8, 1Ch: 2:20, 2Ch: 1:5, Ezr: 10:30

The first reference to Bezalel is [Exodus 31:1](#) *“The Lord spoke to Moses: 31:2 “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 31:3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God in skill, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship,”*

The Exodus references to Bezalel are generally descriptive of his work on the tabernacle. The Chronicles (1 and 2) and Ezra references are of his lineage or reference his handiwork to identify something that he had made.

The NET translators estimate that approximately 2,000 pounds of gold were donated and used in the construction of the tabernacle. Silver received at the census of those age 20 and older was approximately 3.75 tons.

The detailed, ornate, and valuable nature of design and content of the tabernacle required the finest artisans and materials and the highest attention to excellence as befitted The King of Kings.

The text repeatedly noted that each element of their work was as the Lord God had described to Moses; He had left no detail unattended.

And so they obediently followed His instructions so that when they brought the tabernacle to him “... *Moses inspected all the work – and they had done it just as the Lord had commanded – they had done it exactly – and Moses blessed them.*”

The Lord God instructed Moses that the first day of the first month was when he was to assemble the items in the tabernacle and prepare Aaron and his sons to serve therein as priests.

Numbers provides the context for [Exodus 40:2](#); verse 1:1 “Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the wilderness of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites departed from the land of Egypt.” Therefore this [Exodus 40:2](#) event occurred on the first day of the first month of the second year since their exodus from Egypt.

Once Moses had completed the task of preparation “*Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.*”

Even “*Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.*”

God then used the tabernacle as the ancient version of a GPS and a travel schedule “*But when the cloud was lifted up from the tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on all their journeys; but if the cloud was not lifted up, then they would not journey further until the day it was lifted up. For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, but fire would be on it at night, in plain view of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.*”

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The detailed and quality work had to have been extremely time-consuming and exhausting. Much of the gold and silver and other fine resources of wealth that was taken from Egypt in the Exodus was sacrificed to the Lord God for the tabernacle. The detail and the talent to create that detail is amazing to this day – one wonders what these people had endured in Egypt, creating fine clothing and furnishings for Pharaoh – now God redeems that experience to His glory. God chose New Year’s Day to open His tabernacle.

DISCUSS

While Michaelangelo poured himself into painting the Sistine Chapel what must it have been like for Bezalel to work in a much more primitive environment and directly for the Lord God? How

impressive must it have been for the artisans to see God working through their hands as He guided the construction of His tabernacle? Imagine Moses inspecting the tabernacle in all of its detail, seeing now the completion of what God had described to him during his time on the mountain – how might he have verbalized as he looked it all over? What must it have meant to the confidence and sense of national value for the Israelites to have the Lord God choose to not merely visit them but to dwell among them and to lead them toward the promised land?

REFLECT

While the text refers to Bezalel as the “artistic designer” clearly he was God’s human-hands in the creation of what He had described to Moses. The detailed, ornate, and valuable nature of design and content of the tabernacle was not intended to be a model for elite wealthy living nor a goal for those desirous of improving their standard of living, it was to enhance a sense of awe and honor when the people came into the place of sacrifice and worship. From God’s voice to the ears of Moses, and perhaps to papyrus, came 40 days of details and now it has been manufactured in order that a suitable place of meeting between God and His covenant people may exist. God had led, and protected, the Israelites out of Egypt and to the mountain using His presence in a cloud – He now does that again – this time with His presence centered on the tabernacle.

SHARE

When have you been blessed to create something for God’s service? How were you energized and inspired to know that the Lord God intended to use your handiwork in His ministry? When have you participated in a project that required a high degree of excellence? How did you feel as you watched it come together? When have you looked upon the fine handiwork of a true artisan and been amazed? When have you experienced a sense of God’s special presence in your life?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you have, or where you are, or will you will apply your gifts to God’s ministry, to show you an opportunity to do something of excellence which will bring glory to Him and blessing to others, to show you where He has used your gifts and talents, and where He would like to use them again, and to reveal to you a way that He has been protecting you and is offering to lead you.

ACT

Today I will prayerfully agree that whatever God asks me to do that I will humbly give my all to that task and be His tool of excellence to accomplish whatever it is that He decides. I will

prayerfully, perhaps with the confirmation of a mature fellow believer, discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit and give myself fully to the task of excellence He sets before me. I will celebrate those places, perhaps small and largely unnoticed by humankind (but not missed by God), where He has used my gifts and talents for His purposes. I agree to apply myself to excellence in anything He places before me – if it is prayer for others because my circumstances limit my physical activity then I will pray earnestly, if it is the use of my voice to teach, my hands to write, or my body to create and work – I will do it all with excellence because ultimately I am doing it for Him. I will take some time to praise and thank God for His protection. I also commit to prayerfully seek clarity as to His leading; soliciting the prayers in-agreement of one or more mature believers (preferably Biblically-qualified elders) for affirmation/confirmation that I have heard rightly, then act in obedience to His leading.

Be Specific _____

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Note 1: These Studies often rely upon the guidance of the NET Translators from their associated notes. Careful attention has been given to cite that source where it has been quoted directly or closely paraphrased. Feedback is encouraged where credit has not been sufficiently assigned.

Note 2: When NET text is quoted in commentary and discussion all pronouns referring to God are capitalized, though they are lower-case in the original NET text.

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