

Exodus 35 – 40  
Instructions Carried Out  
December 9, 2018

Next Week. Leviticus 1-5

Proverbs 28:6. Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse.

Wesley's Questions for Class Meetings. #20 “Do I grumble and complain constantly?”

What does the Bible Mean?

We have covered a great deal of Exodus which has recorded in detail all of God’s instructions for the building of the tabernacle and its furnishings and decorations including all of the objects used to prepare for and conduct worship.

We have also read that God chose Bezalel and Oholiab as his assistants to direct all the craftsmanship required in the effort. That is repeated here.

Earlier in the book we have also seen the observance of the Sabbath directed in the Ten Commandments as well as in a special directive to the Israelites in Chapter 31. The penalties for desecrating the Sabbath were death and for doing work on the Sabbath was being cut off from the people. Chapter 35 begins with another such emphasis of the Sabbath. Even lighting a fire in one’s dwelling was a violation.

Chapter 35 to 40 report in detail how the Israelites came together to fulfill the vision of God’s instructions for building the tabernacle with all its parts, furnishings and objects of worship and decoration as well as priestly garments. Today we’ll just deal with selected passages that I have chosen as lessons that guide and set standards for us today.

Read. Exodus 35

Exodus 35: 4 – 10.

Moses spoke to the entire Israelite community.

*“From what you have, take an offering for the Lord. Everyone who is willing to bring to the Lord an offering ... All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the Lord has commanded.”* The laws of donating to the Tabernacle are different than those of donating to the poor. God has no need for gifts, so the offerings can be voluntary. But, the poor need donations. See Deuteronomy 25:12. *“When you have finished setting aside a tenth ... [for the] tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, that alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied.”* The great gifts to the tabernacle seems to reflect a deep desire to connect to God.

Exodus 35: 29.

“All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the Lord freewill offerings for all the work the Lord, through Moses, had commanded them to do.”

Read. Exodus 36

Exodus 36: 2-3, 4a, 5.

“Then Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work. They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary. And the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning. So, all the skilled craftsmen ... said, ‘The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done.’ “

Questions

1. How would we at Wesley react if the people gave *too much* this year?
2. What will our reaction be to the possible church building project?

Read. Exodus 37

Read. Exodus 38

Exodus 38: 21a, 24-25, 29.

“These are the amounts of materials used for the tabernacle ... The total amount of gold ... was 29 talents and 730 shekels (over one metric ton). The silver ... was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels (3 ¾ metric tons) ... The bronze was 70 talents and 2,400 shekels (2.4 metric tons) ...” Note that here and elsewhere the Bible credits good work and names the workers. In Exodus Bezalel and Oholiab are named several times. Also, the midwives who resisted Pharaoh, Shifra and Puah are named.

Questions

1. Who was the creative genius behind this project? (Hint. The Bible never speaks of persons being creative – only God).
2. Does this tell us anything about the purpose of physical representations (buildings, furnishings, art, etc.) in helping our faith?
3. How can we insure that physical *aids* do not become religious *objects*?
4. When we credit good work or deeds, are we specific?

Read. Exodus 39

Read. Exodus 39:32-42. This is a brief listing and summary of all the people had accomplished with their offerings and work. Note that Moses did not bless the workers until they had completed all the work and Moses had inspected it. A book written by a Jew on Exodus says about this, “A mitzvah (a commandment/good deed) is attributed to the one who *completes* it.”

Read. Exodus 40

Chapter 40 is basically repetitive except it tells the details of assembling the tabernacle and furnishings and objects of worship and decorations and priestly garments.

God now acted. His action endorsed and blessed all the offerings and all the work by the Israelites. He filled the tabernacle with his glory. For the rest of the wilderness journey, when the cloud lifted the people set out. The cloud was over the tabernacle by day and the pillar of fire was over it by night.

Questions

1. During your life travels, what most reassures you about God’s presence in your life?
2. When do you know it’s time to move on *with* the Lord?
3. Does the Lord, in church setting, relocate himself “on the road again” to set up shop as he directs?