



Exodus - Chapter Thirty Six

- II. Exodus 19:1-40:38 - The Covenant at Sinai (continues)
- II.g Exodus 35:1-40:38 - The Tabernacle: Preparation for the Presence (continues)
- II.g.i Exodus 35:1-36:7 - Moses Prepares the People (continues/concludes)
- II.g.i.4 Exodus 35:30-36:7 - Bezalel and Oholiab (continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Thirty Six

Moses then called forward those with the skills to make the tabernacle and all its components. They brought their offerings and, in fact, gave more than was needed so that Moses had to issue the command that the people were to stop giving and were not to make other items as offerings for the project. A detailed description then follows as to how the tabernacle was constructed.

¹ Bezalel and Oholiab and everyone skilful to whom the Lord has given skill and understanding to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded.

Exodus 36:1

Everyone skilful to whom the Lord has given skill shall work in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded. It was up to the workers under Bezalel and Oholiab to follow what the Lord instructed them to do.

² Moses then called Bezalel and Oholiab and everyone skilful to whom the Lord had given skill, everyone whose heart was stirred to come to do the work; ³ and they received from Moses all the freewill-offerings that the Israelites had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary.

They still kept bringing him freewill-offerings every morning, ⁴ so that all the artisans who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task being performed, ⁵ and said to Moses, ‘The people are bringing much more than enough for doing the work that the Lord has commanded us to do.’ ⁶ So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp: ‘No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary.’ So the people were restrained from bringing; ⁷ for what they had already brought was more than enough to do all the work.

Exodus 36:2-7

Everyone whose heart was stirred is literally whose heart was lifted up, whose affections were set on the work, being cordially engaged in the service of God.

To come to do the work. The planning and preparation were over. It was time to actually do the work of building the tabernacle and its furnishings.

They still kept bringing him freewill-offerings every morning. Again, even willing hearts need to be told now is the time to give. Moses let them know, and the people started bringing their offering to the Lord.

The people are bringing much more than enough for doing the work. This shows how blessed giving can be when free from human manipulation and tricks. Willing hearts will always give enough as God blesses the work. Indeed, the people were restrained from bringing. This also shows that Moses and the planners of the work knew just how much was enough. The job was organised and planned to the extent that they understood what they needed, and when they had more than enough. When God’s people are asked to give to something, they should expect that it be well organised, planned, and managed.

There are good comparisons of such generosity to be made with other accounts such as the anointing of Jesus at Bethany (Matthew 26:6-13), and the giving of the church in Philippi (2 Corinthians 8:1-7 and Philippians 4:14-19).

So the people were restrained from bringing; for what they had already brought was more than enough to do all the work. Moses showed great integrity by not gathering more than the project needed. God told him to take an offering for the building of a tabernacle, and when the tabernacle was provided for the offering was over. The purpose was not to amass endless resources, but to properly put those resources into action.

II.g.ii Exodus 36:8-39:43 - Tabernacle Construction

This section narrates the construction of the tent of meeting (vv.8-38) and its furniture (37:1-29), the pieces outside the tent (38:1-8) and the court (38:9-20), the priestly garments for Aaron and his sons (39:1-31), and also a record of the amount of precious metals used in construction of the tabernacle (38:21-31). The description closes with a summary statement that emphasises not only that all the elements related to the tabernacle were finished but that the people had done so according to the word of the Lord through Moses (39:32-43).

II.g.ii.1 Exodus 36:8-38 - Construction of the Tabernacle

The rest of this chapter describes the construction of the pieces of the tent of the tabernacle according to the instructions given to Moses in 26:1-37: the curtains (vv.8-9) that are then put together so that the tabernacle was a single whole (vv.10-13), the other curtains of skins to cover over the tabernacle (vv.14-19), the frames for each side (vv.20-30) and their bars (vv.31-34), and the pieces for the veil and the screen for the entrance (vv.35-38).

⁸ All those with skill among the workers made the tabernacle with ten curtains; they were made of fine twisted linen, and blue, purple, and crimson yarns, with cherubim skilfully worked into them. ⁹ The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; all the curtains were of the same size. ¹⁰ He joined five curtains to one another, and the other five curtains he joined to one another. ¹¹ He made loops of blue on the edge of the outermost curtain of the first set; likewise he made them on the edge of the outermost curtain of the second set; ¹² he made fifty loops on the one curtain, and he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was in the second set; the loops were opposite one another. ¹³ And he made fifty clasps of gold, and joined the curtains one to the other with clasps; so the tabernacle was one whole.

Exodus 36:8-13

These verses describe the curtains of an artistic design of cherubim according to the command and description in 26:1-6. Throughout the construction of the tabernacle, the narrative refers to the person doing the task simply as he; this is probably Bezalel (37:1), the one whom the Lord called to oversee the work.

¹⁴ He also made curtains of goats' hair for a 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 of the same size. ¹⁶ He joined five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. ¹⁷ He made fifty loops on the edge of the outermost curtain of one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the other connecting curtain. ¹⁸ He made fifty clasps of bronze to join the tent together so that it might be one whole.

Exodus 36:14-18

These verses describe the curtains of goat's hair according to the command and description in 26:7-13.

¹⁹ And he made for the tent a covering of tanned rams' skins and an outer covering of fine leather.

Exodus 36:19

This verse describes the curtains of ram's skin dyed red and probably badger skins according to the command and description in 26:14.

²⁰ Then he made the upright frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood. ²¹ Ten cubits was the length of a frame, and a cubit and a half the width of each frame. ²² Each frame had two pegs for fitting together; he did this for all the frames of the tabernacle. ²³ The frames for the tabernacle he made in this way: twenty frames for the south side; ²⁴ and he made forty bases of silver under the twenty frames, two bases under the first frame for its two pegs, and two bases under the next frame for its two pegs. ²⁵ For the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, he made twenty frames ²⁶ and their forty bases of silver, two bases under the first frame and two bases under the next frame. ²⁷ For the rear of the tabernacle westward he made six frames. ²⁸ He made two frames for corners of the tabernacle in the rear. ²⁹ They were separate beneath, but joined at the top, at the first ring; he made two of them in this way, for the two corners. ³⁰ There were eight frames with their bases of silver: sixteen bases, under every frame two bases. ³¹ He made bars of acacia wood, five for the frames of one side of the tabernacle, ³² and five bars for the frames of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the tabernacle at the rear westward. ³³ He made the middle bar to pass through from end to end half-way up the frames. ³⁴ And he overlaid the frames with gold, and made rings of gold for them to hold the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

Exodus 36:20-34

These verses describe the boards and connecting bars for the frame and walls of the tabernacle according to the command and description in 26:15-30.

³⁵ He made the curtain of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, with cherubim skilfully worked into it. ³⁶ For it he made four pillars of acacia, and overlaid them with gold; their hooks were of gold, and he cast for them four bases of silver. ³⁷ He also made a screen for the entrance to the tent, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine twisted linen, embroidered with needlework; ³⁸ and its five pillars with their hooks. He overlaid their capitals and their bases with gold, but their five bases were of bronze.

Exodus 36:35-38

These verses describe the veil with its four pillars, and the screen with its five pillars according to the command and description in 26:31-33, and 26:36-37.