

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

EXODUS 28-31

It seems like a lifetime ago now, but our family had an extremely unpleasant experience involving a tent. *I remember it well...* Nick had invited a couple of 11 year-old buddies over to sleep out in the backyard. We borrowed a tent and thought we knew how to set up.

First Nick tried, but to no avail... Next his older brother, Zach, tried, but he got aggravated and mad at Nick... Next Kathy tried her hand at tent-making, but she got irritated with the set-up, and upset with Zach...

Finally, Dad, your's truly, tried to solve the riddle of this mound of canvas and poles - only to discover that I was as inept as everyone else at setting up tents.

Sad to say, but the whole family ended up out in the backyard embroiled in a huge argument over that tent. *The tent that day bewildered the whole Adams family.*

But the tent God told Moses to construct had the opposite effect. For the family of Israel, God's tent *brought peace, and unleashed praise, and confirmed faith, and enhanced worship.* And one particular family was told to set up God's tent. *Thankfully, it wasn't the Adams!* The family of Aaron, Moses' brother, was chosen by God to offer sacrifices and oversee worship.

Aaron and Sons became the High Priest and took charge of the Tabernacle. We'll learn later in Leviticus 16 that this priest was the only person God would allow to enter His Holy of Holies, and then only once a year.

Chapter 28 instructs Moses, "Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar." Aaron's family were Tabernacle caretakers.

And God wanted them *to dress for success!* "And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest."

The priesthood was the bridge between God and the people. They represented God to the people. And their clothes, their accessories, were to reveal His glory.

Notice verse 3, the first spiritual gift in Scripture is *the gift of needlework.* Your list of spiritual gifts shouldn't just include pastor, evangelist, tongues, healings... add *seamstress.* God filled artists with "*the spirit of wisdom*" to give these garments some

bling. He wanted His priests decked out in glorious threads.

Read through the Psalms, and you'll see one of the psalmists' favorite expressions is "the beauty of holiness." God surrounds Himself with beauty. His environs are never drab, dull hospital white. Heaven and the throne of God are a kaleidoscope of vivid color.

That today's Orthodox Jews dress in black and white and colorless garments show how much they've distorted the concept of God's holiness. God likes beauty. He's surrounded by rich, vibrant, dazzling color.

Verse 4, "And these are the garments which they shall make (Chapter 28 will list **eight priestly garments**): a **breastplate** (made of 12 stones, will rest over the priest's heart), an **ephod** (was a smock worn over the top of the priestly robes - like an apron), there was a **robe**, a **skillfully woven tunic** (or coat), a **turban** (or headdress), and a **sash** (a belt tying at the waist)."

Two other items are added later in the chapter. In verse 36 a **gold plate** is attached to the turban. And in verse 42 **linen trousers** are made for the priest.

"So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest. They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine linen, and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, **artistically worked**. It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and so it shall be joined together." The front and back pieces of the ephod or priestly vest were joined at the shoulders.

"And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship, made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: six of their names on one stone, and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold. And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel."

"So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a **memorial**." The High Priest was to constantly carry the tribes of Israel on his shoulders. Our shoulders speak of work. "Put your shoulder to it," is a way to say "give it extra effort - work at it." The priest needed to be reminded he worked for the people. His job was not just to intercede for himself, but for all twelve tribes of God's people, Israel.

Verse 13, “You shall also make settings of gold, and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings.” *Two Chainz* isn’t just the name of an Atlanta rapper. Two gold chains were attached to this ephod, and from those chains hung the very important breastplate.

“You shall make the breastplate of judgment. Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, you shall make it.” The breastplate was made of the same design and material as the ephod. “It shall be doubled into a square: a span shall be its length, and a span shall be its width.” The breastplate was folded into a pouch that hung over his chest - a span squared. A span was a measurement of 9 inches, so it was 9” by 9” pouch.

And on the front of the breastplate were arranged 12 gemstones. Verse 17, **And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row; the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes.**” And engraved on each of the stones was the name of the tribe it represented.

The High Priest wore the names of God’s people on his shoulders as a reminder that he worked for them, and over his heart to emphasize his love for them.

There’s a lot we could get into with the arrangement of these stones. Remember the names on the priest’s shoulders were the tribes of Israel according to birth. This was probably the case with the breastplate...

If so, the **sardius** stone stood for *Rueben*, Israel’s firstborn. Reuben means “*Behold my son*”, which speaks of Jesus’ first coming. The last stone, **jasper**, would’ve represented *Benjamin*, whose name “*Son of my right hand*” foreshadowed Jesus’ enthronement at the right hand of God, at His Second Coming.

What’s interesting is that all twelve stones appear in Revelation 21 as the foundation of the New Jerusalem. But in Revelation, the first stone mentioned is the last stone on the breastplate, *the jasper*. And the reason could be that John is looking in reverse. He’s just seen the second coming, and thus, he mentions it first.

Whatever subtleties you can dig up in these stones don’t neglect the obvious... **God sees His children as precious jewels!** He loves us and values us greatly!

I'll let you read verses 22-28 on your own. They describe how the breastplate hung from the ephod. God wanted to be certain it was securely attached...

Verse 30, "And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually." Remember, the priest's breastplate formed a pouch on his chest in which he carried the "*Urim and Thummim*" - names meaning "lights and perfections."

What they actually were we don't know. Some folks believe they were two stones: one stood for yes, the other for no. When the nation needed special guidance the High Priest would reach into His breastplate and pull out a stone giving the people their answer.

The Temple Institute in Jerusalem suggests the name of God was written on a parchment and placed in the priestly pouch. So when the nation needed guidance God's name would shine through the breastplate and illuminate letters written on the stones, actually spelling out a message to the people...

Here's a thought for us. Today, God has already spelled out all we need to know in *the Bible!* God's Word and Spirit are now sufficient. His Spirit guides us by His Word. Thus God speaks to us by *use'n and thumbing* - **using** the Bible, and **thumbing** its pages.

Verse 31, "You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail (or armor), so that it does not tear. And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, all around its hem (these were decorative), and bells of gold between them all around (these were functional): a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy place before the LORD and when he comes out, that he may not die." These golden bells let you know the priest was still active. That God had not judged him for his sin and struck him dead. If people outside stopped hearing the jingle bells they took the priest for a *dead ringer!*

Jewish tradition also says the High Priest even had a rope tied to his ankle so if he died in God's presence he could be pulled out without risking harm to his retrievers. It showed how little confidence the Hebrews had of entering God's intense holiness and surviving.

Now compare that to our New Covenant confidence in Christ. Hebrews 4:16 assures us, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and

find grace to help in time of need.” Jesus abolishes sin completely. There’s no reason for those of us in Christ to ever be fearful going to God for help!

Verse 36, “You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. So it shall be on Aaron's forehead...” The Priest wore this plate on his forehead.

Several years ago an entrepreneur named Andrew Fischer created a new form of advertisement. Fischer realized the space above his eyes was going to waste, so he auctioned it on E-bay to the highest bidder. A stop snoring remedy rented Fischer’s forehead for 30 days at a price tag of \$37,375... Well, on the Priest’s forehead was an advertisement for God’s holiness.

It’s interesting, before a thought or image entered his mind it passed across God’s holiness. *And it would be wise for us* to put a figurative plate on our forehead that reminded us of God’s holiness. The spiritual battle we all fight with temptation is won or lost in our minds!

This plate was on Aaron’s forehead, “that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.” It won’t be until Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, dies on the cross that sin is abolished once and for all. OT offerings were tainted with sin - imperfect sacrifices. The gold plate on the priest’s forehead spoke of God’s holiness, and reminded Israel that a holy sacrifice would be required. The OT offerings were *a reminder of iniquity* more so than *a solution for sin*.

Verses 39-40 describe the priest’s “*tunic*” and “*sash*,” or *coat* and *belt*... **And his priestly hat!** Notice his hat was for “*glory and beauty*.” Apparently, God likes hats!

It’s interesting, Jewish men today wear yarmulkes. In Hebrew it’s called a “*kippah*,” or *dome*. It’s a reminder that God is over us. Once in Jerusalem I found two great yarmulkes - a Bulldog kippah and Braves kippah. I can wear one in the fall and the other in the spring!

Then verse 42, “And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs.” These pants reached to the thighs, like *Bermuda shorts*... And they started at the waist, *not the hips*. That means the priests were forbidden to sag. To my knowledge these are the only pants God designed, and they didn’t sag. *Just say’n*...

And these priestly shorts were designed for modesty. Verse 43, “They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they come into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they

come near the altar to minister in the holy place, that they do not incur iniquity and die.” If the priest exposed his nakedness it defiled what was holy to God... And as believers God considers us holy.

That’s why modesty is also **our** concern. *When you dress, in your mind are you covering or exposing? Modesty covers.* It can be done stylishly, but it covers nakedness, not exposes it. Modesty is a ignored virtue in our culture, but it shouldn’t be among God’s people.

God says of these instructions to Aaron, **“It shall be a statute forever to him and his descendants after him.”**

Of course, when we study the priesthood we should recall Hebrews 7. It tells us Jesus is *our great High Priest. And contrast His garments with the OT priest...*

Jesus wore a purple robe for mocking, not a beautiful ephod... He had no precious gemstones on His shoulders, only a cross of wood... Jesus had no breastplate, yet He had a love for Israel and all humanity... Folks around Jesus didn’t hear the jingling of bells, just the pounding of nails... No fine linen turban sat on His head, only a crown of thorns... No head plate read holiness, yet Jesus’ life and death shouted out His holiness... And no linen trousers hid His nakedness, rather He bore our guilt and shame... Our Lord Jesus is a better High Priest in every way!

Chapter 29, **“And this is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests...”** In other words, here’s how you’re to dedicate these priests...

“Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (you shall make them of wheat flour). You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams.” Obviously, the priestly dedication will involve a sacrifice... Then in verses 1-9 they’re to wash with water, and dressed in their garments - *all we just studied: the tunic, robe, ephod, breastplate, sash, turban and gold plate.* Their sons should also get uniformed up. Then they all should be anointed with oil.

And let me make one important point! **These priests were fit for God and able to serve Him only in the robes God provided.** They were never worthy on their own. And the same is true of our spiritual standing. We stand before God and serve Him only in the spiritual robes of righteousness provided for us in Christ Jesus.

In verse 10 the priests are ready for the sacrifice, **“You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull.”** This laying on of hands symbolized a transference. Our laying

on of hands transfers faith, this transferred sin. But the Hebrew word implies more than a light touch. This was emotional. *The priest thrust his hands on the head of the bull, he pressed.* All his sin shifted to the sacrifice.

“Then you shall kill the bull before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting.” Sin demands a sacrifice. This is why Judaism was a bloody religion. Blood splattered everywhere... These verses describe a sin offering. The fat was burned on the altar, while the skin of the animal was burned outside the camp.

And Jesus too was sacrificed outside the camp. In the first century *the place of the skull*, Golgotha or Calvary, was located outside Jerusalem’s north wall.

Verse 15 deals with the first of the two rams. Let me summarize. *Sin is transferred. The lamb is killed. Blood is sprinkled on the altar. Then the ram is burned.* We’re told in verse 18, “It is a burnt offering to the LORD; it is a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.”

It’s interesting, the bull was a sin offering that atoned for man. The ram was a burnt offering satisfying God. Both *humans got pardoned and God was appeased.*

Verse 19, “You shall also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar.” Notice the extent to which the priest was dedicated to the Lord, *from head to toe.* God wants to possess all of us.

And since in the NT all God’s children are priests, meaning you and me; then we should dedicate our ears to God - *to hear His Word.* Our hands to God, *to do His will.* And our feet to God, *to walk in His ways!*

Verse 21, “And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons’ garments with him.” Again, a Hebrew priest was always covered with blood. His job was to butcher the sacrifices. Here, he’s just breaking in a new uniform.

But his was a **double anointing** of blood and oil. And believers need the same... *the blood of Jesus* to pardon us, and *the oil of the Holy Spirit* to empower us.

Verse 22, “Also you shall take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the

right thigh (for it is a ram of consecration), one loaf of bread, one cake made with oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the LORD; and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD.” Here’s the first time in history people *do the wave!* Actually, the priest presents a wave offering to God.

“You shall receive them back from their hands and burn them on the altar as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the LORD. It is an offering made by fire to the LORD. Then you shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration and wave it as a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be your portion. And from the ram of the consecration you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering which is waved, and the thigh of the heave offering which is raised, of that which is for Aaron and of that which is for his sons.” Like a two piece dinner at KFC, you get a breast and thigh... Here was the general rule for most sacrifices, the fat belonged to God, while the meat fed the priests.

Verse 28, “It shall be from the children of Israel for Aaron and his sons by a statute forever. For it is a heave offering...” Ok, you waved a wave offering, so *what did you do with a heave offering?* You’d heave it! The priest would lift it up and down to the Lord.

“It shall be a heave offering from the children of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings (we’ve read about *sin offerings*, *burnt offerings*, and now *peace offerings* - we’ll study all the different offerings and their meaning when we get to Leviticus), that is, their heave offering to the LORD. And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. That son who becomes priest in his place shall put them on for seven days, when he enters the tabernacle of meeting to minister in the holy place.” The succession of the High Priest will occur within Aaron’s family. The role of High Priest will be passed from father to son...

Verse 31, "And you shall take the ram of the consecration and boil its flesh in the holy place. Then Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them; but an outsider shall not eat them, because they are holy. And if any of the flesh of the consecration offerings, or of the bread, remains until the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten, because it is holy.” In ancient culture to eat with someone was an expression of unity with that person. The priest eating his portion of the sacrifice was his agreement to cooperate with God.

Verses 35, "Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, according to all that I have

commanded you. Seven days you shall consecrate them.” This dedication of the priests was repeated seven bloody days in a row.

Verses 36-42 lists the **daily sacrifices** that were to be carried out by the priests. At the start of each morning and evening a lamb (along with flour, oil, and wine) were to be sacrificed to dedicate God’s altar.

In verse 43 God **commits** to operating through this sacrificial system! He is going to honor the *tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrifices...* “I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.”

In Chapter 30 God instructs Moses to build more furniture, namely **the altar of incense**. “You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. A cubit shall be its length and a cubit its width - it shall be square - and two cubits shall be its height.” This table was small, just 1½’ long, 1½’ wide, by 3’ tall.

“Its horns shall be of one piece with it. (These horns were on the tabletop where you could tie down the incense.) And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. Two gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place them on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. And you shall put it before the veil that is before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the Testimony, where I will meet with you.”

Notice, God clearly states this altar was placed before the veil - *in the Holy Place, not in the Holy of Holies*. Yet in Hebrews 9:3-4 the writer says the altar of incense was behind the veil with the Ark. *Well, which is it?* It’s actually both. The altar itself was in front of the veil, but the incense waft through the air into God’s presence, behind the veil. *Which is a lesson for us...*

Ephesians 2:6 tells us in Christ, we’ve been seated in heavenly places. *Well, if that’s true why will I be stuck in traffic tomorrow?* The altar of incense tells us why. Every believer lives their life in two locations. Physically you’re on earth, but spiritually in Christ you can waft over into the Holy of Holies. By praying and living in a constant awareness of God’s presence you can experience heavenly blessings even on earth.

“Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he

shall burn incense on it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations”

There was always a sweet smell... For all the furniture spoke of Jesus...

The [table of showbread](#) reminded us that Jesus is **the bread of life**... The [Menorah](#) that He is **the light of the world**... The [brazen altar](#) that Jesus is **our only sacrifice**... The [Ark](#) that He is **our mercyseat**... And now, the [altar of incense](#) speaks of **the priesthood of Jesus**. He makes intercession to God on our behalf.

Verse 9, “**You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it.**” This altar of incense was not for sacrifice, except for once a year... “**And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD.**” Here’s an interesting lesson, **it’s not just prayer that saves, but the Savior Himself**. Pray until you’re blue in the face, but until you call on Jesus you’re wasting your breath!

Verse 11, “**Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them. This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs). The half-shekel shall be an offering to the LORD."**

Everybody 20 years old and older paid a flat tax of a half-a-shekel. No deductions for the poor or penalties for the rich... Verse 16, “**And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves.**” Sacrifices, oils, and incense - making atonement - cost money. It was paid with this half-shekel offering.

“**Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them - to him and his descendants throughout their generations."**

In the outer court, between the brazen altar and the Holy Place, was [the bronze laver](#), or a washing bowl. Here the priests washed-up before entering the tent.

In the Bible there are two types of cleansing... A spiritual cleansing effects the inner man. It always occurs at the altar, where our debt of sin is paid. But the outer man is cleansed at the laver. Our minds and hands are washed and renewed with the water of God's Word. It's at the laver you prepare for worship.

And it's interesting, that the laver was the only piece of furniture that had no dimensions. In the Tabernacle it was a small bowl. But in Solomon's Temple it's called "the brazen sea." It was a huge reservoir sitting on the back of 12 stone oxen. In Revelation 15 the real laver in heaven is even larger. It's called "a sea of glass."

Verse 22, "Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Also take for yourself quality spices - 500 shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (250 shekels), 250 shekels of sweet-smelling cane, 500 shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil." Verses 26-31 tell us this *holy anointing oil* was used to anoint the Tabernacle, all its furniture, even the priests. And it was made of special ingredients that were skillfully compounded.

The next few verses speak of this special oil, and to us it speaks of what it represents - the Holy Spirit...

Verse 32 tells us the oil "shall not be poured on man's flesh..." Remember, the anointing oil was always symbolic of God's Spirit – and His Spirit never anoints or empowers our human ingenuity or selfish ambition - *our flesh*. The Spirit always seeks to glorify God.

"Nor shall you make any other like it, according to its composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you." The work of God's Spirit can't be imitated. God frowns on those who attempt His work in their own power.

And "Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people." The Spirit isn't a mysterious force accessible to the person clever enough to unlock its power. No, the Holy Spirit is a gift exclusively for God's children.

And the rest of the chapter is a recipe for the incense that is to be burned in the Tabernacle. It too should not be duplicated for personal use. *It's also holy to God!*

Chapter 31, "Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting

jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all who are gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you..." Imagine, the skilled labor required to construct the Tabernacle? Moses needed talented people able to work with metals, embroidery, fabric, leather, wood, oils, incense... *I panic when we're short a few nursery workers...* But **where God guides He provides**, and that would be true with the Tabernacle.

God supernaturally gifted men like Bezalel and Aholiab. He filled them with the Holy Spirit to mold metal, and cut jewels, and carve wood. Again, these are spiritual gifts - *wood-worker* and *diamond-cutter*.

Verses 7-11 is a Tabernacle punch list. Here's what the workers need to accomplish before they can close.

Then in verse 12, "The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.'"

It's interesting, God has given Moses a monumental job. The Tabernacle was a small-scale model of heaven itself. It spoke of the future Messiah Who will save the world. This was all a significant undertaking!

Yet as vital as this job was - and before the first task gets assigned - God reminds Moses he will still need to rest one day in seven. The sign of the Hebrew Covenant was not *the Tabernacle*, but *the Sabbath*.

"You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people." For the Christian, Jesus is now our Sabbath rest. We're no longer under a literal Sabbath, yet resting one day in seven is still a healthy principle... "Take a break, or life will break you!" We're wise in setting aside a day each week to *pray* and *play*. For the person who overworks may indeed "*be put to death...*" by a *massive coronary*.

"Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." The Sabbath cycle of work and rest isn't just cultural and Jewish. It's a creation principle and it applies to us all.

And notice here, the six days of creation are treated as literal 24 hour days - not ages, but literal days.

Then verse 18, “And when (God) had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.” But as Moses descends the mountain something happens to these tablets... Next week we’ll learn that Moses becomes the first man in history to break all Ten Commandments at once. *We’ll talk about how and why he did it next week...*