
Day 32 – February 1

Establishment of a Nation (1525 – 1400 BCE)
Construction of the Tabernacle

Readings: *Exodus 35:4-30; 36:1-38; 37:1-29; 38:1-31; 39:1*

Reflections:

- This tent of God is a very humble dwelling. It is relatively small and lacking any of the grandeur associated with the ancient pagan temples. This tent will remind us that God is a God of the humble, not of the proud. He identifies with his people and seeks to dwell closely with them.
- The Israelites all contribute the best of what they have to see this tent of meeting constructed. They gather together the precious items that they had taken with them when they left Egypt (see Exodus 12:33-36). This was a voluntary offering of worship based on their hearts before God. Again we see the importance of our hearts before God.
- Those who are most skilled volunteer as craftsmen and craftswomen. We see that the Spirit of God comes on those with skills to complete this project. God gives us natural skills and abilities. As we surrender them to God, then through his Spirit we can be fully animated and empowered to do the will of God. God's Spirit takes our natural skills to a whole new level of creativity and effectiveness.
- Bezalel and Oholiab are named as key craftsmen in this project. They are most likely the foremen for the construction and creative work.
- We see in this account how true love for God results in radical generosity as day after day people continue to bring the best they have for this place of meeting with God. In fact, Moses had to stop them from bringing things. We see how Moses is a wise steward and doesn't want to see unnecessary waste.
- The entire project is described in great detail and we see again how vitally important record keeping was to the Israelites. Although humble, this tent is designed with beauty, precision and the best quality possible for that time period.
- The mirrors the women used to make themselves beautiful they donated to make the bronze laver. When people rally around God's mission people are called to make sacrifices, to give up things that make their life better or easier, to see God's purposes completed. In this way we move from being self-centered to being God-centered.

- This section concludes by outlining the total cost of this project. The number of shekels goes beyond anything we could easily imagine. Literally two to three tons of shekels were given for this project. This reminds us that when a community rallies toward any project it is astounding what God can accomplish through them. Israel is suggested to have over six hundred thousand men over the age of twenty. This would suggest that the total community is well over a million and a half in size. Many secular scholars doubt this number but Biblical scholars see this as a credible number based on the careful record keeping of the Israelites.
- The project of the tabernacle should inspire Christ-followers with the following:
 - If everyone gives the best they have with radical generosity, you will have more than enough;
 - God wants to fill those with significant skills with his Spirit to both lead the community as well as mobilize the community to complete huge projects;
 - God uses both creativity and organization in accomplishing his purposes;
 - Beauty as well as functionality are equally important in how we do the will of God;
 - God wants us to work together to create a community where people can connect with God. In the story of Israel, this was expressed through the tabernacle. Once Jesus comes we will see this fulfilled through the church, described as God's new temple and the body of Christ.