

Construction

Exodus 35: 29 to 36: 1

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In Exodus 25 we see the array of materials brought by the children of Israel to construct the dwelling place of God. I want to carry your minds a little further into chapter 35, where the actual construction of the tabernacle was about to take place.

We have recorded in this chapter the names of two men, Bezaleel and Aholiab, who were particularly fitted by God, and mainly responsible for the construction of this building, and of them we want to speak a little. Looking on to the temple, only one man is named as working — Hiram, whose mother was a Jewess and whose father was a Gentile; a picture no doubt of the world to come, "And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD" (Zech. 6: 15). Then looking on further to the temple described for us in Ezekiel, not one person is mentioned as building there. We know this is future, and the building is seen as completed, not in process of building, yet not one name is mentioned in regard to this construction. Looking on further to the New Testament where the spiritual house is brought into being, three Builders are named in its construction, i.e. the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. "Ye are God's building," (1 Cor. 3: 9). "Upon this rock I will build," (Matt. 16: 18). "Builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," (Eph. 2: 22). The spiritual house has been brought into being by the direct working of the Godhead, and shows a great advance on all that came out in Old Testament times. Such chapters as Luke 15, Eph. 2 and 1 Pet. 1 show the activities of the Godhead and we, beloved, are the result of this threefold working in our souls.

It is **willing** hearts that caused this vast amount of material to be brought for the construction of the tabernacle; but when it came to using those materials it was **wise** hearts that were needed. It has often been pointed out that an appreciation of the grace and mercy of our God will beget within us a willing heart, but only as taught of God by the Spirit can we have wise hearts, Vv. 5 and 10. We may also notice in regard to the willing hearts, that both men and women are included, v. 22. Though sisters are not permitted to take public part in the meetings today, they all have something to bring. As having a place in the house of God, all have the privilege of making a spiritual contribution, willingly, from their hearts.

In calling Bezaleel and Aholiab, we see the sovereignty of God in the selection of His servants and I want to suggest that in Bezaleel we have a fore-shadowing of the apostolic band to whose care was committed the establishment of Christianity, in the power of the Spirit, in this world. You will remember the scripture which assures us that we are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone," (Eph. 2: 20). Bezaleel was identified by **name**, and we have the twelve, more than once in the New Testament, identified by name. So I take him to be a picture of the twelve, as I shall try to explain. Sovereignly called by name and divinely equipped for his service, he is seen here as the founder, leader and chief constructor of this building. The three names of his ancestors, coupled with his own name, seem to help in indicating features seen in the apostles. We can at least use them by way of application.

Bezaleel means, "in the shadow of God." This indicates that he was under divine protection for the work he had to do. You will remember that in John 17 we have three unities spoken of by our Lord in His prayer to the Father. (12) "That they may be **one**, as we," v. 11. (2) "That they also may be **one**

in us," v. 21. (3) "That they may be **one**, even as we are one," v. 22. The first unity is apostolic. The second is discipular. The third is in glory. Now while the second and third unities take in the whole Christian company, the first is limited to the apostles. Just as there was not a single divergency of thought between the Father and the Son, so in the apostolic band we see a company with one thought, one desire — to bring out in testimony in this world, all that was committed to them on behalf of the Son. Whatever their personal distinctions may have been, or the distinctiveness of their several ministries, they were one, divinely one, in their testimony to the work of Christ and His place in the glory of God. And so, beloved brethren, we have the fruit of this oneness in a complete presentation of the truth as it is in Jesus, whether it be His ministry in this world, or His present place at the right hand of God. Through them, overshadowed by God, all the truth has come out **to** us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Who took hold of them on the day of Pentecost for this particular work.

Then, we are told, Bezaleel was the son of Uri, "enlightened." Obviously this name is from the same root as "Urim," which means "lights." So we can apply this to the apostles as men divinely enlightened for the work they had to do. In the closing words of our Lord, as recorded in the Gospel of John, He told them of the coming of the Spirit, Who would bring to their remembrance all things which He had spoken unto them; take of the things of the Son and show them unto them; and also show them things to come. They were thus divinely enlightened as guided into all the truth, and so we have it given to us through them.

Then we read that Uri was the son of Hur which means "purity." We have but to consider the lives of these men to learn how much they were marked by personal purity and how careful they were to present the truth as a pure stream from the ascended Head in heaven. Free from any taint of human philosophy or merely human learning in any way, they were vessels in the hand of the Spirit, to bring out in the power of the Spirit the whole truth of God. Communicating spiritual things by spiritual means, they gave as a clear stream the truth of Christianity in all its parts. Though the truth of the mystery had yet to be administered by Paul, we must not forget that the twelve knew of it, even if they did not administer it. At the very centre of Paul's writing about the mystery in Eph. 3, he tells us that the holy apostles knew of it, v. 5. Hence, the twelve were one with Paul when he **completed** the Word of God, (Col. 1: 25).

Then lastly we are told that Hur was of the tribe of Judah. This name, as we well know, means "praise." How well we know that this was the end the apostles had in view in their wonderful labours. They did not serve for filthy lucre, nor to make a name for themselves, but to beget praise to the Father and the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, beloved, I think I can see in these marks, indications of the great apostles. They were men who were divinely preserved in view of a united testimony being rendered; divinely enlightened by the Holy Spirit Who, through them, has brought out the Word of God completely; they were marked by purity of conduct and spoke the Word of God in an unadulterated way like a pure living stream, labouring with one end in view — the praise and glory of the Father and the Son.

So we read in v. 31, that Bezaleel was **filled** with the Spirit of God and this would take us in thought to Acts 2, where the filling of the Spirit is twice mentioned. Bezaleel was fully equipped with wisdom, understanding, knowledge and **all** workmanship, and comes before us as one fully qualified by God to bring into being every detail of the Tabernacle. With wisdom he would have all the latent **resource** he stood in need of, and with understanding he would be divinely **illuminated**. Then knowledge would give him **intelligence** of the details of the various articles, while **all workmanship** shows that he used what God gave him to **produce** results. So we may think of that noble apostolic

band, resourceful in meeting every kind of opposition; illuminated with all the truth as it is in Jesus; fully equipped with knowledge of every detail of the will of God and putting it all to such good service in all workmanship, that Christianity in all its parts has come into being in this world. How soon that wisdom was seen in display may be gathered from the first chapter of Acts when one was needed to fill the place of Judas. Indeed, the opening chapters of the book of the Acts give us a remarkable display of all these qualities in the foundation work of the twelve.

We next have a record of the various effects these men were capable of producing in vv. 31. 32. I find on looking up this phrase "devise curious things," that it really means — to think artistic things. Now while we have said that the apostles were not left to themselves to think things up, yet they did have the Spirit in their hearts, Who constantly exercised them to meditate upon these things and so have the truth clearly in their hearts and minds with a view to passing it on to us. These artistic things were worked in gold, silver and brass, suggesting the nature, disposition and character of God. Silver, which often typifies redemption, would speak of the disposition of God as a Saviour-God today. Then the cutting of stones would have in view a display of the various personal and official glories of Christ, while the carving of wood would rather have in view His moral glories in Manhood. All the carving of wood would be, of course, in shittim wood, as that was the only wood used in the tabernacle and is the well-known type of the incorruptible Manhood of our Lord. Putting them together in all this working, these things would suggest that God has been fully declared in His nature, disposition and character and Christ has been declared in His personal, official and moral glories. God as Author and giving character to all, and Christ as the Centre and Administrator of all, form the very kernel of the truth ministered to us. Let us remember, while thinking of the carving of wood, that we never get an explanation of the incarnation, for the apostles do not anywhere in Scripture give us a metaphysical explanation of the union of Godhead and Manhood in our Lord. Seeing they have not attempted this in the revelation they have given us by the Spirit, wisdom would counsel us to leave such dangerous questions alone. The glory of His perfect Manhood we can talk about without pretending we know all about the incarnation.

In v. 34, we have another servant mentioned by name, Aholiab, whose name means "tent of my father." If Bezaleel means "in the shadow of God," as suggesting the apostles, Aholiab may suggest another company who have been formed by their labours, what we may call the true apostolic succession, without apostolic authority. Paul writing to Timothy says, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (2 Tim. 2: 2). This is what I mean by the true apostolic succession, and one would desire to be in it. Aholiab seems to suggest this, as working directly under Bezaleel and ably supporting him in the work he had to do. We are told Aholiab was the son of Ahisamach, whose name means "a supporting brother." What a privilege is ours today to have grace to be found supporting that which came out at the beginning in the apostles' testimony. Further, we are told that he was of the tribe of Dan — "a judge." This may suggest he was blessed with spiritual discernment. It was this the apostle Paul desired for the Corinthians, spiritual discernment to understand what he wrote to them. Thus it was with the apostles and those who were called out by their word; perfectly equipped and working in harmony, the one took the lead and the others gave worthy support. So the dwelling place of God was secured when the Spirit came into this world, the answer, as we have been trying to show, to all these types.

A little more of the details of this work is mentioned in v. 35. With wisdom of heart, **all manner** of work was carried out by these men and may describe the various segments of the ministry which all go to produce, in completeness, the unity of the faith. Only as we have every truth, or all truth in its

various branches, shall we have in its completeness, the unity of the faith. We need all truth whether it be that of the engraver or that of the embroiderer. The engraver may suggest that which is **cut in**, subjective impressions of truth in our souls; and certain lines of ministry produce this. The embroiderer, on the other hand, rather makes his work **stand out**, and certain lines of what we usually speak of as practical truth, produce this. How much we stand in need of both I need hardly press in a company like this.

Christ wrought in the soul by the Spirit, and Christ manifest in the life by the same Spirit, are surely a beautiful combination. Then the thought of weaving would suggest that which binds together; and how much we need this, beloved. As we have an ear for all truth today, these are suggestively the results which will be brought about. Truth ingrained into our new moral beings forming us after Christ; which in turn will produce a manifestation of the character of Christ in our lives, while walking in unity with the saints in the bond of love, seem to be suggested by the engraving, embroidering and weaving.

Lastly, in Exodus 36: 1, we read that all who were capable of helping in this work, did work. Whatever gift we may have — and all have something they can do to help — if we do not put into exercise and action what the Lord has graciously given us, the work is not going to be done as it ought to be. Let us, then, be up and doing like these willing and wise hearted people, labouring in the service of our Lord. He gives the ability and the spiritual energy for His work; ours is the privilege to use what He has given us for the glory of God and in the interests of our Lord Jesus Christ.