

EXODUS 31 DESIGN AND CREATION

Since chapter 25, we have been dealing with the instructions for the Tabernacle. This is the place God designed so that He could dwell with His people in a more tangible way. It is the way that the people could worship Him. We have seen that there are constant reminders of atonement with sacrifices and offerings to be perpetually continued every day. There is to be cleansing of the priests constantly as they would go about their daily service. All of the articles and furniture and the priests were to be consecrated so they would be holy to the Lord. We see all the details involved in this section as they give us types of the fulfillment in Christ. We see the beauty and glory of Christ represented by the Tabernacle. We have now come to the last chapter of this section of instructions for the building and carrying on of the worship at the tent of meeting. Moses was with God receiving the instructions back in chapter 24. He actually received the Law which is covered in chapters 20-23. Then the instructions for the Tabernacle were given in chapters 25-31. In this chapter God chooses the men that He wanted to be the craftsmen and artisans. They are the ones who will use their God given talents as they follow the instructions to build this place of worship. God is the master designer and He uses the best ones qualified to put it all together. This is the Creator of the universe who created and designed this microcosm of the universe, so that people could understand the intricacies of His grand creation. We will look at this passage and go back to the Genesis account to show how the Tabernacle parallels God's creation. In fact, this building project is another act of creation.

1. IMPLICATIONS OF CREATION VV 1-11

THE MINI-UNIVERSE

There is a connection between the Tabernacle and creation.

Psalm 78:69, Isa 40:22

A. THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

It is interesting to note that throughout the chapters of 25-31, seven times we see "The Lord said" or "The Lord spoke."

They are at different intervals and it reminds us of the six days of creation and then the seventh day of rest.

31:1,12, 25:1, 30:11,17,22,34

B. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN CREATION

The Spirit of God is mentioned twice in this section. This is referred to in this way only five times in the Old Testament

Ex 31:3---- Gen 1:2

The Holy Spirit played a key role in creation and in the building of the Tabernacle.

The Holy Spirit was given to certain men who God had chosen in the Old Testament era to equip them for a specific work.

C. THE PRESENCE OF WISDOM

Ex 31:3,6----Prov 8:1,12, 22-31 Wisdom was there when God

created.

D. THE EARTH AND THE HEAVENS

The Tabernacle is a microcosm of the universe in that the outer courtyard represents the earth and the Tent represented the heavens. The Holy Place represented the abode of God. There was the earth water, sky, lights in the sky, and heaven.

E. THE FILLING OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

As Bezalel was filled with God's Spirit, the Tabernacle was filled with the presence of God as the anointing oil and its aroma filled the whole place. There are other places where we witness the Spirit of God filling the Tabernacle, and the Temple later on.

Ex 31:3—Jere 23:24—Ex 40:34---Isa 6:3—The whole earth is filled with His glory.

F. THE GOODNESS AND BEAUTY OF CREATION

Ex 31:7-11---Gen 2:9—When God created, He made everything perfect and good and beautiful. In the Tabernacle are articles made of gold and silver and bronze with the finest fabrics and oils and other materials in the world.

There is shape, order, design, and color in creation and the Tabernacle. The preaching of creation tells us about God.

G. THE TEACHING OF CREATION

All of creation proclaims the very glory and beauty of God. God's creation proclaims the glory of the Lord. The Tabernacle preaches and teaches the beauty of the Lord.

Ps 19:1---Ex 29:45-46 Will know He is God, by its teaching and proclaiming.

H. WHAT DOES THIS CONNECTION MEAN?

What does God signify here of this connection.

The desert—Gen 1:2, The earth was formless and void. Deut 32:9-10, It was a wasteland. The desert is symbolic of chaos and waste.

The Tabernacle appears in the desert as an oasis in the midst of a wasteland. We see order and beauty in an horrific place. God's presence brings order in all the ugliness. It also teaches us what God is going to do. He will restore a broken universe.

Restoration—Isa 35:1-2 65:17, Rev 21-22—There will be no futility or emptiness anymore.

We today, live in a desert of sin and corruption, but therein lies the beauty as we look to God's sustenance amidst all the turmoil.

God's plan has been to rescue His creation out of chaos. Christ is the Tabernacle. Because of His work at the cross, the universe will be restored.

2. THE CALLED

God sovereignly elected and equipped the specific people He wanted to build this project.

A. THE CHIEF ARCHITECT—HIS DIVINE WILL

God is the master designer and it is all in His perfect plan that will be carried out by very qualified men.

B. THE EQUIPPING

God equips these men with skill.

God chose him for a particular reason. This was a distinct act of the Divine will.

Bezalel—In the shadow of God---In the hot desert sun, God protects His people

D. THE CONSTRUCTION MANAGER

Oholiab—The Father is my tent---The Father is my protection.

Now there's something very encouraging about that, because when we look at ourselves, and when we look at the Church, we sometimes wonder if this thing really is going to be able to resist the prevailing of the gates of hell. And we often feel like the Lord is having to work more in spite of us, rather than through us. Well that may be true, but it doesn't matter. Just as God built His tabernacle, so, also He builds His church. He calls the people to build it. He chooses the people to build it. He equips the people to build it. And He draws near to them in this tabernacle. And He does the same with His new covenant people. He calls the people. He chooses the people. He equips the people. He draws near to the people, who become His living temple, His tabernacle. There's the first thing we see in Exodus 31:1-11. Ligon Duncan

3. THE SABBATH, SIGN OF THE COVENANT W 12-17

Both the creation and Tabernacle accounts end up with a Discussion of the Sabbath.

Here we see an emphasis, a final emphasis on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is reiterated here. It's not the first time that Moses has talked about the Sabbath and it won't be the last. But it's reiterated here as a perpetual sign, and also as an instrument of our knowledge of God and it's enjoined on Israel as a Holy observation. And we learn in verses 12, 17, that the Sabbath is to serve as the pledge and the outward marker of the covenant relationship that exists between God and Israel. The Sabbath is emphasized in various ways in this passage. And it's in fact, made clear that even the tabernacle is commanded by God. Even the tabernacle does not take precedence over the Sabbath.

A. THE ORIGINAL SABBATH DAY

Ex 31:17, Gen 2:2

B. EMPHASIZED

here are probably 10 or 12 discreet components describing the observance of the Sabbath in those passages. But notice 3 times, Moses emphasized in verses 13, 14 and 16, observe the Sabbath. Because, and here it's emphasized that it's to be observed because it's a sign and because it's perpetual and by it you know that I am the Lord, who made you Holy.

C. SACRED TIME

Thirdly, though the tabernacle is sacred space, its space that God has appointed for His worship. And the Sabbath is sacred time appointed by God for His worship. Moses is showing us here in Exodus 31 that sacred time takes priority over sacred space. In other words, He's saying, "Look, I've just given you the commandments for the building of the tabernacle. You can't work on the Sabbath day, even to build God's tabernacle. You are to take God's time of rest even in the building of His house."

Importance

Now, let me just make a couple of observations about it. First of all, notice in verses 14 and 15 that the death penalty is to be given in Israel for those who profane the Sabbath. That is, as those who treat it as it is not different, as it is not Holy. And it's given in the form of a categorical desert law, not unlike some of the laws that we met when we studying Exodus 21 through 23. And Numbers chapter 15:32-36 shows us this law being applied, so we know that this wasn't theoretical, that there were cases in which people literally were put to death, because of their profaning of the Sabbath. But, that seems to be relatively rare in Israel's history. However, towards the end of the Old Testament, the Sabbath again became very, very important to the people of God, especially, in the time of the Maccabean rulers. It was one of the ways that Israel showed herself to be different from the Gentiles around her. She kept the seventh day. And it became a mark of orthodoxy and Jesus constantly ran into trouble with the religious teachers of His day, because He seemed not to be orthodox in His teaching on the Sabbath.

Refreshment

In other words, the language serves to stress the value to us of Sabbath observance. That's why Jesus in

Mark 2 could say "Man was not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man." In other words, the Sabbath was made to be a moment, a slot of space of sacred time, which would reinvigorate you, which would refresh you, which would revive you spiritually and bless you.

D. PLEDGE, MARKING, BLESSING

4. GOD IS THE SOURCE OF LAW AND WORSHIP V18

A. THE FINAL WORD

B. THE FINGER OF GOD

God gives Moses the stone tablets written with His own finger. And this again emphasizes that God Himself is the source of the law, and God Himself is the source of the right way to worship Him.

C. THE PERMANENCY OF THE LAW

The stone used in giving the tablets reminds us of the permanency, indeed, the eternity of that law. It's not written on paper. It's written on stone, in stone to speak of its permanency. And these last words make clear that God Himself, and no other, has authorized the ritual and the order of worship set forth to approach Him in the tabernacle.

This is about God bringing order to something that has gone terribly wrong. He brings order to us.---2 Cor 5:21. We are rescued from our fallenness, even in our walk in everyday life and our sinfulness. He is restoring us right now. We are being transformed into His image. We are in a desert of sin and evil, but we have order and beauty present in the person of Christ.