

March 20

Scriptures: Read Exodus 35 & 36

Key Verse: “Then everyone came whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and they brought the Lord’s offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments.” (Exodus 35:21)

Overview

Here begins the account of the actual building of the tabernacle. Before Moses gave any details about it, he first reminded the Israelites of the importance and obligation of Sabbath observance (35:2, 3). Even in their enthusiasm to build the house of God, they were not to disregard this law of rest and waiting upon God one day out of seven. There is a spiritual and physical danger of not taking a day of rest because of being over-zealous, and over-industrious. The body and soul absolutely require this rest. God, who made us and knows us, has provided for this need by His Sabbath day.

Moses was faithful to the Lord and to the people by telling them exactly the Lord’s commands. He had been previously prevented from doing this by the incident of the golden calf. Now the people’s hearts were ready to receive the Law and the careful instructions about the tabernacle. Moses did not pressure anyone to give to the building fund; he merely laid before them the need and they, of their own accord and good will, responded (35:21). He stressed that the gifts were to come from a willing heart (35:5), The Lord is pleased to see a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7) and pleased to accept offerings which support His work.

Moses must have been thrilled to see the terrific response of all the people. Every person could contribute in one way or another as an individual expression of faith and worship. Along with willingly giving their time and talents to help, they also gave much more material than was required, until Moses even had to tell them to stop. It seems they gave out of a sacrificial spirit. If Moses or the others in leadership over the building project had been greedy and desiring to enrich themselves, they would have allowed the people to continue giving even after the need was met. But they were honest and faithful to the glory of God. Believers today should imitate the attitude of Moses and the Israelites in their giving; in such a way the Lord’s work would be mightily advanced.

Now that Bezaleel and Aholiab had all the materials needed, they were able to start the construction. If they alone were to have done this great task, it would have taken years, but God provided them with much help and filled these helpers and well as themselves with the spirit of wisdom, that even their natural capabilities would be improved. God’s Spirit enabled Bezaleel and Aholiab with the gift of teaching and also enabled the others to learn from them so that the work would be done exactly as God instructed. Many people in various capacities and with various gifts were needed to see God’s desire accomplished, just like it is among the believers in Christ today: all have a different function, but all are necessary. To see the work accomplished it is important that our God-given abilities be put into action.

Much of the instruction that Moses gave the people is repeated here exactly as it had been given first to Moses by God (Ex. 25-31). This was not useless repetition, but an emphasis that they might carefully adhere to God's word. Without obedience, no amount of labor on the tabernacle or sacrifices offered could be acceptable to God.

The best free-will offering one can give to the Lord today is ones' life, offered to the service of God to be used where needed. All the Israelites happily brought gifts to the Lord. In the same way we who believe and love the Lord should desire to bring Him those precious gifts of souls into His kingdom to make up the gospel tabernacle of Christ; we can never give too much. In the house of the Lord there is room for all. In 1 Peter chapter 2 versus 4 and 5 we read: "Coming to Him (the Lord Jesus) as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to god through Jesus Christ".

Prayer

O Lord, we offer our lives unto You for Your purpose. Help us to show this in practical terms in faithful service and offerings for Your cause and kingdom.