

Introduction: *Asah* – How One Verb Tells the Whole Story

“And he made...”

The verb translated “he made” is one of the most common verbs in the Bible.

“Asah” means “he made” or “he did” or “he worked.”

It has a very wide usage – and is found in all the central actions of the book of Exodus. For instance, in Exodus 1 the midwives “did not do” as Pharaoh commanded them.

That’s *asah* – they *did not do* – they did not do the work that Pharaoh commanded.

And so the LORD *made for them houses* –

he *did* for them (*asah*) he worked on their behalf.

And in Exodus 3, the LORD tells Moses to say to the elders of Israel,

“I have seen what has been done to you” (*asah*)

and so God promises that he will stretch out his hand

and *do* (*asah*) wonders.

God commanded Moses and Aaron to *do* (*asah*) signs before Pharaoh,

and so they *did* (*asah*).

All through the plagues, there are lots of uses of *asah* –

coming to its climax in the LORD’s declaration that he will *do* judgment on Egypt in the death of the firstborn (Ex 12:12).

When you talk about ‘keeping’ the Passover –

the verb is *asah* – to “do” or to “make” the Passover.

And when Israel stand trembling at the Red Sea,

Moses tells them to stand still and see the salvation of the LORD

which he will *do* for you this day!

The same verb is used to speak of the mighty deeds which the LORD has *done* – as is used for the command for Israel to *do* what the LORD says.

In the Ten Commandments, *asah* is the verb used to say

“you shall not *make* any graven image”

And also that God *does* mercy to thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

And of course, it is used in the fourth commandment –

For on the Sabbath day you shall *do* no work –

because for six days you shall *do* all your work,

because in six days the LORD *made* (same verb, *asah*) the heavens and the earth.

God’s labor – God’s work – in making the heavens and the earth

is here made the pattern and example for our labor and work.

And then from chapter 25 through chapter 39, it goes crazy!

There are over a hundred uses of *asah* in the description of the tabernacle –

(generally “you shall make”) in chapters 25-31.

And of course, in chapters 32-34 – the rebellion at Sinai with the golden calf –

the whole focus is on how they *made (asah)* the golden calf
and raised the question of what God would *do (asah)* with the people.

And having decided to show mercy to his people,
the LORD gives his Spirit to Bezalel the craftsman,
so that he might *make (asah)* the tabernacle – a sanctuary for God’s name.
Our passage today has over 70 uses of the verb.

So let’s put it all together:
The LORD *made* the heavens and the earth.
The LORD *did* mighty deeds in saving his people from Egypt.

Now his people are called to *do* as the LORD commands,
and *make* a holy dwelling place where the LORD might dwell in their midst.

That’s pretty much the story of the book of Exodus – all told with one verb!

And we sing about the result in Psalm 84!

Sing Psalm 84A
Read 1 Corinthians 3

Think about this:

Paul talks about building with wood, hay, and straw –
or building with gold, silver, and precious stones.
What does he mean by “building”?
Well, consider the context.
Paul is talking about the divisions in Corinth –
and how different groups in the church are following different teachers.
In other words, Paul is talking about how pastors preach.
Paul has laid the foundation in his preaching – and the foundation is Jesus Christ.
Some pastors build on the apostolic foundation with wood, hay, and straw.
In other words, their preaching is insubstantial.
And when their work is tested by fire,
it will be consumed.
Paul is not saying that such pastors are *unbelievers* –
(That’s why he says, “he himself will be saved”
even though his work is burned up).
Rather, he is saying that pastors need to be careful how they preach –
how they build on the foundation that Paul has laid.

We need to use gold, silver, precious stones...

Things that last – things that endure through fire.

That’s why we need to see what Exodus 36-38 is teaching us.
Because this is pure gold!

And to see this, we need to get our bearings as to where we are in Exodus.

The last half of the book of Exodus has a very simple pattern:

In chapters 19-23, God meets his people at Sinai – declaring his intent to *dwell* with his people, and he gives them the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant.

And chapter 24 contains Israel’s first worship service, as Moses reads the Book of the Covenant and offers the Blood of the Covenant.

Chapters 25-31 then contain the description of the Tabernacle and its furnishings, concluding with the call of Bezalel and Oholiab, and a reminder to keep the Sabbath.

Then chapters 32-34 recount the rebellion of Israel at Sinai with the golden calf, and how God reveals himself to Moses, so that his glory is revealed in the face of Moses.

Now chapters 35-39 record the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings, *beginning* with a reminder to keep the Sabbath, and the call of Bezalel and Oholiab.

And chapter 40 brings the book to its conclusion with the glory of the LORD *finally* filling the Tabernacle.

This is what is sometimes called a chiasm.

So the bookends of this chiasm – the “A” sections are the glory of the LORD *at Sinai* (19-24)– and the glory of the LORD *filling the Tabernacle* (40).

The lengthy “B” sections are the descriptions of the Tabernacle (25-31 and 35-39).

And the center is the revelation of God’s glory, God’s name, and God’s covenant to *Moses* in spite of Israel’s sin and idolatry at the golden calf (32-34).

And on either of this central section – at the end of chapter 31 and at the beginning of chapter 35 – is a focus on the Sabbath.

1. Doing and Resting: Remember the Sabbath (35:1-3)

35 Moses assembled all the congregation of the people of Israel and said to them, “These are the things that the LORD has commanded you to do. ² Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. ³ You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day.”

Have you noticed that this emphasis on the Sabbath keeps coming back?!

Not only is Sabbath-keeping included in the Ten Commandments, but the Sabbath is also highlighted when God gives the manna – since there is no manna given on the Sabbath day.

The Sabbath is also included in the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 23:12), and again in Exodus 31 and 35 – as it bookends the renewal of the covenant in Exodus 32-34.

That means that there are five different chapters in Exodus that highlight the importance of the Sabbath
Why does the Sabbath play such an important role in the book of Exodus?

And particularly, Moses says that whoever does any work on the Sabbath shall be put to death.
Why is Sabbath-breaking considered worthy of the death-penalty?

Well, think about the Ten Commandments.

How do you know that a community (or an individual)
is keeping covenant with God?

The first three commandments are all negative.

You shall not have any other gods before me.

You shall not make any graven image.

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

Commandments 5-9 are just normal human ethics:

Honor your father and mother.

Do not murder.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal.

Do not bear false witness.

The 10th commandment is impossible to prove one way or the other.

You shall not covet.

The fourth commandment is the one positive command that distinguishes God's people
by what they *do*.

The one who works on the Sabbath is saying *very clearly*
that I do not want to be part of God's people.

And particularly in the OT, the people of Israel – all those who live in this place –
are supposed to be a holy nation, a royal priesthood (Exodus 19).

So if you have a person who is *supposedly* an Israelite,
but who refuses to *live* like an Israelite,

but wants to remain and keep all the *benefits* of an Israelite! –
such a one needs to be cut off from his people.

The OT death penalty is replaced in the NT by excommunication.

In 1 Corinthians 5-6, Paul clearly connects the OT death penalty with excommunication:
“expel the wicked person from among you.”

But is Sabbath-breaking really all that serious?

I find it very ironic that the fourth commandment is the one that many Christians ignore.

Because it is the one commandment that demonstrates our distinctness from the world.

Some people say that the NT never reiterates the Sabbath command.

But Jesus makes it very clear that the Sabbath command is still in force.

In Matthew 12 Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for their *distortion* of the Sabbath commandment –

but Jesus does in fact reiterate the Sabbath command!
He says that he is *Lord* of the Sabbath –
and as Lord of the Sabbath he condemns the Pharisees
for their failure to do *good* on the Sabbath.

If the Lord Jesus is *your Lord* – then you need to demonstrate that *positively*
by how you rest from your labors on the Sabbath.

I realize that we live in a day where it is very difficult to rest on the Lord's Day.

Though in one sense, it has *always* been a challenge.

If you think back to the fourth commandment itself,

the fourth commandment is the *only one* that is addressed especially to superiors:
“on it you shall do no work: you, *nor your son nor your daughter* (addressing parents),
nor your man servant nor your maidservant (addressing masters),
nor your stranger within your gates (addressing magistrates).”

Why does the sabbath commandment particularly address superiors?

Well, because parents, employers, and magistrates

are especially prone to command those under their care to work on the Sabbath!

So if your parent – if your boss – commands you to work on Sunday,
what do you do?

Well, you can try to persuade them otherwise

(and U.S. labor law actually requires employers to seek to provide accommodation
for workers whose religion requires them not to work on certain days).

But if you fail,

if your boss still requires you to work,
then it is *his fault* – not yours.

(And if your boss requires you to demonstrate that your religion actually requires this,
you can give them a section from the Westminster Confession and Catechisms!)

On the other hand,

it's important to remember the lessons that Jesus has taught us about the Sabbath!

We must remember that the Sabbath was made for man – not man for the Sabbath.

In other words, we must not get so preoccupied with following the rules,
that we forget why the rules were made!

Consider the command here:

“You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day.”

What if it's really cold – and someone is sick –

and you need to light a fire to keep him warm?!

Then you light a fire and you keep him warm!

The point of the law is that you shall not be focused on yourself and your own desires.
It's a day for rest – and for giving rest to others.

Or as Jesus said,

It is lawful to do *good* on the Sabbath day!

So Sabbath-keeping is one way that God's people demonstrate that they belong to the LORD.
How you use your *time* needs to be oriented around Christ and his kingdom.

And point two – starting in verse 4 –
is that how you use your *money* – your wealth –
also needs to be oriented around Christ and his kingdom.

2. The Freewill Offering: The Contributions for the Tabernacle (35:4-36:7)

⁴ Moses said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "This is the thing that the LORD has commanded. ⁵ Take from among you a contribution to the LORD. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the LORD's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze; ⁶ blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen; goats' hair, ⁷ tanned rams' skins, and goatskins; ⁸ acacia wood, ⁹ oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, ⁹ and onyx stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

The rest of chapter 35 and the beginning of chapter 36 then recounts the freewill offering that the people of Israel brought for the construction of the Tabernacle.

What does this teach us?

Think back to Paul's use of the image in 1 Corinthians 3.
Paul says that we are engaged in temple building –
we are building with gold, silver, and precious stones
(or at least we should be!).

So when we think about the freewill offerings for the Tabernacle,
we should connect this with the work of church planting –
the work of missions and evangelism

Because the church – the body of Christ – *is* the holy dwelling place of God.
God designed the Tabernacle as *his* holy dwelling place –
where the LORD dwelt with Israel.

It's important to see that there is no compulsion here.

There is no percentage required.
And as you read through the passage
it becomes clear that some people gave gold – others gave spices –
while others gave of their abilities to *spin* the yarn, or work as craftsmen.

Throughout the Old Testament there are various principles –
all of which are useful for helping us *think* about how to give,
but none of which are directly applicable to our day.

(Notice that the Ten Commandments have a certain priority:
they have a more direct relevance for the church –
(in part because Jesus and the apostles say so!),
whereas other OT laws need to be understood in terms of their equity –
in terms of the principles of justice that they embody).

The OT will talk about tithing (giving ten percent of the harvest),

and also about firstfruits (giving the first part of the harvest),
and also about gleanings (leaving part of the harvest for the poor),
and also – like here – about freewill offerings.

By the time of the NT, the economy had already begun to change –
and certainly today, it would be very difficult to implement an OT giving system!

But the principles are still useful:

give a set portion of your income regularly;
and give to God the firstfruits (not the leftovers);
but make sure that you are giving some to the poor –
and also look for opportunities to give above and beyond your regular giving.

If you look down to chapter 36,

you can see the result of this mindset among the Israelites.

They are so eager to give –

they are so excited about the way that the Kingdom of God is coming in their midst,
that they give much more than is necessary for the work!

Finally the craftsmen come to Moses and say,

“Make them stop!”

We have far more than we need!

Have you ever heard a ministry do this?

Have you ever heard a ministry say,

“We have enough – please stop giving!”?

No, usually when a ministry is rolling in the dough,
they figure out new and bigger projects to tackle!

What is required is a clear vision of what the LORD requires of us.

God told Moses here is the plan for the Tabernacle.

Build *this*.

And what God told the apostles is the plan for the Church.

Go build *this*.

Once or twice in my life have I seen this –

where a church said *no more, please* –

because they *had enough* to do what God called them to do!

But it requires a clear focus on the *plan* – the *pattern* which God has shown to us on the mountain.

And that’s why Moses keeps repeating the picture of what he had seen.

Verses 10-19 of chapter 35 provide a brief summary of the items that were to be made.

¹⁰ “Let every skillful craftsman among you come and make all that the LORD has commanded: ¹¹ the tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its hooks and its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; ¹² the ark with its poles, the mercy seat, and the veil of the screen; ¹³ the table with its poles and all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; ¹⁴ the lampstand also for the light, with its utensils and its lamps, and the oil for the light; ¹⁵ and the altar of incense, with its poles, and the anointing oil and the

fragrant incense, and the screen for the door, at the door of the tabernacle; ¹⁶ the altar of burnt offering, with its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils, the basin and its stand; ¹⁷ the hangings of the court, its pillars and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court; ¹⁸ the pegs of the tabernacle and the pegs of the court, and their cords; ¹⁹ the finely worked garments for ministering^[f] in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests.”

²⁰ Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. ²¹ And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. ²² So they came, both men and women. All who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the LORD. ²³ And every one who possessed blue or purple or scarlet yarns or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or goatskins brought them. ²⁴ Everyone who could make a contribution of silver or bronze brought it as the LORD's contribution. And every one who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work brought it. ²⁵ And every skillful woman spun with her hands, and they all brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. ²⁶ All the women whose hearts stirred them to use their skill spun the goats' hair. ²⁷ And the leaders brought onyx stones and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastpiece, ²⁸ and spices and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. ²⁹ All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD.

Verses 20-29 emphasize *repeatedly* how all of this was done *freely* – everyone whose heart stirred them.

You can see here where Paul will get his idea of how the Lord loves a cheerful giver.

³⁰ Then Moses said to the people of Israel, “See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; ³¹ and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, ³² to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, ³³ in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. ³⁴ And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. ³⁵ He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer.

36 “Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whom the LORD has put skill and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded.”

The end of chapter 35 and the beginning of chapter 36 call attention to the call of Bezalel – the Spirit-filled craftsman – and his assistant, Oholiab.

As we saw back in chapter 31, this is the *one time* in all of the OT that the Spirit *fills* someone other than prophets, priests, kings, and judges.

And the reason is clear!

Bezalel is called by God to build a holy dwelling place for God's name!

Consider the words of Jesus:

"Destroy this temple, and I will rebuild it in three days."

What was Jesus referring to?

His body.

The Tabernacle – and later the Temple –
were designed as *pictures* of Jesus.

God's purpose was to dwell in *humanity* –

but humanity was unclean – sinful – unfit to be a receptacle for the Divine!

And so God begins by showing us a picture in gold, silver, and bronze.

And again, Paul will use this image of Bezalel – the wise master-builder –

when Paul talks about *his work* (and every pastor's work)

in building with gold, silver, and precious stones.

Christ is the foundation.

And all who preach throughout the history of the church

are building on that foundation that Paul and the rest of the apostles laid.

We are building a holy temple – a dwelling place for God.

² And Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whose mind the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work. ³ And they received from Moses all the contribution that the people of Israel had brought for doing the work on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, ⁴ so that all the craftsmen who were doing every sort of task on the sanctuary came, each from the task that he was doing, ⁵ and said to Moses, "The people bring much more than enough for doing the work that the LORD has commanded us to do." ⁶ So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, "Let no man or woman do anything more for the contribution for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing, ⁷ for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work, and more.

One final comment on this middle section:

Look at how the whole community comes together!

Yes, God has provided (through Moses) the pattern for the whole project.

And yes, God has given his Spirit to Bezalel

in order to inspire his teaching and direction along with Oholiab (v34).

But there is not the slightest hint of an authoritarian regime!

When you have leaders like Moses and Bezalel and Oholiab,

the result is a people who joyfully throw themselves into the work!

It's why we encourage you to look around for what you see that cries out to be done!

Especially in the NT church – since God has poured out his Spirit on *all* his people! –
we as elders are confident that God is showing *you too* what needs to be done.

We are here to teach and to shepherd –

but it is only when each part of the body is working properly
that the whole body builds itself up in love!

So as you see things that may be overlooked –
as you think of things that could help us to do better what Jesus has taught us –
please don't hesitate to say something!

Sometimes people think that *everything* we do is carefully thought out –
(and *yes*, we do *try* to think things through!!) –
but sometimes the only reason why something hasn't been done
is because no one has ever gotten around to doing it!

(For instance, people sometimes ask, "Why don't you have a cross?"
The answer is: because no one has ever gotten around to doing it...)

3. Doing and Making: The Construction of the Tabernacle (36:8-38:20)

a. The Tabernacle (36:8-38)

⁸ *And all the craftsmen among the workmen made the tabernacle with ten curtains. They were made of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet yarns, with cherubim skillfully worked. ⁹ The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits,^[g] and the breadth of each curtain four cubits. All the curtains were the same size.*

The rest of our passage then deals with the construction of the tabernacle.

If you pay attention to the order,
it is a very different order than what we heard in chapters 25-31.
And the difference is found primarily
in that chapters 25-31 describe items in order of importance,
starting with the ark of the covenant and working outward
from the holy of holies to the outer court;
whereas chapters 36-38 follows the order of construction
(or perhaps better, the order of assembly – found in Exodus 40).

To put it simply,
while the ark of the covenant is undoubtedly the most important item that Israel made,
the assembly of the Tabernacle is required *first*
in order to have a place to *put* the ark!

Once the Tabernacle is built – once the tent is in place –
only *then* can you put the ark and the table and the lampstand and the altar of incense
in their places.

I'm not going to walk through each section again –
if you missed those sermons in June and July, you can go back and listen to them
(or read them).

I will simply remind you of the main point:
namely, that in the very structure of the Tabernacle we see the pattern of worship revealed!
The altar of burnt offering in the courtyard is the first thing you see.
And beside it is the basin of bronze for the priests to wash.
In order to enter God's presence,

we need a sacrifice –
and we need a holy priest – one who is cleansed and pure –
to offer that sacrifice and bring us into the holy place.
And when the priest enters the holy place,
he comes bearing incense – which is the prayers of the saints –
which he offers before the Lord;
But the first section of the Tabernacle –
the holy place –
represents *this age*.
The holy of holies – the *Most* holy place –
represents the age to come!
And just like *only Moses* was allowed to go up to the *top* of Mt. Sinai –
so also *only the high priest* is allowed to enter the Most Holy Place –
and that once a year! –
And the High Priest wears the Ephod with the Breastpiece –
bearing the names of the 12 tribes on the 12 stones –
so that in him all Israel might enter the presence of God!

And *all of this* points us to Jesus –
who brings us *with him* – *in him* – to the Father.

¹⁰ He^[h] coupled five curtains to one another, and the other five curtains he coupled to one another. ¹¹ He made loops of blue on the edge of the outermost curtain of the first set. Likewise he made them on the edge of the outermost curtain of the second set. ¹² He made fifty loops on the one curtain, and he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was in the second set. The loops were opposite one another. ¹³ And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains one to the other with clasps. So the tabernacle was a single whole.

¹⁴ He also made curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle. He made eleven curtains. ¹⁵ The length of each curtain was thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits. The eleven curtains were the same size. ¹⁶ He coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. ¹⁷ And he made fifty loops on the edge of the outermost curtain of the one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the other connecting curtain. ¹⁸ And he made fifty clasps of bronze to couple the tent together that it might be a single whole. ¹⁹ And he made for the tent a covering of tanned rams' skins and goatskins.

²⁰ Then he made the upright frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood. ²¹ Ten cubits was the length of a frame, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each frame. ²² Each frame had two tenons for fitting together. He did this for all the frames of the tabernacle. ²³ The frames for the tabernacle he made thus: twenty frames for the south side. ²⁴ And he made forty bases of silver under the twenty frames, two bases under one frame for its two tenons, and two bases under the next frame for its two tenons. ²⁵ For the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, he made twenty frames ²⁶ and their forty bases of silver, two bases under one frame and two bases under the next frame. ²⁷ For the rear of the tabernacle westward he made six frames. ²⁸ He made two frames for corners of the tabernacle in the rear. ²⁹ And they were separate beneath but joined at the top, at the first ring. He made two of them this way for the two corners. ³⁰ There were eight frames with their bases of silver: sixteen bases, under every frame two bases.

³¹ He made bars of acacia wood, five for the frames of the one side of the tabernacle, ³² and five bars for the frames of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the tabernacle at the rear westward. ³³ And he made the middle bar to run from end to end halfway up the frames. ³⁴ And he overlaid the frames with gold, and made their rings of gold for holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

³⁵ He made the veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen; with cherubim skillfully worked into it he made it. ³⁶ And for it he made four pillars of acacia and overlaid them with gold. Their hooks were of gold, and he cast for them four bases of silver. ³⁷ He also made a screen for the entrance of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework, ³⁸ and its five pillars with their hooks. He overlaid their capitals, and their fillets were of gold, but their five bases were of bronze.

b. The Ark (37:1-9)

³⁷ Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood. Two cubits^[l] and a half was its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. ² And he overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and made a molding of gold around it. ³ And he cast for it four rings of gold for its four feet, two rings on its one side and two rings on its other side. ⁴ And he made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold ⁵ and put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark. ⁶ And he made a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half was its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. ⁷ And he made two cherubim of gold. He made them of hammered work on the two ends of the mercy seat, ⁸ one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat he made the cherubim on its two ends. ⁹ The cherubim spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat were the faces of the cherubim.

c. The Table (37:10-16)

¹⁰ He also made the table of acacia wood. Two cubits was its length, a cubit its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height. ¹¹ And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made a molding of gold around it. ¹² And he made a rim around it a handbreadth^[l] wide, and made a molding of gold around the rim. ¹³ He cast for it four rings of gold and fastened the rings to the four corners at its four legs. ¹⁴ Close to the frame were the rings, as holders for the poles to carry the table. ¹⁵ He made the poles of acacia wood to carry the table, and overlaid them with gold. ¹⁶ And he made the vessels of pure gold that were to be on the table, its plates and dishes for incense, and its bowls and flagons with which to pour drink offerings.

d. The Lampstand (37:17-24)

¹⁷ He also made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand of hammered work. Its base, its stem, its cups, its calyxes, and its flowers were of one piece with it. ¹⁸ And there were six branches going out of its sides, three branches of the lampstand out of one side of it and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side of it; ¹⁹ three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on one branch, and three cups made like almond blossoms, each with calyx and flower, on the other branch—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand. ²⁰ And on the lampstand itself were four cups made like almond blossoms, with their calyxes and flowers, ²¹ and a calyx of one piece with it under each pair of the six branches going out of it. ²² Their calyxes and their branches were of one piece with it. The whole of it was a single piece of hammered work of pure gold. ²³ And he made its seven lamps and its tongs and its trays of pure gold. ²⁴ He made it and all its utensils out of a talent^[k] of pure gold.

e. The Altar of Incense (37:25-29)

²⁵ He made the altar of incense of acacia wood. Its length was a cubit, and its breadth was a cubit. It was square, and two cubits was its height. Its horns were of one piece with it. ²⁶ He overlaid it with pure gold, its top and around its sides and its horns. And he made a molding of gold around it, ²⁷ and made two rings of gold on it under its molding, on two opposite sides of it, as holders for the poles with which to carry it. ²⁸ And he made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.

²⁹ He made the holy anointing oil also, and the pure fragrant incense, blended as by the perfumer.

f. The Altar of Burnt Offering (38:1-7)

³⁸ He made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood. Five cubits^[4] was its length, and five cubits its breadth. It was square, and three cubits was its height. ² He made horns for it on its four corners. Its horns were of one piece with it, and he overlaid it with bronze. ³ And he made all the utensils of the altar; the pots, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the fire pans. He made all its utensils of bronze. ⁴ And he made for the altar a grating, a network of bronze, under its ledge, extending halfway down. ⁵ He cast four rings on the four corners of the bronze grating as holders for the poles. ⁶ He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. ⁷ And he put the poles through the rings on the sides of the altar to carry it with them. He made it hollow, with boards.

g. The Bronze Basin (38:8)

⁸ He made the basin of bronze and its stand of bronze, from the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered in the entrance of the tent of meeting.

h. The Court of the Tabernacle (38:9-20)

⁹ And he made the court. For the south side the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, a hundred cubits; ¹⁰ their twenty pillars and their twenty bases were of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. ¹¹ And for the north side there were hangings of a hundred cubits; their twenty pillars and their twenty bases were of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. ¹² And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their ten pillars, and their ten bases; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. ¹³ And for the front to the east, fifty cubits. ¹⁴ The hangings for one side of the gate were fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and three bases. ¹⁵ And so for the other side. On both sides of the gate of the court were hangings of fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three bases. ¹⁶ All the hangings around the court were of fine twined linen. ¹⁷ And the bases for the pillars were of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. The overlaying of their capitals was also of silver, and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. ¹⁸ And the screen for the gate of the court was embroidered with needlework in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It was twenty cubits long and five cubits high in its breadth, corresponding to the hangings of the court. ¹⁹ And their pillars were four in number. Their four bases were of bronze, their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their capitals and their fillets of silver. ²⁰ And all the pegs for the tabernacle and for the court all around were of bronze.

Why do we have all this detail?

And especially, why are we given all this detail *again*!?

This brings us back to our main verb.

Asah.

And he made...

Back in chapters 25-31, the focus was on the command: “You shall make.”
Now we see the fulfillment: “And he made.”

How are we supposed to go about building Christ’s church?
The way he commanded.

If you look around the American church today,
you can see what happens when you forget this!
Churches have turned aside from the things that Luke tells us:
“they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.”

Too often churches have turned to modern marketing strategies and pop-psychology.

But Jesus says that we make disciples by doing two things:
by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit –
and by teaching them to observe all that he has commanded.

And the only way to do this is by teaching the Bible.
Paul tells Timothy in 1 Tim 4:13:
“devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.”

How do we go about building the church?
Preaching the word – and living it out.

It would be very easy to be pessimistic in our day.
We see the mainline denominations sliding away from the faith entirely.
We see evangelicalism imploding.

But we’ve been here before.
In the 18th century, Deism had largely overrun the church.
Church attendance was lower than it is today –
and many of the churches had forgotten about the gospel!
Likewise, in the 11th and the 15th centuries, there were dark times.

And think about the lesson that Moses will teach us!
Moses thinks that after they build the Tabernacle,
they will just go right in to the Promised Land –
and God will establish his kingdom!
We know that God had another plan.

Moses will spend the next *forty years* in the wilderness,
waiting for all the wilderness generation to die.
So that *Joshua* can lead the people of Israel into the land!

And no, there is no accident that he was named Joshua –
because it was the later Joshua (our Lord Jesus!)

who brings us into the Most Holy Place –
the heavenly Jerusalem!
It is Jesus who by his Spirit builds his church through his Word!

We are *not* just building a church *for us* – a social club to make *us* happy and content!
We are building a church that is here for our children and our grandchildren –
a church that will endure for generations.
Because *Jesus promised* that the gates of hell will not prevail against his church!

That's why we follow the pattern of worship that the church has used –
well, ever since Exodus 24!
That's why we sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs that have been sung –
well, ever since Exodus 15!

That's why my preaching has been more influenced as much by the early fathers
as by the latest commentaries.

We value every age of the church (including the present!) –
because we are *all* being built together into a holy dwelling place for God.

If we believe that Jesus will be faithful to his promises,
then we can go forward with confidence –
knowing that *this gospel* will accomplish its purpose
in the salvation of those who are perishing –
to the ends of the earth!