

“Bezalel”
Exodus 31:1-11
(Preached at Trinity, March 8, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Beginning in **Chapter 25** God began to give the directions concerning the Tabernacle. God was very specific about the construction of the Tabernacle. This was the only building ever designed by God.
Exodus 25:9 – “According to all that I shew thee, *after* the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make *it*.”
2. The Tabernacle was central in the worship of the Israelites and a major focus of Scripture.
 - A. The Tabernacle was Israel’s worship center for almost five hundred years - from Moses to David until Solomon’s temple was built.
 - B. Scripture gives the Tabernacle a major place - thirty seven entire chapters.
 - a. Thirteen chapters in the book of Exodus discuss the Tabernacle
 - b. Eighteen chapters in the book of Leviticus center on the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle.
 - c. Two chapters of Deuteronomy center on the Tabernacle.
 - d. Four chapters in the book of Hebrews focus on the Tabernacle.
3. Why was the Tabernacle so important? Why was God so particular in how it was to be built? Why is so much of Scripture devoted to it.
Because God would use the tabernacle to teach Israel. All of the Tabernacle had prophetic, redemptive or typical significance.
4. The Tabernacle was meant to teach Israel two essential truths.
First: The presence of God. God was present in the Tabernacle. The word for Tabernacle is מִשְׁכָּן (mishkan) - dwelling place
Second: The Tabernacle was meant to preach the Gospel to Israel – and to us. Although God was present, He was unapproachable because of their sin and defilement. They could only approach by way of sacrifice and a mediator.
How does a person enter into the presence today – through Jesus Christ.
5. All of the elements of the Tabernacle ultimately point us to Christ. Everything in the Tabernacle was important.
God ordered the materials – very costly: gold and silver, brass, blue, purple and scarlet cloth, fine white linen, white goat’s hair, ram skins that they dyed red, either badger or dolphin skins, acacia wood, oil, spices and precious stones.
6. It was to be constructed with the highest excellence in craftsmanship. Where could such craftsmen be found? We find in **Chapter 31** that God had prepared a man. He had blessed him with the gifts necessary to accomplish the construction of the Tabernacle.
Exodus 31:3 – “And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,”
7. This man was Bezalel along with his assistant, Aholiab. Bezalel means “In the shadow of God.”

- A. In **Verse 2** we read that God chose him by name. He was called and set apart. He was chosen for this work.
- B. He was chosen by God's sovereign will and purpose. God could have chosen Moses to do the work but He didn't. This wasn't Moses' gift. Moses was highly gifted as a prophet and leader but God raised up Bezalel and Aholiab and others as the skilled craftsmen.
- Exodus 31:3-5** – "And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, ⁴ To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, ⁵ And in cutting of stones, to set *them*, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship."
8. Those that God called to this work he stirred their hearts to do the work.
Exodus 36:2 – "And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, *even* every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it:"
9. They labored until the work was accomplished. They labored with excellence.
Exodus 39:43 – "And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them."
10. They were rewarded for their work – "and Moses blessed them."
11. There are several things in want us to draw from this passage.
- I. First, we need to see again that God loves beautiful things
- A. Beauty is something absolute. It is intrinsic.
1. The definition of beauty – God is beautiful and that which reflects His beauty is beautiful.
 2. We saw it in **Chapter 28** with the priestly garments
Exodus 28:2 – "And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty."
 3. The priestly garments were designed to reflect the beauty of God.
They were made of beautiful materials
They were made by craftsmen skilled in making beautiful things.
 4. The various elements of the Tabernacle were meant to be beautiful.
There were precious stones, pure gold, beautiful tapestries.
 - The Golden Lampstand was a beautiful piece of work designed to look like branches with almond clusters and flowers – all of solid gold!
 - The tables and altars had beautiful moldings around the top.
 - The curtains were sewed with fine thread and decorated with cherubim all around
 It was all filled with beauty
- B. Our post-modern world has lost all sense of the importance of beauty.
1. Modern art is often filled with ugliness and meaningless form.
 2. Even Christians have traded beauty for functionality
 3. Somehow we have come to believe that God is unconcerned about beauty
- C. Bezalel and Aholiab demonstrate that God is indeed interested in beauty
1. Their chief work and the extent of their giftedness was to produce things beautiful to the eye

2. Every element was to be produced with excellence – a eye to detail
NAS **Exodus 26:1** "Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet *material*; you shall make them with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman. (KJV – “cunning work”)
NAS **Exodus 28:3** "And you shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me."
3. The beautiful things they produced were meant to point men to the beauty of our Creator.
 - a. The beauty of creation reflects the beauty of God.
 - b. We should try to fill our lives with things of beauty.

II. We can see in Bezalel the work of Christ

- A. Jesus was chosen of God and precious
 - 1 **Peter 2:4** – “To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious,”
 1. **Verse 2** tells us Bezalel was chosen by name
Exodus 31:2 – “See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri”
 2. Jesus was sent of the Father according to the eternal Covenant of Redemption
John 5:36 – “But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.”
 3. Jesus was precious and well pleasing to His Father
- B. Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit
 1. Bezalel was equipped through the power of the Holy Spirit
Exodus 31:3 – “And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,”
 2. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit. His earthly ministry was carried on by the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit
Luke 4:1 – “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,”
Luke 4:18 – “The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,”
- C. Jesus is engaged in a work of excellence
John 4:34 – “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.
 1. Jesus is building His Church
Matthew 16:18 – “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

2. It is a work of unsurpassable excellence
Ephesians 5:26-27 – “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”
 3. God’s will is being perfectly accomplished through His dear Son.
 This is God’s exceedingly great work in history. All things point to this.
 - a. This is the meaning of history. It is a work of excellence; a work of perfection.
 - b. Not a single of of His people will be lost
- D. Just as Bezalel received a reward, so Jesus has been rewarded of the Father
Philippians 2:9 – “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:”

III. We can see our own work in Bezalel

- A. We were chosen by God – called by name
1 Peter 2:9 – “But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”
2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 – “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: ¹⁴ Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 1. God has chosen you particularly, by name
 2. He has set you apart for His service
- B. God has given you His Spirit
 1. You were called by His Spirit, regenerated by His Spirit
 2. You are equipped for service by His Spirit
1 Corinthians 12:4-6 – “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”
 3. God has given you what YOU need to serve Him
1 Corinthians 12:18 – “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”
 4. God has equipped you to edify the body, to build up the church
NAS **Ephesians 4:16** – “from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”
 5. How are you doing at building up the church through the use of your gifts?
 6. Notice again in **Chapter 36:2** that God stirred up the hearts of His people to fulfill their calling and use their gifts
Exodus 36:2 – “And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, *even* every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it:”

7. Is your heart stirred with a passion to serve Christ?
- C. Bezalel was stirred to work with excellence
1. He was filled with skill which he used to the glory of God
Exodus 31:3 – “And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship”
 2. We should notice the difference between the work of Bezalel in **Chapter 31** and Aaron in **Chapter 32**
 - a. Aaron had some skill as a sculptor but what did he make? –
Exodus 32:4 – “and fashioned it with a graving tool”
 - b. It’s possible to use your gifts for idolatry. To glorify yourself. To satisfy yourself
 3. Again, are you laboring for the glory of Christ and are you seeking to do all things with excellence?
 4. As Christians we should be perfectionists.
 - a. Somehow this has been given a negative connotation.
 - b. Is God a perfectionist? No, He IS perfection. His perfection sets the standard for everything we do.
We must give our very best in all that we do.

Conclusion:

1. Just like Bezalel God has chosen us and called us by name. He has set us apart as His holy servants. He has filled us with His Spirit and equipped us to work with excellence.
2. Do you have this passion – to do everything for His glory with excellence?
3. Are you using your gifts to the fullest?
^{NAS} **Romans 12:6** – “And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *let each exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷ if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”