



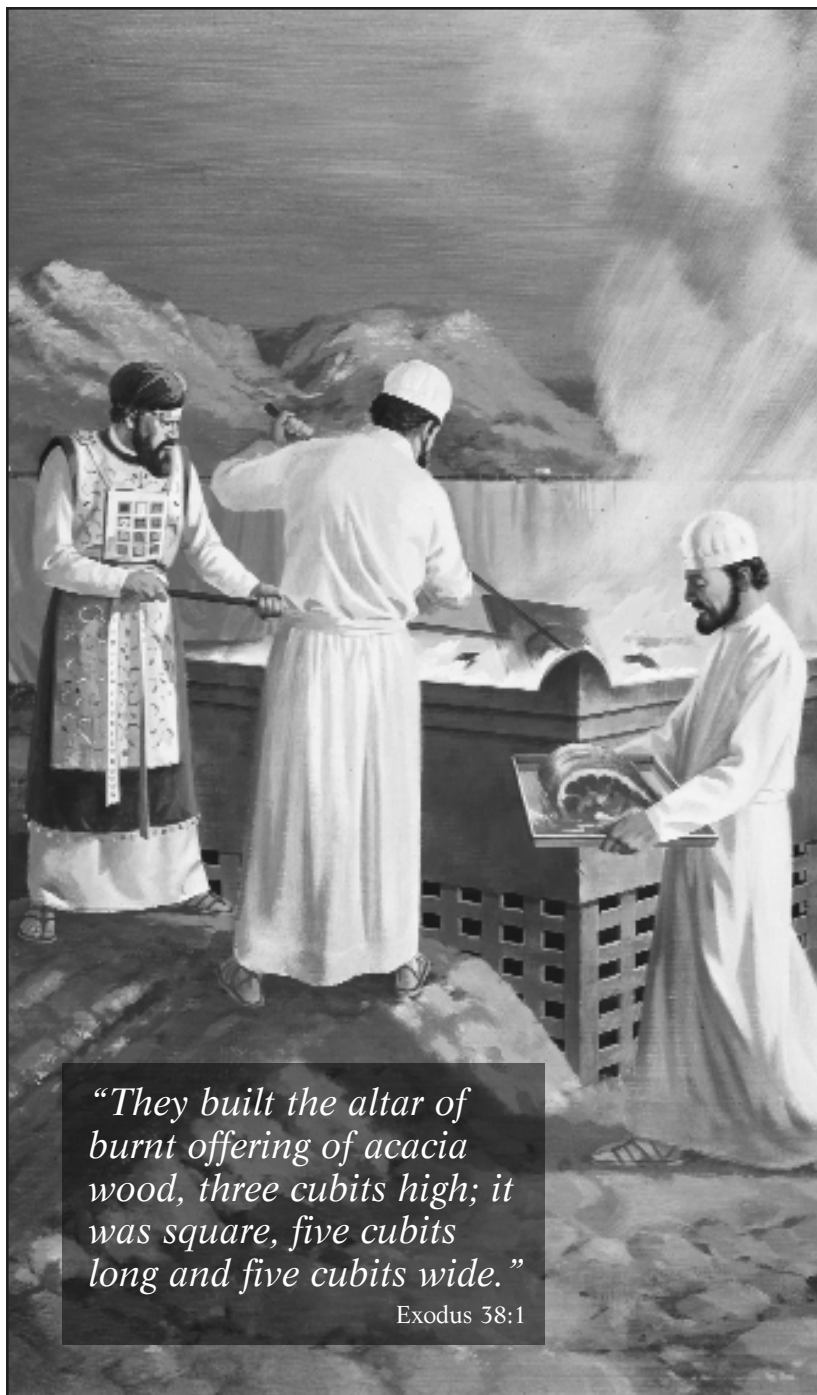
CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

EXODUS

Week 4



“They built the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood, three cubits high; it was square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.”

Exodus 38:1

Fire Pit and Midnight Oil

DAY 22

Exodus 27:1-21; 38:1-20

Do you ever burn the midnight oil? What for? Do you do it regularly?

1. What was cooking in the box-like fire pit?
2. Why were burnt offerings used in worship? Why are they no longer needed today (Heb 8 and 10)?
3. How big was the courtyard? What was at its center, between the east and west ends (27:9, 12-13)? Was there a diminishing of holiness as one moved out from the center?
4. Why the seven-and-a-half-foot-tall curtain around this courtyard?
5. Why did the lampstand burn all night long in perpetuity (27:20-21)? Why only the purest of oil?

1. What does all this attention to (and repetition of) detail say about worship, then and now? Could repetition be a good thing?

2. Religious workaholics tend to burn the midnight oil attempting to earn God's favor, but God's grace, not individual effort, causes the Light of Christ to illuminate our lives as Christ-followers.

***Horns**, or corner projections on the altar (27:2), were significant as both places of help and refuge (1Ki 1:50; 2:28), and as a place of atonement, where bull's blood was placed (29:12; Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30).*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word



“These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve me as priests. Have them use gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.”

Exodus 28:4-5

Exodus 28:1-43; 39:2-31

Have you ever made a fashion statement with hats? Shoes? Jeans? Special T-shirts? Eye glasses? Furs? Jewelry? Designer clothes?

1. What materials and colors made the priestly clothes special (28:2-8)? Why create special clothes for the priests to wear? What “fashion statement” were they making?

2. What was an “ephod” (28:6; see related note)? What accessories adorned the shoulder straps, waistband and breastpiece (28:9-14, 17-30)?

3. What purpose did the breastpiece serve? The Urim and Thummim present a mystery. What was their purpose?

4. What other priestly garments was Aaron to be outfitted with? Why the bells (28:34-35)? What was “holy to the Lord” (28:36-38)?

1. What colors and kinds of robes and vestments, if any, have special meaning in the rituals and ceremonies of Christ-less religion?

2. What in your life is holy to the Lord?

3. How did this high priest’s clothing differ from that in Ephesians 6:11-17? Which can you see yourself wearing?

*The **ephod** (28:6) was a sleeveless vest-like garment worn by the high priest. This vestment featured twelve gemstones representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Attached to the ephod was a breastpiece or shield housing the **Urim and Thummim** (28:30). The Urim and Thummim meant something like “the curses and the perfections” or “things from first to last” or “No” and “Yes.” The Urim and Thummim were somehow used in casting lots to determine God’s will (see Nu 27:21).*

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Take My Life and Let it be Consecrated...

Exodus 29:1-46

OPENING
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What do you think a pastor or priest needs in order to have a credible ministry?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What parts of this service require more explanation? For example, what distinguished the *sin offering* (29:10-14, 36) from the *wave offering* (29:22-26), from the *fellowship offering* (29:27-28), from the *morning and evening offerings* (29:38-39)?

2. What NT significance is evident in the washing (29:4; see Heb 10:22)? In the new garments? In the laying on of hands to transfer sins to the sin-bearing substitute (Ex 29:10, 15, 19; see Lev 16:20-22; Isa 53:12)? In the burning of the sin offering outside the camp (Ex 29:14; see Heb 13:11-13)? In the burning of the entire ram (Ex 29:18, 34)? In the application of blood to different body parts (29:20)?

3. What bottom line was served by all these rituals (29:42-46)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How would you feel being the one ordained as described in this passage? (a) grossed out, (b) clean all over, (c) set apart and special, (d) burdened with responsibility.

2. Do any of the instructions for Aaron's ordination help you celebrate your own calling? Are there any elements of sacrifice that indicate you have dedicated or consecrated yourself totally to God?

WINDOW
on the Word

This material is duplicated in Leviticus 8:1-33, which bears many literary and theological connections—even verbatim parallels—with this current section. Notes from the Leviticus passage will explain many of the terms used here.

Smells, Signs and Seal of the Covenant

DAY 25

Exodus 30:1–31:18

The last time you smelled incense, how was it being used? (a) at a religious ritual, (b) in an alien culture, (c) in the late '60s counterculture, (d) as a room freshener. What would a Christian fragrance smell like?

1. Why burn incense? (a) as a room freshener, (b) to get a spiritual high, (c) to add meaning to prayer and worship, (d) to lead people to worship by the nose.
2. Why the census? (a) to raise revenue for the ministry, (b) to symbolically ransom the Israelites held captive by Egypt, (c) to avoid divine punishment.
3. What made the anointing oil (30:23-33) and the incense (30:34-38) sacred?
4. Who or what qualified Bezalel and Oholiab to do their jobs? Was there any room for creative variance from the Architect's plan?

1. What skills have been in your family for generations? What work do you feel God may have selected just for you?
2. What does it mean for a Christ-follower that God knows his workers by name and cares about their craftsmanship—even details about materials, design and function?

*There is no explanation given in the OT for the practice of burning **incense**, but it is symbolically associated with the prayers of God's people (Ps 141:2; Lk 1:10; Rev 5:8; 8:3-4). A **census** was taken on seven recorded occasions, for various reasons—taxation, accounting, land grants and military purposes. In this case (Ex 30:11-16), the census was a revenue-generator. The **head tax** of half a shekel (less than a dollar in today's economy) was small enough to ensure that everyone could pay, but large enough to serve as a token reminder of God's priceless mercy in redeeming Israel.*

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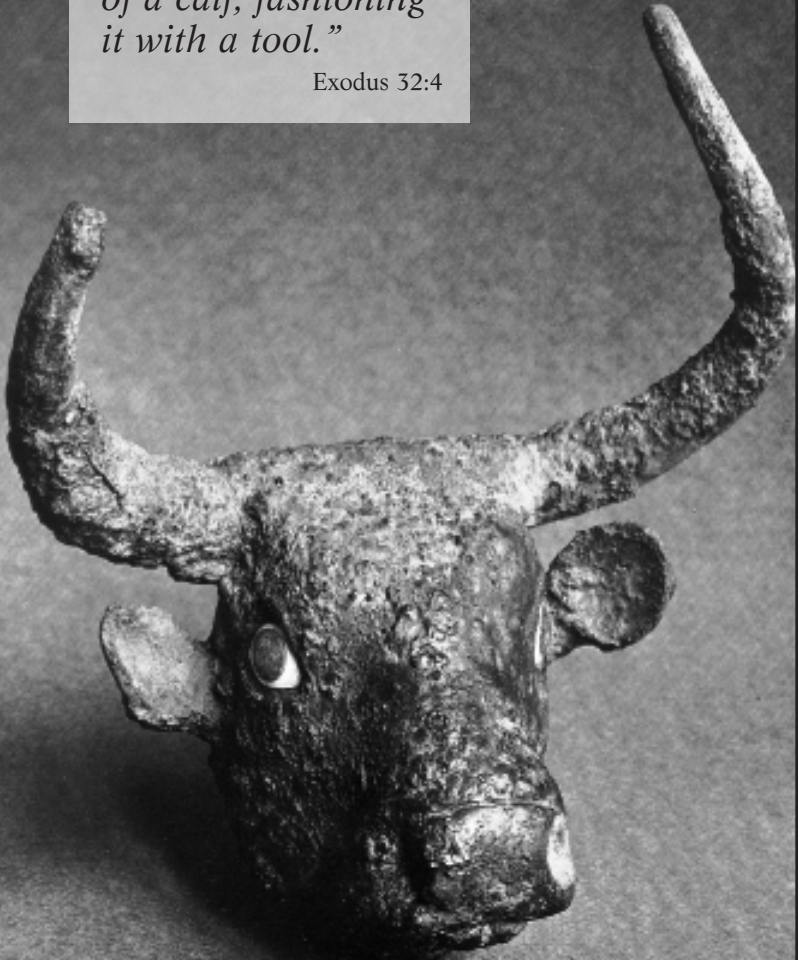
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“He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool.”

Exodus 32:4



Sumerian artifact, The Louvre, Paris

Golden Calf and Gold Dust

DAY 26

Exodus 32:1–33:6-35

What do you have the hardest time with—waiting for an appointment, being stood up, wasting time or being impatient with others? What do you typically do to fill the time?

1. Why make a golden calf after experiencing God's redemption from slavery in Egypt (32:1-6)?
2. How did Aaron justify his actions?
3. What does the term "stiff-necked" imply (32:9)? What was God's response to these people? How did Moses respond to God disowning Israel (32:11)?
4. Where had Moses been all this time?
5. Why did Moses smash the tablets and force Israel to drink gold dust? (a) this was a deliberate action, (b) this was an angry overreaction, (c) to symbolize the shattered relationship between God and Israel.
6. How did Moses fare as a mediator for the Israelites (32:11-14, 30-34)?
7. What was God's attitude toward this terrible sin (33:1-6)? Was God still angry? What would become of the covenant promises?

1. Is there anything that might lead you astray from Jesus or test your loyalty to him?
2. What do you do when you haven't communicated with God in a while? Where does the barrier usually lie?
3. What has been the outcome of any spiritual dry spells you have experienced?

Bull images were connected with ancient Near Eastern gods, which makes Aaron's golden calf (32:4) all the more idolatrous.

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Tent, Tabernacle and Tablets

Exodus 33:7–34:35

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Have you ever been in the presence of a famous person? Has anyone ever shaken your hand, causing you not to wash that hand for days?

DIGGING
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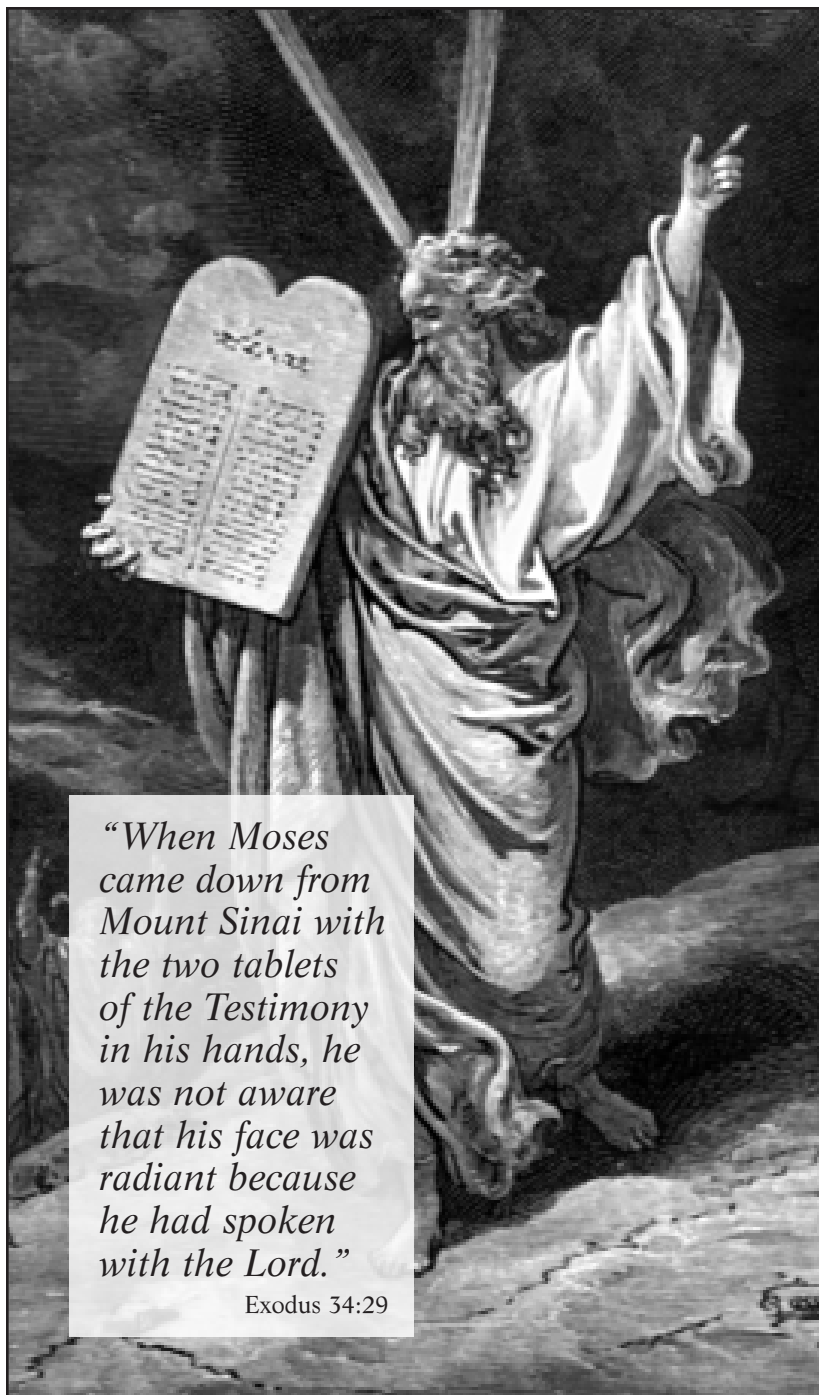
1. Note the context before and after the stunning climax in 33:17. Why seek God's face and favor at this time? What prompted God's surprising response?
2. What was Moses' relationship with God like? (a) master-servant, (b) teacher-pupil, (c) king-ambassador. By contrast, what is Jesus' relationship with you (Jn. 15:15)?
3. What did God promise Moses (33:14, 17, 19; 34:10-11, 24)? What conditions or responsibilities came with each renewed promise?
4. What did the new stone tablets teach about God (34:10-26; compare 13:11-16; 20:1-17; 23:12-19)?
5. What behaviors were so horrific to God that the Israelites should never do them?
6. Moses wore a veil to hide his face—radiant with God's glory—from the fearful Israelites (34:29-35). How is this veil significant for Christians (2Co 3:7-18)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Imagine God inviting you to meet him in a tent. What would you say? Who would you take with you?
2. Do you sense God being near or far away? Speaking or silent? Angry or merciful? Leading you or leaving you alone?
3. Can others tell the difference when you've spent extra time with the Lord? How so?

WINDOW
on the Word

Since no man has seen or can see God (33:20; compare Jn 1:18), what was revealed here is not how God looks, but a glimpse of God's glory—what God really is—his goodness, his name (character) and sovereign mercy (33:19).

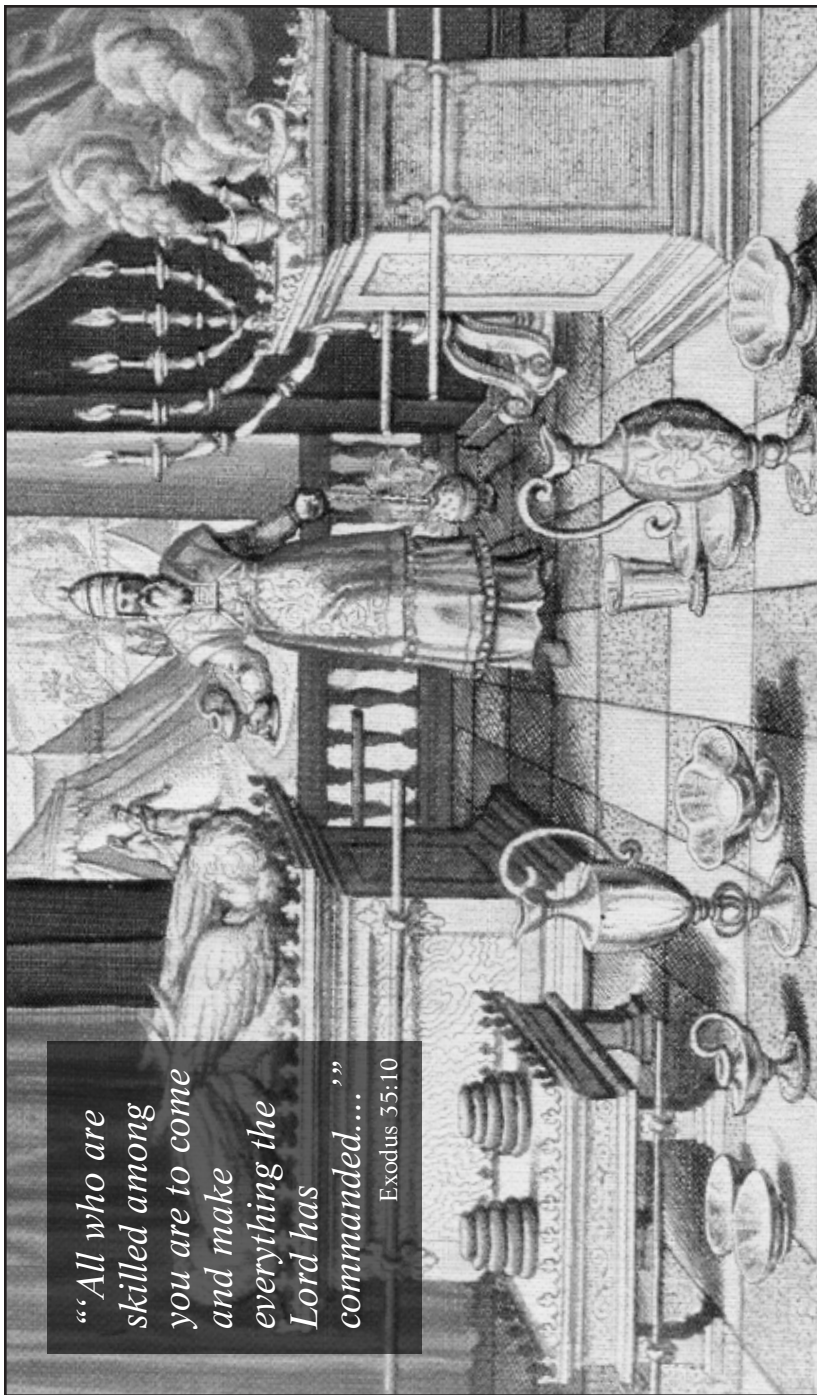


“When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord.”

Exodus 34:29

*“All who are
skilled among
you are to come
and make
everything the
Lord has
commanded....”*

Exodus 35:10



Community at Work and Worship

DAY 28

Exodus 34:1-39:43

Have you visited a variety of churches? Did you think that God was present at any of them? What led you to your conclusion?

1. Scan the specifications for working on the Tabernacle and make a “to do” list. Describe a week in this community at work and worship (35:2).

2. What was special about the gifts offered here (35:4-29)? Is there anything about the workers that deserves notice? (a) men and women were both involved, (b) their willingness, (c) their generosity, (d) their resourcefulness, (e) their obedience, (f) their exuberance, (g) their giftedness.

3. What do the materials used (Ex 38:21-31) tell you about the peoples’ attitude toward God?

4. How many times did Moses do “as the Lord commanded”? Why this constant refrain?

1. Do you believe physical representations of God (church architecture, furnishings, art work) help or hinder Christians as they follow Christ? How do such religious objects and aids to worship differ from a religious idol?

2. In what ways do some Christian traditions recognize the gifts of everyone? Taking a tip from Moses, how could Christian groups improve on that?

3. How does the freewill offering taken here compare with the offerings taken by churches you may have attended?

*This section repeats much of **Yahweh's instructions**, but in a somewhat different order. Exodus 35:1–39:31 parallels much of 25:1-7; 39:32-41; 31:2-6; 26:1-37; 25:10-39; 30:1-5; 27:1-19; 28:6-43. Here, stated mostly in the past tense, is Israel's fulfillment of Yahweh's instructions. That the work assigned earlier is completed, “as commanded by the Lord,” is a point made explicit at 35:29; 36:5; 38:22; 39:1, 7, 21, 31. On the offering of materials, the recognition of the artisans, the construction of the Tabernacle furnishings and the making of the priestly garments, see previous notes.*

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A Job Well Done

Exodus 39:32–40:33

OPENING
up to the Word

Has anyone ever noticed that you had accomplished “a job well done” or “everything as commanded”? Were you praised or promoted for it?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What had the Israelites done? How well? What was the motivation?
2. What did Moses do with all the materials they brought him?
3. Did Israel always do everything “as the Lord commanded Moses” (39:32, 42; compare 25:9; 32:1-6)? What specific jobs did Moses fulfill “as the Lord commanded him” (40:16)? What standard did he use to determine that the job was complete?
4. Why do you think God wanted the Tabernacle built in the first place? Why did he want it done so precisely?
5. Is there a danger of localizing God to one building, group or place? How is that problem addressed here (40:34-38)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Moses blessed his many workers for their contributions. Have you received a blessing for work done for the Lord? Under the new covenant, isn't the greatest blessing we receive completely undeserved?
2. How does God, in Christ, enable Christ-followers to be his workmanship (Eph. 2:8-10)?

Life on the Road with God

DAY 30

Exodus 40:34-38

What do you like about life on the road? (a) fast food, (b) changes of weather, (c) travel games, (d) sightseeing, (e) new places to worship.

1. Who or what finally fulfills the purpose for which the Tabernacle was built (40:34)? When God moved on, what did that mean?

2. How does the end of the book of Exodus compare with its beginning? With the other glorious manifestations of the Lord (Ex 12 and 20)?

3. What did the household of Israel hope and dream for while on the road?

4. God always traveled with the Israelites. What do you think that meant to them? (a) safety, (b) guidance, (c) comfort, (d) gentle prodding.

1. Have you ever lived like the Israelites, with no place to call home?

2. Do you believe God is traveling with you now? How close? (a) overhead like a cloud, (b) inside like a fire, (c) no sign of his presence, (d) other.

3. What sign of his presence could God show you that would make him seem more real to you?

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