

Vayakel Exodus - Shemoth (35.1-38.20)

After the golden calf and breaking the stone tablets of God's Ten Commandments, Moses returns to Mt. Sinai for another 40 days and 40 nights and brings back a second set of stone tablets. Moses gathered the Israelites to share all that God had commanded. Moses said "God commands a holy Sabbath. Six days you shall work but on the seventh day no-one may work. Whoever works on the Sabbath shall be put to death. You shall create no fire on the Sabbath day."

Moses continued, "This is what God has commanded. Everyone moved by his or her heart to donate to God shall bring gifts for the Sanctuary. These gifts can be gold or silver, wool or linen, wood or oil, spices or stones, anything to make the Sanctuary more glorious. Let everyone with talent and skills help make this Sanctuary and everything it." Right away the whole Israelite community went to find gifts. Men and women, brought these gifts to build the Sanctuary, the Tent of Appointed Meeting with God.

Moses then said, "God has called out by name Bezalel and Oholiab and filled them with the spirit of God and the knowledge and talent to craft and teach you how to use your skills to make God's Tent of Appointed Meeting." Moses then gave the Hebrews gifts to Bezalel and Oholiab and they, along with all the other artisans, began to lovingly craft the holy Sanctuary according to God's specific instructions. As they work, the Israelites keep bringing their voluntary gifts for the Sanctuary until there was so many Moses told them to stop bringing any more.

Here is how The Tent of Appointed Meeting with God was made. The Inner Sanctuary was made of fine twisted linen cloth with an angel design and a roof of goat's hair. Its sides are made of acacia wood covered with gold. Its curtains are made of blue, purple and red cloth also with an angel design. Bezalel then makes the Ark which will hold God's Tablets Of Testimony. He makes it out of gold covered acacia wood. The Ark's cover is made out of pure gold and crafted so that two angels face each other and their wings spread out over the Ark to protect it.

For outside the Ark's chamber, Bezalel made a gold covered acacia wood table and gold utensils for the bread. He made the decorative seven branched Menorah lamp out of pure gold, hammering it out of a single piece of metal.

Bezalel made the Incense Alter out of gold covered acacia wood altar with its top, its horns and its rims of out pure gold, as well as its utensils. He prepared sacred anointing oil and incense. He made the burnt offering Altar out of copper as were its utensils.

Bezalel then makes the copper Washstand and finishes up with the enclosure which created an entrance for the Tent of Appointed Meeting With God out of long curtains of finely twisted blue, purple and red linen.

Questions: 1) How do you rest on Shabbat? 2) As a giver of gifts to God (or to humans), do you give the exact amount, a little more or a little less? 3) What is the meaning of so much gold in the Sanctuary?

Illustration ideas: The Israelites bringing gifts...men and women working together on the Sanctuary... any part of the Tent of Appointed Meeting, ark, tabernacle, curtains etc...the angels on the Ark cover...