

Equipped by the Spirit of God

Reading (Exodus 31: 1-6) (John 14: 26)

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Background: God wants to live among us.

In previous chapters Exodus, we read God led Israelites out of Egypt. He performed many miracles, so that Pharaoh agreed to let Israelis leave. Exodus chapter 13, "By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people"(21-22). God was guiding his people, led them out of slavery, running to the land that He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In the desert, God has a job for Israelites to do, that was to make the tabernacle—not a permanent building, but rather a big tent which can be easily dismantled and carried away by Israelis to the next camp site.

Why did God want a tabernacle? Was it because He had no place to live, so that He had a shelter from the Sun, the sandstorm?

In chapter 25, verse 8, the LORD said" ⁸Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them." The reason to build the tabernacle is because, God wanted to dwell among his people. Please note, it was not Moses or Israelis asked God to live in them, it was God Himself took the initiative action, "I want to live among you".

God didn't dwell in people at beginning, because he was busy leading the people out of Egypt to a safe place. He performed all super natural miracles to establish his absolute authority over his creation, to show and convince Egyptians and Israelis that He is the LORD, the sovereign God.

Now after they crossed the red sea, the threat of Egyptian army resolved, God had a new plan for his people, a plan to train and teach his people to know more about Him. To achieve this, Lord wanted to dwell among his people, so that they could knew him first hand. After about 400 years after Joseph's time, most Israelites didn't know God as the way Jacob or Joseph did. To most of them, the LORD, YHWH, was a name they only heard of but never ever had a chance to have intimate relationship with. Who is the LORD, what are the things he likes, or not like; what shall we do or not to do to please him? How can we do to worship him? So God decided to live in Israelites so that they could start to learn more about Him.

Interesting fact is that God didn't speak to Israelis for 400 years before Jesus came. God decided to became flesh to dwell among his people. This time, He is going to live the life that his people could see and witness, so that they would have no excuses to say they didn't know God.

Do you see God's heart here? It has always been God's desired to meet his people ever since He created Adam. God hasn't changed. His passion for his children never changes—that is lead us know Him more, to lead us to be more like him.

God gives gifts

So God asked Israelites to build this tabernacle, the ark of covenant and all utensils in the tabernacle. Problem is no one had seen these things before, so no one knew how to build them.

Here we read

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ²“See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— ⁴to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, ⁵to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts.”

God had chosen Bezalel son of Uri. Pay attention to this. It is God who chose Bezalel. If God asks you to do something, he will give you a gift to get it done. He always equips his people to do his work.

Example. (Peter)—Peter didn't pastor a church before.

Today we are called to build temple in where? In our heart. Paul said “don't you know your body is the temple of Lord”. Today God commands us to build his temple among the people. How? Will God equip us? Yes.

²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14: 26)

As God gave Bezalel skills and talent to build tabernacle, same way today, God gives us Holy Spirit to build His kingdom among us.

Remember, we are here today is not by chance, today we are sitting here, not elsewhere is because God has chosen you to build his temple, and He will equip you, He will give you wisdom, power, strength, and the Spirit to help you build his temple.

Maybe you think, who am I, how can God use a small person like me? Hudson Taylor said “All God's giants have been weak men, who did great things for God because they reckoned on His being with them.”

God builds His team

⁶ Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you.”

God doesn't send you to do the work alone, He knows you need help. He knows you can't do things by yourself.

A rope has greater strength than the combined individual strength of the strands that make it up? Why is this? The answer is quite simple. Individual strands have weak spots along them, points at which they easily break. But in a rope, the weak spots are randomly distributed along the length of the rope and the twist in the rope allows the surrounding strands to cancel out the weak spots of the individual fibres.

It's the same with people. We all have strengths and weaknesses. On our own our weaknesses can break us, but together we work to achieve strength for all.

When US built the Pacific Railroad, which was the first transcontinental railroad in USA, a lot of Chinese Labours were recruited to do the job. So the management found out despite the fact Chinese were physically not as strong as Europeans, they worked far more efficient than Europeans. Chinese seldom got sick, because they drank boiler water, they didn't go to pub so there was no hungover. He then found out Chinese were very quick and accurate to get the nuts and bolts on rails. So he divided his team, Europeans, physically stronger, were in charge of laying the rails, Chinese were in charge of put on the nuts and bolts, and boiling water. So in the end, his team had less sickness, and work much more efficiently than before. During a competition between west and east team, they beat the eastern side team by far.

So God gathered all kinds of people to work together building his tabernacle.

God has a heart for us not just living among us, He also wants build us together as a team. A good leader knows how to build his team, he will diligently delegate work to his team, give them a vision, motivate them, encourage them, bond them together, driven them to achieve the vision.

God gave Israelis different skills, Bezalel, Oholiab and all other workers, they all had their small part of job to do. Though they didn't know what the final product would be, what they needed to do was to obey God's command. Because God had the blue print.

In the same way, Jesus asked us to build the temple, and He gives us spirit to help us.

In Ephesians 4, Paul said there is one Lord, one father, one spirit, one body, but to each one of us, God gives us different gifts, he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers so that we can build one body, one church, one tabernacle for Jesus to dwell among us.

When you are given the task from God. All you need to do is being good at it. All of us are delegated work by God in some respect. If God asks to be a builder, then be good at it; if a teacher, be good at it; if a husband, be good at it, a wife, be good at it. Because by being good at what you do, you give honour to the LORD, because he puts you at this position. Together we can build God's team.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.(Romans 8:28)

Equipment from God

Let's have a look how many skills are required to build the tabernacle.

⁴to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, ⁵to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts...⁷the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent— ⁸the table and its articles, the pure gold lampstand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, ⁹the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand— ¹⁰and also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and

the garments for his sons when they serve as priests, ¹¹and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They are to make them just as I commanded you."

Our God is a very detailed God, here He listed all the detailed works the Israelis needed to do and He gave them skills accordingly. In chapter 35 to 40, Moses recorded in details how the tabernacle was built according to God's demand. Well in the Old Testament time, the tabernacle and the temple were physical buildings, today God give us ability and gifts to build temple in peoples heart, this building is no longer a physical building, so we need different skills and gifts.

Gifts of holy spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11),

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit a **message of wisdom**, to another **a message of knowledge** by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another **gifts of healing** by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another **miraculous powers**, to another **prophecy**, to another **distinguishing between spirits**, to another speaking in different kinds of **tongues**, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues**. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines."

Note this, these gifts are not obtained by yourself, these are gifts given by the Spirit. Same way as God gave knowledge and skills to Bezalel, Oholiab and all other workers in the desert. God is still busying working today

In Romans 12 (to build the body)

⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

We are serving a living God, His heart never changes. He still wants to live among us today. We need to build a temple so that He can live among us .

Will God give us gifts to build the Temple? Of course, same as in Moses time. Now comes the question, do you know your gift? Are you aware what kind of gifts you have? If you don't know your gift how can you build the temple of the Lord.

In the coming new year, I pray we all have deeper knowledge of God. The more you know about God, the more you know about yourself. The more you serve God, the better your life will be.