

## **You Shall Know I AM: The Beauty of the LORD**

(Exodus 31:1-11; 35:4- 39:42)

4/28/19

When God has a special task in mind, He hand picks His servants that have been equipped with God-given gifts to accomplish His plan. God always provides the necessary resources to complete the task.

### INTRODUCTION

We have been studying from the book of Exodus. The theme of this book is “You Shall Know that I AM.” God not only wants His people to know that He is the Self-Existing Sovereign God, who is all powerful, but also He wants the rest of the world to know. God displayed His awesome power to Pharaoh as well as to His people through the 10 plagues. After being overwhelmed by God, Pharaoh finally let God’s people go to worship the Lord.

On their way to the Promised Land, the Lord provided His people the Law, where it gave instruction as to how they could have a relationship with God and how they could worship Him. In addition, the Law taught them how they could live in harmony with mankind. God has called His people to be a set apart people so that they could shine for the Lord. They were to be a blessing to the rest of the world.

After receiving the Law, God provided His people directions to build Him a place of worship in a form of a Tabernacle. They had been in Egypt for 400 years. Most of the Hebrews had forgotten how to worship the Lord. That is why the Lord gave His people the Law to provide instructions to seek reconciliation before the Lord.

Before the Tabernacle could be built, resources were needed to build it. First, the right people to build the Tabernacle. Second, the right material to build the Tabernacle. In Exodus 31, God calls skillful craftsmen to build His Tabernacle. Let us read Exod. 31:1-2 where God identifies the master craftsman. “Then the Lord said to Moses, “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.”

#### A. God Calls Skillful Craftsmen to Build His Tabernacle

##### 1. The Call to Service

We see here the call to service. God chose Bezalel. He was identified by name. God knew exactly who He wanted for this important task. Being an artist might not seem to be very valuable, but God acknowledged his gifts and ability. God handpicked his servant to accomplish His task.

**ILLUSTRATION:** My daughter, Grace, in middle school, wanted to be a cheerleader. I had a poor stereotype of what a cheerleader was. I strongly discouraged her from trying out. She missed the first practice and I was happy, feeling that would hinder her from being selected. I asked her why she wanted to be a cheerleader. She said that she was capable of being one. It was not because of status, but ability. Later, I was shocked to find out that she was selected. Afterward, I told her that God had placed her in that position and she should be the best cheerleader she could be and to represent God well. Later, she was selected to be the head cheerleader for the team and was a positive influence to her peer. God gave her special talent and she used it to honor God.

God has a special plan for each of us. Some of us are gifted with gifts that are not as common as those around us. We might not be good in math, but excel in art. We do not have a passion for science, but has a great love for dance. We might not fit the normal mode of one that might do well in life. But they can be used for the kingdom of God.

God makes all of us in a special and distinct way. No matter who we are, we are significant before the Lord. He has an extraordinary task for each of us. Scripture said in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." We are not created to bring glory to self, but to give glory to God. Note what Col. 1:15, "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."

These abilities are given to us to give honor to God. God has wired us with unique gifts for a special calling. No matter what gifts and ability we might have, God can be honored by our skills. [As we read verse 3-5, we see Bezalel's gift and ability or capacity for service. "and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts- to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship." He was a very gifted craftsman that God picked to oversee the building project of the Tabernacle. ]

## 2. The Capacity for Service

Bezalel was identified as one filled with the Spirit of God. This is very unique to find people filled with the Holy Spirit in OT. God had not only called Bezalel, but also equipped Bezalel for this task. God not only calls us, but also equips and trains us for that calling. An example this is through the life of Moses.

ILLUSTRATION: God had called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. But It took 80 years of equipping before he was ready to complete the task God had called Moses to. God trained Moses both in the Egyptian palace as well as in the Midian desert to lead His people out of Egypt. God also equipped Bezalel with artistic skill for this special task God had appointed him. Sometimes, God make us go on a detour to learn an important lesson to equip us for future task.

ILLUSTRATION: I remember when I was about to finish college, I felt God was calling me to go to seminary to prepare for full-time vocational service. However, my parents did not allow me to go to seminary. In respect to them, I did not go. Instead, I taught high school for two years. Initially, I thought I wasted two years. But looking back, those were two incredible years of learning. As a teacher, God taught me to handle tough situations. It has been invaluable for me as a pastor later on. God does not waste anything in our life to equip us for his calling.

Some of you might be going through some difficult challenges. God might be preparing you for something significant down the road. God filled Bezalel with the Holy Spirit and gave him passion and ability in all kinds of crafts. He skillful with precious metals as well masonry and woodwork. He was gifted with all kind of craftsmanship. Therefore, he was the perfect supervisor of this important project.

ILLUSTRATION: How has God gifted you? Are you going to embrace it and make best use of it for the kingdom of God? God has blessed our church with all kinds of believers that are gifted in variety ways. I am thankful for Bill Huang, who has been gifted with the gift of teaching. He is able to explain God's word in a clear and simple way. We are blessed with Amy Tsui with gift of administration. She thinks through things systematically and in great detailed. God has raised Malcolm Perrin and Janine Wong with the gift of evangelism. They are passionate in sharing the good news with the lost. God has raised Jonathan Huang with the gift of shepherding and discipling. He has a caring heart. Someone I admire a whole lot is Joe Gor, who is a quiet servant that has the gift of help. He is faithful and dependable working behind the scenes. Connie Poon Chow has the gift of hospitality; she has a way of welcoming guests and helping them feel comfortable. Are your using your gifts and abilities for the kingdom of God?

[ God not only called and equipped Bezalel, but He also provided him with a companion. God many times brings a companion to team up with us for service. We see this in verse 6, "Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also God has given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you." ]

### 3. The Companion for Service

God appointed Oholiab to be Bezalel to be his assistant. He was called to help the master craftsman. Oholiab was a second fiddle. Not everyone is called to be the leader, but being the right hand person is a critical for the task. When a leader has a good right hand man, they can accomplish so much more.

ILLUSTRATION: After leading the English congregation as the lead pastor for 33 years, God called me to serve as executive pastor as well as an English Pastor. God taught me to be a Barnabas, who was the one that trained Paul. But later in his career, Barnabas recognized Paul's potential. As a result, he stepped back to allow Paul to lead as Barnabas plays the second fiddle. When Pastor Jason was appointed as Lead Pastor, we became equal as executive team member, but as an English Pastor, I was technically subordinate to him. I became the second fiddle or first lieutenant. Together we were able to do so much more as a team.

God believes in teams. He called both Bezalel and Oholiab to work together. Oholiab was also gifted with skills. In addition, God has called other craftsmen to join hands with them in building the Tabernacle. God assembled others together with gifts in working with metals, stones, and wood.

No matter how gifted we are, we need others to work along our side. It is when we think we can do it all that will create pride and pride will lead to a fall. May we acknowledge how God has gifted us and has valued our gifts, even if it might not be very visible gifts. I am thankful for those that work behind the scene like Jackie Huang with the church website, Vincent Chan on the audio, & Alice Chu on the power point.

### 4. The Categories of Service

In Exod. 31:7-11, Moses identified a number of categories of service. It included the articles of the Tabernacle, the apparel of the priests, and the anointing oil and fragrant incense. There were many different tasks that required many different skills. God called

all kinds of people to work together. Let us read Exod. 35:10, “All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the Lord has commanded.” Now the invitation to the work was wider. Not only Bezalel and Oholiab could take part, but “every able man” could share in the construction. There were all different kinds of service available. God had equipped them and they used their gifts for the kingdom.

APPLICATION: There are many different areas of services in this church. As we approach the summer months, we give our children and youth Sunday school teachers a break. Therefore, there is a need to find volunteers to serve over the summer for our children and youth. If you are interested, please contact Mr. Frank and Stanley.

[ God not only handpicked his servants and equipped them to build His Tabernacle, but God also provided abundant resources to build His Tabernacle. ]

## B. God Provides Abundant Resources to Build His Tabernacle

We see earlier that God was calling skillful craftsmen to build His tabernacle. Now He was commanding His people to contribute material toward building His tabernacle. God went into much details as to what He needed. God had set up the blueprint for the place of worship. He then identified all the materials that were needed.

### 1. The Reason for the Contribution

God commanded them to take an offering. Let us read Exod. 35:4-5, “Moses said to the whole Israelite community, “This is what the Lord has commanded. From what you have, take an offering for the Lord. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the Lord an offering of gold, silver, and bronze.” The author goes on to list not only precious metals, but fine linen, animal skins, acacia wood, oil, spices and stones. There were a lot of different materials that were needed.

Note that God asked all the people from what they had to give back to Him. God had blessed His people abundantly. When the Hebrews left Egypt, the Egyptians gave them precious metals like gold and silver as well as precious linens. Now, God commanded them to offer up a contribution toward the Tabernacle. The reason for the contribution was that it was commanded by God. God commanded His people to offer up their talents or abilities as well as their treasures or their possessions.

ILLUSTRATION: Yesterday, at the leadership conference, a member came up to me and said, “God has blessed us abundantly. We should give more sacrificially to the Lord.” Do we realize how much God has given to us? All that we have comes from the Lord. May we give back to Him what He has entrusted to us.

God does not love a person because he can afford to give more to the work of God than someone else. When it comes to giving, God is more interested in the heart behind the gift. Remember the poor widow giving in Mark 12:41-44, “Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything- all she had to live on.” In 2 Cor. 9:6, God said that He loves a cheerful giver. May we learn to give sacrificially with a cheerful heart.

## 2. The Response for the Contribution

It is interesting to see how the people responded to God's command. They gave generously. It was also an obvious sign that they were grateful to the Lord. Giving is an act of worship. It was for the Lord's work. This offering was made up of both materials and service. This offering was given by both men and women. It was given freely. Their hearts were stirred and they were willing to give and not out of obligation. In Exod. 36:5, "The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work of the Lord commanded to be done. Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work." The craftsmen whom God had chosen had to dissuade the rest of the congregation from bringing further gifts.

May we examine how God has been good to us and give accordingly. How has God gifted you in talent and treasure? He has a special task for you like Bezalel and Oholiab. May we be available for the Lord to serve Him with our abilities and possessions.

When God has a special task in mind, He hand picks His servants that have been equipped with God-given gifts to accomplish His plan. God always provides the necessary resources to complete the task.