

FEBRUARY 13

Exodus 35:10-36:38

Exodus 35:10-35

Lots of observations here, but I'll only make a few.

Vs. 10-19 Being a pastor, I always wonder how Moses did this logistically. God had already told Moses which men had been especially gifted for the work of construction. Did they hold meetings? How did Moses communicate the detailed designs he was given? Did they have a white board or did they each have little stone tablets?

Vs. 20-29 The people gave willingly and eventually had to be restrained in their giving. They also gave willingly to make the calf. Giving doesn't tell the entire story, nor is it a sure sign of spiritual maturity.

The caution I see in all of this, for us as disciples, is that if they had sought the Lord and waited on Him, they would have gotten what they wanted, a place and symbol of worship. God was already giving the plan to Moses as they were pressing Aaron to allow them to go bovine. As often as I have heard preachers "wax elephants" on this story, talking about the willing heart of the people, as Paul/Spirit reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10, all of these people who were giving (except a couple) rebelled and died in the wilderness. Sin is incurable and the heart is deceitful beyond all things. Our religious routines and sacrifices do not mean spiritual maturity and can be used by us to gain our own ends and pacify our guilt. Our only hope is to keep our hearts soaked daily in the Word and to set our hearts on closely, humbly following the Spirit.

Vs. 30-35 Apparently Bezalel was the main leader and artist of the tabernacle. The "he" of chapter 36 probably refers to Bezalel. Bezalel taught himself and Oholiab to make what needed to be made, and these two men led and guided all the men and women who worked on the tabernacle.

One point of trivia in v. 30 is that the title, *son of Hur*, would have been pronounced "Ben Hur." You were wondering where they got the title for that movie, right? You'll notice in the movie, Ben Hur is of the tribe of Judah.

Exodus 36

Vs. 1-7 Notice that after commissioning Bezalel and Oholiab, the first order of business was to get the people to stop bringing stuff. Apparently it was interrupting the work.

Vs. 8-38 There is a great amount of detail and care given to what was done in building this place of worship. What do you think God is trying to say to us?

V. 35 This refers to the veil that stood before the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies), in the Holy Place. The tabernacle was one tent divided into two rooms. One was called the Holy Place, where the lampstand, altar of incense and table of the bread of the Presence stood. As you entered this tent, straight ahead was the altar of incense, and just inches beyond that altar was the veil. Beyond that veil was the Most Holy Place. The ark of the covenant was in the Most Holy Place, holding the Ten Commandments, and the top of the ark was the mercy seat, symbolically, the throne of God.

The priests entered the Holy Place twice every day, but the high priest only entered the Most Holy Place once a year on the Day of Atonement when he made sacrifice for the sins of the people/nation. This veil separated the people from the presence of God. It was only by going through this veil that forgiveness for the people and nation could be made. This is the making of that veil. Now notice what happens in the NT reading for today.

The tabernacle would be completed about a year after the Exodus.

Matthew 27:32-66

For us as disciples, this is hallowed ground. All that Jesus endured and suffered for our salvation comes to a focus on the cross, as He is cursed and punished by His Father, for our sins.

V. 32 Jerusalem was filled with people who had come to the Passover. This man, Simon, was a Jew from Cyrene in North Africa. Talk about being in the wrong place at the right time. Mark 15:21 mentions that two of Simon's sons became known in the church. They apparently all became believers. Also, see Acts 13:1 where one of these sons is there in that prayer meeting when the Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. Also, the Jewish believers from Cyrene were some of the first to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

V. 34-37 This gall was like morphine; it numbed the mind and the pain. Jesus wanted, and chose, to stay lucid.

V. 37 Usually the charge was written on this plaque. In this case it was ironic for two reasons. First, Pilate was lashing out at the Jews for threatening him with blackmail if he didn't crucify Jesus. Second, the title was the charge against Jesus and it was true. He was guilty of being the Messiah, the coming Son of Man.

V. 38 This is Isaiah 53:9.

Vs. 39-43 To understand this in a deeper way, read Psalm 22 again.

V. 44 At this early point in those six hours on the cross, the thieves also joined in. Toward the end, Luke tells us that one of those thieves repented and was saved.

Vs. 45-50 This is also in Psalm 22. Note that the bystanders tried to prolong Jesus' life/death to see if Elijah would come. Ironically, the only way Jesus died was that He allowed Himself to die. He had the power at any time to save Himself, but He submitted Himself to the Father's will to be poured out as a sacrifice for our sins.

Vs. 51-54 Notice v. 51 and think about what you just read in the OT portion....pretty cool, huh? Notice the time when vs. 52-53 actually take place. They couldn't rise until He did. Just as Jesus was the "firstfruits" of those risen from the dead, there was this "token" resurrection of some of those whose graves were in Jerusalem.

V. 54 The centurions were always good guys.

Vs. 55-56 At the time of Jesus' death these women were standing at a distance. There were a lot of Mary's. Matthew doesn't mention that the women were earlier standing under the cross at the moment when Jesus gave his mother into the Apostle John's care (John 19:25-27). I think that Matthew refers to Jesus' mother here as *the mother of James and Joseph*, Jesus' brothers.

Vs. 57-61 Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin, like Nicodemus. Both were followers of Jesus, and in John 19:39 it says that Nicodemus met with Joseph and brought the materials and spices for a quick burial in Joseph's expensive tomb. Again, this is Isaiah 53:9.

V. 61 I think this *other Mary* was Jesus' mother.

Vs. 62-66 The best laid plans of mice and men.

That was Friday, but Sunday's coming. What does this section mean to you in your life as a follower of Jesus in the harvest? What observations or thoughts come to mind as you read this?

Psalm 34:1-10

I have to admit that my heart really clings to the promise and assurance of this psalm. This morning, my heart is on the needing end of what David has experienced.

Vs. 1-3 This is the declaration of praise. The reasons for this bold praise are about to be given.

V. 4 This was David's situation.

Vs. 5-10 Does v. 5 remind you about something from Moses in Exodus?

V. 7 This sounds like another reference to Exodus.

Proverbs 9:7-8

For anyone who has tried to help others, the trick is to understand the difference between a wise man and a fool. There are a lot of brilliant fools, and as you see in Matthew, even a lot of religious ones. As a disciple, seeking and praying for others to nurture as disciples, what does that spark of wisdom look like that can shine through immaturity? Jesus saw it in Peter and didn't let Peter go. On the other hand, in Matthew 7:6 Jesus warned His disciples to stay out of fruitless discussions with fools. Wisdom teaches us when to speak and when to be quiet. It isn't a matter of right or wrong or courage or cowardice. It is a matter of wisdom and the Spirit.