

Reformation Fellowship Notes • March 18, 2018
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Handout #33
Exodus 37–40

I. Introduction

- A. What we will do today
 - 1. We are going to work through the last four chapters of Exodus.
 - 2. Some comments about Exodus as a whole
- B. What is happening in the last six chapters
 - 1. Exodus is not just petering out with boring repetition of details.
 - 2. On the contrary, it is building to a crescendo of excitement and delight.
 - a) The fulfillment of every detail of the instructions is recorded.
 - b) The people are excited.
 - (1) Giving abundantly
 - (2) Providing labor
 - (3) Everyone is involved in one way or another.
 - 3. It ends in elegant poetry.
 - a) Describing God's entrance into the tabernacle

II. Exodus 37:1-9

- A. Bezalel built the ark of the covenant.
 - 1. Repeats 25:10-22
 - 2. Some minor changes in spelling and grammar.
 - 3. Instructions about placement and purpose are omitted.

III. Exodus 37:10-16

- A. Bezalel made the table.
 - 1. Repeats 25:23-30
 - 2. Some minor changes in vocabulary and phrasing.
 - 3. Instructions about the ceremony omitted.

IV. Exodus 37:17-24

- A. Bezalel made the lampstand (menorah).
 - 1. Repeats 25:31-40
 - 2. Omits ceremonial instructions and the fact that the pattern was shown to Moses on the mountain.

V. Exodus 37:25-29

- A. Bezalel made the altar of incense.
 1. Repeats 30:1-5
 2. Exodus 30 has much more about placement and ritual.
 3. This passage includes mention of the production of oil and incense for use with the altar of incense.

VI. Exodus 38:1-7

- A. Bezalel made the altar of burnt offering.
 1. Repeats 27:1-8
 2. Some changes in form and abbreviated.

VII. Exodus 38:8

- A. Bezalel made the laver.
 1. Laver instructions in 30:17-21
 - a) Here only statement of construction
 2. Bronze came from the mirrors of the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.
 - a) We lack the background information to make good sense of this.
 - b) Mirrors would be made of high-quality bronze.
 - c) Exceptional gift
 - d) One possible explanation:

“But another, quite fascinating detail is also included here: one that presumes some common knowledge that Moses and his audience shared, but that we do not. At some point after the tabernacle was built, certain women were employed to serve at its entrance—a practice that probably continued as long as the tabernacle was in use, judging from the mention of it in I Sam 2:22, hundreds of years after the time of the present description. How were these women chosen, and what exactly did they do? We have no firm information. They quite possibly volunteered—or were paid with a portion of the sacrifices—to help with utensil cleanup, general courtyard cleanup, water resupply, ancillary food preparation, guiding and assisting other woman worshipers, washing priests’ clothes, and the like. The first such group of women may have been chosen from among those who donated their mirrors, precisely because such a gift of something normally valued by a woman would tend to demonstrate her devotion to God.” (Stuart, p. 767-8)

VIII. Exodus 38:9-20

- A. Bezalel made the court.
 1. Repeats 27:9-19

2. Several changes in phraseology and wording
 - a) Some clarifying details

IX. Exodus 38:21-23

- A. Moses appointed Ithamar and some Levites to keep track of the materials used in the construction of the tabernacle.
 1. Record- and inventory-keeping was common in the ancient world.
 2. Moses probably knew to do this based on past experience.
 - a) The Israelites have been very distrustful of Moses from the beginning.
 - b) So he wants to forestall two problems.
 - (1) A worker might pilfer some of the materials for his own gain.
 - (2) Moses might be accused of lining his own pocket.
 - c) The people might be acting with enthusiasm to build the tabernacle, but they are not suddenly saints.
 3. Bezalel and Oholiab were in charge of the project.
 - a) Oholiab's expertise was engraving and weaving.

X. Exodus 38:24-31

- A. This only has a list of metals used.
 1. Materials that could be used as money?
 2. Materials that were of greatest value
 3. This provides a sense of the total value of materials given.
- B. Gold given
 1. 29 talents and 730 shekels
 - a) A talent equals 75 lbs.
- C. Silver given
 1. 100 talents and 1,775 shekels
 - a) Every adult male had to pay $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel when census was taken.
 - (1) Census was taken and then finished in second year.
 - (a) God commanded this (30:11-16).
 - (b) Finished in Numbers 1:2
 - (2) The timing of these things is difficult.
 - (a) Silver is collected and used in the tabernacle, which is finished at the beginning of the second year
 - (b) We are given the number from the census in 38:26, before the census was taken.
 - (3) Cassuto's conclusion:

“In view of this, we may assume the purport of the verse to be as follows: In the first year of the exodus of the Israelites from the land of Egypt, at the same time as the artisans were occupied with the construction of the Tabernacle, the first steps were taken in connection

with the census. The children of Israel presented themselves one by one before the officers in charge, who registered their names on ostraca and received from each one silver weighing half a shekel. This silver was used for the work of the Tabernacle, for the making of the pedestals. After all the measures requisite to the registration of the Israelites had been taken and after the month of Nisan—the month dedicated to the festival of the erection of the Tabernacle and the Feast of Passover—was ended, work began, on the first day of the second month of the second year, on the classification and examination of the ostraca and the calculation of the figures by the men in charge of these duties, namely, the chieftains of the congregation who are mentioned in Numbers i 4 ff. These tasks were carried out, as is expressly stated *ibid.* (v. 2, and elsewhere), according to the number of names, that is by counting the names inscribed on the potsherds. Now although several months had passed since the commencement of the census, and some of those registered had already died, and on the other hand, a number of young people had, in the meantime reached the age of twenty and had become eligible for inclusion in the population-count, nevertheless the total resulting from the census computations was exactly the number of half shekels that had been contributed in the first year, because the figures were worked out on the basis of ostraca inscribed at the time when the half shekels were handed in.” (Cassuto, p. 471)

(4) The fact that the silver used in the tabernacle came from the census tax is indicated in the list of gifts (35:24)

- D. Bronze given
 - 1. 70 talents and 2,400 shekels

XI. Exodus 39:1

- A. Introducing the production of priestly garments
 - 1. From blue and purple and scarlet fabric
 - 2. The pronoun switches to “they.”
 - a) Highly skilled work of the high priest’s clothing is made by “he.”
 - b) The other priestly garments are made by “they.”
 - c) Work with stones and metal for the garments is made by “they.”

XII. Exodus 39:2-5

- A. The description of the making of the priestly garments corresponds to the instructions given in 28:6-39.
 - 1. Any details not related to the production of the items have been removed.
 - 2. Some slight changes in wording and grammar
- B. Notice that each section ends with “. . . just as the LORD had commanded Moses.”
- C. He made the ephod.
 - 1. Not clear whether the he refers to Bezalel or Oholiab.
 - 2. Gold was the main material.

- D. He made shoulder pieces.

XIII. Exodus 39:6-7

- A. They made stones.
- B. He put them on the shoulder pieces.

XIV. Exodus 39:8-21

- A. He made the breastpiece.
- B. They mounted stones on it.

XV. Exodus 39:22-26

- A. He made the robe for the ephod.
- B. They made the pomegranates and bells for the bottom trim.

XVI. Exodus 39:27-29

- A. They made garments for the other priests.

XVII. Exodus 39:30-31

- A. They made the high priest's golden plate.
 - 1. Here it is called a "holy crown."

XVIII. Exodus 39:32-43

- A. Formal statement of completion

"Thus all the work of the tabernacle, of the tent of meeting was completed; and the sons of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses."

- 1. Formal
- 2. Specifies that this was done by the sons of Israel.
- 3. Evokes the creation narrative (Gen. 2:1-2).
 - a) Clearer evocations come the end of this passage.
- B. A list of all the pieces that were made.
 - 1. Almost identical to the "to do list" in 35:10-19.
- C. Last two verses repeat the statement of completion.
 - 1. Moses saw all the work. . .
 - a) Cf. Creation narrative
 - 2. Moses blessed them
 - a) Cf. Creation narrative
 - 3. In some sense, the building of the tabernacle bears a resemblance to God's creation of the universe.

XIX. Exodus 40:1-16

- A. God's instructions for the construction of the tabernacle
 - 1. God explains how everything goes together.
 - a) Comments along the way have told us how it would all go together, but this summarizes the picture.
 - 2. It begins with how everything is to be set up.
 - 3. Then God describes how to consecrate everything.
- B. First day of the first month of second year
 - 1. Two weeks short of one year since the Passover.
- C. Moves from most holy to least holy.
 - 1. Ark
 - 2. Other furniture for tabernacle
 - 3. Furniture outside of tabernacle
 - 4. Court
- D. Instructions for consecration of furniture and tabernacle
 - 1. Parallel passage to Exodus 30:22-33
 - 2. Tabernacle and furniture
 - 3. Altar for burnt offerings
 - 4. Laver
 - 5. High priest
 - 6. Other priests

XX. Exodus 40:17-33

- A. Moses is the one listed as doing all the set up.
 - 1. Some passive voice verbs, but no one else as subject.
- B. Seven parts
 - 1. Each part ends with "...just as the LORD had commanded."
- C. Each piece of furniture is set in place and used for its purpose.
 - 1. Tabernacle
 - 2. Ark
 - a) Testimony put in it
 - 3. Table
 - a) Bread placed on the table

4. Lamp
 - a) Lamps supplied with oil and lighted
5. Altar of incense
 - a) Incense burned
6. Altar of burnt offering
 - a) Offered burnt offering and meal offering
7. Laver
 - a) Priests washed hands and feet

D. “Thus Moses finished the work.”

XXI. Exodus 40:34-38

- A. This is the climax that the last six chapters have been working up to.
1. Elegant poetic style

“These verses, which are phrased in an elevated, poetic style, depict the manifestation of the Divine Glory in expressions that parallel those used at the end of chapter xxiv to portray God’s presence on Mount Sinai. The Tabernacle is a kind of miniature Sinai, which can be transported from place to place, in order to accompany the children of Israel in their wanderings and to serve as a palpable token of the Divine Presence in their midst throughout their journeyings. Just as the Lord had revealed Himself to them on Mount Sinai in the awe-inspiring theophany of the third month, even so He manifests Himself to them now, and will reveal Himself in the future, in the sanctuary that they have made to Him.” (Cassuto, p. 484)

2. This is fulfillment of 24:15-16.
3. This imagery is repeated when the temple was dedicated.
 - a) I Kings 8:10-11
4. God’s presence was constantly with them throughout their travels in the wilderness.
5. God’s presence was visible to all the people of Israel.

XXII. Conclusion

- A. Crescendo
1. Like the conductor of a symphony
 - a) Brings in every musician
 - b) All playing at full volume
 2. The end of Exodus is a grand “celebration.”
 - a) God is in their midst.