

# Exodus 38 Commentary

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| Summary Chart of<br>The Book of Exodus |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>DELIVERANCE<br/>FROM OPPRESSION</b> | <b>PREPARATION FOR<br/>WORSHIP</b>   |
| Redemption from Egypt<br>Ex 1:1-18:27  | Revelation from God<br>Ex 19:1-40:38 |
| Getting Israel Out of Egypt            | Getting Egypt Out of Israel!         |
| Narration                              | Legislation                          |

|  |                         |                                       |  |                             |                              |   |                       |                          |                        |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Birth of Moses<br>Ex 1-2                         | Call of Moses<br>Ex 3-6 | Conflict with Pharaoh<br>Ex 7-10      | Exodus from Egypt<br>Ex 11-12                      | Red Sea Crossed<br>Ex 13-15 | Journey To Sinai<br>Ex 16-18 | Law Given<br>Ex 19-24                             | Tent Plan<br>Ex 25-31 | Idol Worship<br>Ex 32-34 | Tent Built<br>Ex 35-40 |
| <b>Subjection</b>                                |                         |                                       | <b>Redemption</b>                                  |                             |                              | <b>Instruction</b>                                |                       |                          |                        |
| <b>Suffering and Liberation of People of God</b> |                         |                                       | <b>Guidance of God</b>                             |                             |                              | <b>Worship of God</b>                             |                       |                          |                        |
| <b>Moses and Burdens of Israel</b>               |                         | <b>Pharaoh and Plagues Upon Egypt</b> |  | <b>Red Sea Deliverance</b>  | <b>Wilderness Provision</b>  | <b>Sinai Instructions</b>                         |                       |                          |                        |
| <b>Bondage and Oppression</b>                    |                         |                                       | <b>Deliverance and Provision</b>                   |                             |                              | <b>Law Pattern and Construction</b>               |                       |                          |                        |
| <b>Israel in Egypt<br/>Ex 1:1-13:16</b>          |                         |                                       | <b>Israel to Sinai<br/>Ex 13:17-18:27</b>          |                             |                              | <b>Israel at Sinai<br/>Ex 19:1-40:38</b>          |                       |                          |                        |
| <b>God's People Enduring Bondage</b>             |                         |                                       | <b>God's Grace Revealed in Redemption</b>          |                             |                              | <b>God's Glory Manifested in Worship</b>          |                       |                          |                        |
| <b>Egypt<br/>430 Years<br/>(15% of Exodus)</b>   |                         |                                       | <b>Wilderness<br/>2 Months<br/>(30% of Exodus)</b> |                             |                              | <b>Mt Sinai<br/>10 Months<br/>(55% of Exodus)</b> |                       |                          |                        |
| <b>From Groaning</b>                             |                         |                                       |  |                             |                              |   |                       |                          | <b>To Glory!</b>       |

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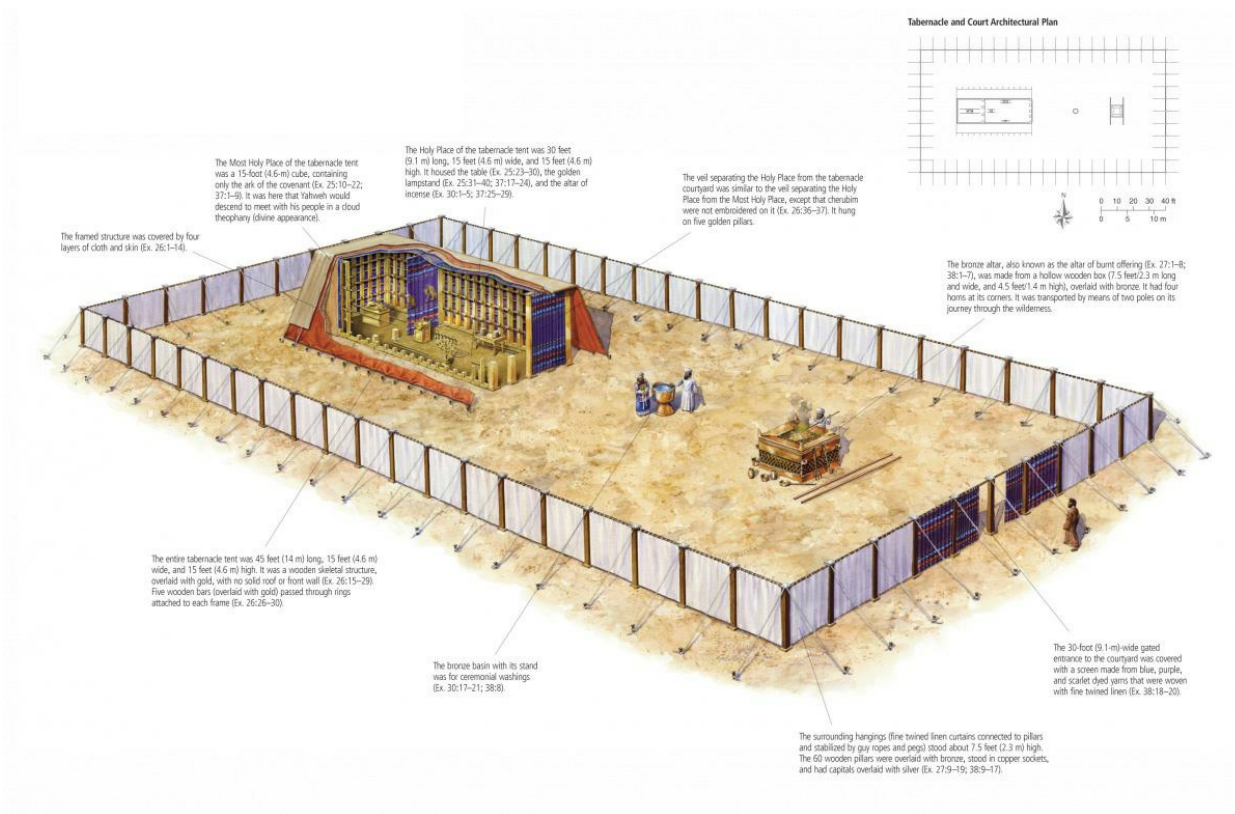
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| <b>GENESIS</b>            | <b>EXODUS</b>              |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| human effort and failure  | divine power and triumph   |
| word of promise           | work of fulfillment        |
| a people chosen           | a people called            |
| God's electing mercy      | God's electing manner      |
| revelation of nationality | realization of nationality |

**SUMMARY OF THE PENTATEUCH**  
(from Believer's Study Bible)

**Exodus 38:1 Then he made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits wide, square, and three cubits high.**

- **the altar:** Ex 27:1-8 40:6,29 2Ch 4:1 Eze 43:13-17 Ro 8:3,4 12:1 Heb 3:1 Heb 9:14 13:10 1Pe 2:5
- Eze 43:16 Joh 6:37 Heb 13:8 Rev 21:16
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



#### THE COURTYARD WITH ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING

Then he made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits wide, square, and three cubits high - See comments on Exodus 27:1

#### Related Resources:

- Torrey Topical Textbook [Altars Altar of Burnt-Offering, the Altar of Incense](#)
- American Tract Society [Altar](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Altar](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Horns of Altar Altar](#)
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- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Altar Horns of the Altar](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Altar Altars forms of](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Altar](#)

**Exodus 38:2 He made its horns on its four corners, its horns being of one piece with it, and he overlaid it with bronze.**

- **he made:** Ex 27:2
- **bronze:** Job 6:12
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Altar of Burnt Offering - Brazen Altar  
With Four Horns

**He made its horns on its four corners, its horns being of one piece with it, and he overlaid it with bronze-** See comments on Exodus 27:2

**Exodus 38:3 He made all the utensils of the altar, the pails and the shovels and the basins, the flesh hooks and the firepans; he made all its utensils of bronze.**

- **he made:** Ex 27:3
- **flesh hooks:** 1Sa 2:13
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**He made all the utensils of the altar, the pails and the shovels and the basins, the flesh hooks and the firepans; he made all its utensils of bronze.** - See comments on Exodus 27:3

**Exodus 38:4 He made for the altar a grating of bronze network beneath, under its ledge, reaching halfway up.**

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**He made for the altar a grating of bronze network beneath, under its ledge, reaching halfway up.-** See comments on Exodus 27:4-5

**Exodus 38:5 He cast four rings on the four ends of the bronze grating as holders for the poles.**

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**He cast four rings on the four ends of the bronze grating as holders for the poles.-** See comments on Exodus 27:

**Exodus 38:6 He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze.**

- Ex 25:6 De 10:3
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze.-** See comments on Exodus 27:6

**Exodus 38:7 He inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to carry it. He made it hollow with planks.**

- Ac 9:15 1Co 1:24 2:2
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**He inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to carry it. He made it hollow with planks** See comments on Exodus 27:7

**Exodus 38:8 Moreover, he made the laver of bronze with its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.**

- **the laver:** Ex 30:18-21 40:7,30-32 1Ki 7:23-26,38 Ps 26:6 Zec 13:1 Joh 13:10 Tit 3:5,6 Heb 9:10 1Jn 3:7 Rev 1:5, 1
- **who served at the doorway** 1 Sa 2:22. Pr 8:34 Mt 26:69 Lu 2:37 Joh 18:16 1Ti 5:5
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#### Egyptian Mirrors

**Moreover, he made the laver of bronze with its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting** - See comments on Exodus 30:17ff. This verse summarizes the commands of 30:17–21.

**Currid** - these women felt led to donate their bronze mirrors to the making of the laver. These mirrors undoubtedly came from Egypt. Egypt was well-known in antiquity for making cosmetic objects, in particular, mirrors. Egyptian mirrors consisted of either cast or hammered metal discs, almost always in an elliptical shape. Made mostly of either copper or bronze, they were polished to a radiant sheen. Then they were inserted into a handle made of faience, wood, stone, ivory, or metal. The handles were carved with different types of representations, such as gods, during the New Kingdom period.

**Bush - He made the laver of brass**—of the looking-glasses of the women assembling, &c. 'As the laver was of brass or copper, it is evident that the 'looking-glasses,' with which it was made, were of the same metal. The word 'mirror' should have been used in the place of 'looking-glass,' in the various passages where it occurs, and which are all incompatible with the idea of glass. Thus Job (chap. 37:18), 'Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass?' and an apocryphal writer (Ecclus. 12:11.) says, 'Thou shalt be unto him as if thou hadst wiped a looking-glass, and thou shalt know that his rust hath not been altogether wiped away.' In all these passages a metallic mirror is obviously intended. The word מראת maroth, considered to denote mirrors in the present text, does not, however, any where else occur in that sense, and Dr. Boothroyd, taking it in its most usual sense, considers the text to mean that the laver was made under the inspection of the women, not with their mirrors. This explanation seems to us to involve greater difficulties than those which it is designed to obviate. The common translation is perfectly consistent with the context, and with the early history of mirrors; besides which, all the ancient versions, as well as the Jewish writers, understand mirrors to be intended. We may understand either that the stock of copper in the camp was so comparatively small, as to have been exhausted in the other works for the tabernacle, or else that the mirrors of the women were particularly required for the laver as being of a superior sort of metal. As the women who assembled at the tabernacle are especially mentioned, it is not improbable that they followed the example of the Egyptian women who took their mirrors with them when they went to the temples. Moses may have required them for the laver, in order to put a stop to a practice of which he did not approve.

'Artificial mirrors seem to have been made as soon as men began to exercise their ingenuity on metals and stones. Every solid body capable of receiving a polish would be more or less suitable for this purpose; hence the earliest mirrors of which we possess any information were of metal. Stone mirrors are also noticed very early; but as such mirrors could not have been in any degree equal to those of polished metal, they are rarely mentioned by ancient authors, and then seem to be chiefly used for purposes of ornament, being polished slabs or panels fixed in the walls of wainscoted apartments. For this purpose the Romans preferred what Pliny calls the obsidian stone, which Beckmann identifies with the species of vitrified lava now called Icelandic agate. Plane, concave, and convex mirrors of a similar substance were in use among the Americans when the Spaniards came among them; and they had also others made with a mineral called the Inca's stone, which seems to have been a compact marcasite or pyrites, susceptible of a fine polish, and calculated to form mirrors apparently superior to any of stone which the ancient nations of Europe and Asia seem to have possessed. The Americans had also mirrors of silver, copper, and brass. When men began to work metals, it must soon have been discovered that the hardest white metals reflected more distinct images, when polished, than any others. Of all the metals known to the ancients, steel was the best calculated for the purpose; but Beckmann says that he can discover no indications that steel mirrors were in use among them; and he thinks that its liability to contract rust and to become tarnished, prevented this otherwise desirable metal from being employed for the purpose. We rather differ from him in this particular. The mention of rust in the above quotation from the Apocrypha seems to imply that the mirror there in view was of steel; and although it be true that the Greeks and Romans did not use such mirrors, it does not follow that they were not employed in the East, where, in most parts, the dryness of the atmosphere exposes polished steel to the least possible danger from rust. In fact steel mirrors, although in some degree superseded by looking-glasses, continue to be extensively used in the East. After steel, in eligibility for mirrors, comes silver; and we find that silver mirrors are those most generally mentioned among the Greeks and Romans. 'In the Roman code of laws,' says

Beckmann, 'when silver plate is mentioned, under the heads of heirship and succession by propinquity, silver mirrors are rarely omitted; and Pliny, Seneca, and other writers, who inveigh against luxury, tell us, ridiculing the extravagance of that age, that every young woman in their time must have a silver mirror. These polished silver plates may however have been very slight, for all the ancient mirrors preserved in collections, which I have seen, are only covered with a thin coat of that expensive metal.' There was also in use for the same purpose a mixture of copper and tin, producing a white metal which would seem to have been better adapted for mirrors than silver, although, on some account or other, it was not so much esteemed for the purpose. One reason probably was, that this metal was more liable to be tarnished than those of silver, requiring to be frequently brightened before being used. Hence it seems that a sponge with pounded pumice-stone was generally suspended near the ancient mirrors. Mirrors of copper, brass, and gold, do not appear to have been much in use after the superior fitness of silver was discovered; yet there is no question that copper and brass were soonest applied to this purpose, and doubtless continued to be used by those who could not afford silver or silvered mirrors. The use of metallic mirrors is now, in Europe, almost entirely confined to reflecting telescopes. The mode of compounding the metals of which these mirrors are made, and of polishing them of a proper form, is an art of great nicety.

There is some difficulty in determining when glass mirrors were invented. Pliny alludes to attempts made at Sidon to form mirrors with glass, but in what manner does not appear; and if the attempts had produced any approximation to our mirrors, they would surely have superseded those of metal, which they were so far from doing that, whatever they were, they never came into use. With the exception of this notice in Pliny, there is no trace of glass mirrors till the thirteenth century, after which they are spoken of in the clearest manner, and continued to be mentioned in every century, and at last mirrors of metal passed entirely out of notice. That the practical invention of glass mirrors cannot be much earlier than the date here assigned, seems to be evinced by the fact, mentioned by Beckmann, that glass mirrors continued to be very scarce in France in the fourteenth century. Those of metal were still in common use, and the mirror of even the queen, Anne of Bretagne, consort of Louis XII., was of this description.—On the history of mirrors, see further in Beckmann's 'Hist. of Inventions,' vol. iii. See also Goguet, 'Origine des Lois.' t. i. p. 371; Harmer vol. iv. p. 332–334; Burder's 'Oriental Customs,' vol. i. p. 37; vol. ii. p. 52, &c. Pict. Bib.

**NET NOTE on serving** - The word for "serve" is not the ordinary one. It means "to serve in a host," especially in a war. It appears that women were organized into bands and served at the tent of meeting.

**Bush on the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle** - Assembling. Heb. צבאות tzobeoth assembling in troops. The Heb. word here rendered 'assembling' is properly a military term applied to the orderly mustering or marshalling of an army. The verb from which it is derived, צבא tzaba, has the signification of warring or going forth upon a military expedition, and the corresponding substantive is for the most part rendered 'host,' 'hosts;' sometimes 'war,' or 'warfare.' But as the regularity and order which marked the services of the sanctuary resembled those which prevail in a well-disciplined army, one party succeeding and relieving another in the discharge of their appropriate duties, the term became at length applied to the orderly course of ministration in the matter of the worship of God, as may be seen from the following passages; Num. 4:23, 'All that enter in to perform the service (לצבא צבא litzbo tzaba, to war the warfare;) i. e. perform the service, to do the work of the tabernacle; Gr. λειτουργειν, to minister. Num. 8:24, 'From twenty and five years old and upward they will go in to wait upon the service (לצבא צבא litzbo tzaba, to war the warfare) of the tabernacle:' So with probably a like sense Paul says to Timothy, 'that thou mightest war a good warfare;' as if it were a usual phrase to signify the service of God. In the present instance accordingly we suppose the word is applied to certain women of the congregation who had devoted themselves, from the promptings of a peculiar spirit of piety, to various functions pertaining to the tabernacle service, for the same or a similar reason to that for which the term is applied to men when busied in the like employment. In strict parallelism with this we find the word occurring 1 Sam. 2:22. 'And how they lay with the women that assembled (הצבאות hatztzobeoth) at the door of the congregation; i. e. who were convened there as female ministers for pious purposes. So it is said of Anna, the prophetess, Luke 2:26, that she 'departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.' With this mode of interpretation—the assembling for purposes of pious ministry—several of the ancient versions strikingly accord. Thus, the Chal. 'Of the mirrors of the women which came to pray at the door of the tabernacle.' Gr. 'Of the women that fasted, which fasted at the door of the tabernacle of witness.' Fasting is here specified because it was a usual accompaniment of praying. Targ. Jon. 'Of the brazen mirrors of modest women, who, when they came to pray in the portal of the tabernacle stood by their heave-offering, and offered praises and made confessions.'

**Exodus 38:9 Then he made the court: for the south side the hangings of the court were of fine twisted linen, one hundred cubits;**

- **court:** Ex 27:9-19 40:8,33 1Ki 6:36 Ps 84:2,10 89:7 92:13 100:4
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Exodus 38:9-20 ends the description of the construction of the tent, its furnishings and its utensils.

**Then he made the court: for the south side the hangings of the court were of fine twisted linen, one hundred cubits-** See comments on Exodus 27:9

**Exodus 38:10 their twenty pillars, and their twenty sockets, made of bronze; the hooks of the pillars and their bands were of silver.**

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**their twenty pillars, and their twenty sockets, made of bronze; the hooks of the pillars and their bands were of silver:** See comments on Exodus 27:10

**Exodus 38:11 For the north side there were one hundred cubits; their twenty pillars and their twenty sockets were of bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands were of silver.**

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**For the north side there were one hundred cubits; their twenty pillars and their twenty sockets were of bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands were of silver** - See comments on Exodus 27:11

**Exodus 38:12 For the west side there were hangings of fifty cubits with their ten pillars and their ten sockets; the hooks of the pillars and their bands were of silver.**

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**For the west side there were hangings of fifty cubits with their ten pillars and their ten sockets; the hooks of the pillars and their bands were of silver** - See comments on Exodus 27:12

**Exodus 38:13 For the east side fifty cubits.**

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**For the east side fifty cubits** - See comments on Exodus 27:13

**Exodus 38:14 The hangings for the one side of the gate were fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets,**

- hangings: Ex 27:14
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The hangings for the one side of the gate were fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets** - See comments on Exodus 27:14

**Exodus 38:15 and so for the other side. On both sides of the gate of the court were hangings of fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets.**

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**and so for the other side. On both sides of the gate of the court were hangings of fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets** - See comments on Exodus 27:15

**Exodus 38:16 All the hangings of the court all around were of fine twisted linen.**

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**All the hangings of the court all around were of fine twisted linen.**

**Exodus 38:17 The sockets for the pillars were of bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands, of silver; and the overlaying of their tops, of silver, and all the pillars of the court were furnished with silver bands.**

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**The sockets for the pillars were of bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands, of silver; and the overlaying of their tops, of silver, and all the pillars of the court were furnished with silver bands**

**Exodus 38:18 The screen of the gate of the court was the work of the weaver, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen. And the length was twenty cubits and the height was five cubits, corresponding to the hangings of the court.**

- 2Ch 3:14
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**The screen of the gate of the court was the work of the weaver, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen. And the length was twenty cubits and the height was five cubits, corresponding to the hangings of the court.**

**Bush - The height in the breadth was five cubits.** The phrase is Hebraic, denoting the height of the hanging of the gate, which was five cubits, corresponding with that of the rest of the hangings of the court. Suppose this piece of tapestry, which was twenty cubits in length, to be lying spread out upon the ground; it is evident that what constitutes its breadth in this situation becomes its height when hung up; and this is what is meant by the text. Its height as composed of its breadth was five cubits.

**Exodus 38:19 Their four pillars and their four sockets were of bronze; their hooks were of silver, and the overlaying of their tops and their bands were of silver.**

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**Their four pillars and their four sockets were of bronze; their hooks were of silver, and the overlaying of their tops and their bands were of silver.**

**Exodus 38:20 All the pegs of the tabernacle and of the court all around were of bronze.**

- Ex 27:19 2Ch 3:9 Ezr 9:8 Ec 12:11 Isa 22:23 33:20 Eph 2:21,22 Col 2:19
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**All the pegs of the tabernacle and of the court all around were of bronze** - See comments on Exodus 27:19



**Exodus 38:21 This is the number of the things for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were numbered according to the command of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.**

NET Exodus 38:21 This is the inventory of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, which was counted by the order of Moses, being the work of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.

NLT Exodus 38:21 This is an inventory of the materials used in building the Tabernacle of the Covenant. The Levites compiled the figures, as Moses directed, and Ithamar son of Aaron the priest served as recorder.

ESV Exodus 38:21 These are the records of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were recorded at the commandment of Moses, the responsibility of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

NIV Exodus 38:21 These are the amounts of the materials used for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the Testimony, which were recorded at Moses' command by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest.

KJV This is the sum of the tabernacle, even of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest.

- **tabernacle of testimony:** Ex 25:16 Ex 26:33 40:3 Nu 1:50,53 9:15 10:11 17:7,8 18:2 2Ch 24:6 Ac 7:44 Rev 11:19
- **by the hand:** Nu 4:28-33 Ezr 8:26-30
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Exodus 38:21-31 is an "inventory" of the material and expenses related to the construction of the Tabernacle.

**This is the number of the things for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony** - NET = "This is the inventory of the tabernacle"

**Currid** points out that "For the only time in the book of Exodus, the sanctuary is called the 'tabernacle of testimony'. That is a rare designation in the Old Testament, occurring elsewhere only in Numbers 1:50, 53; 10:11. The term 'testimony' refers to the covenant relationship between God and Israel—much as it does in the term 'the ark of testimony'. It reflects the focus, or core, of the tabernacle's purpose and symbolism: it is where God and Israel meet!"

**Bush - This is the sum of the tabernacle.** That is, the sum, enumeration, or inventory of the various particulars of the tabernacle furniture. These were reckoned up by the Levites over whom Ithamar, the son of Aaron, presided. In the clause, 'for the service of the Levites,' the word 'for' does not occur in the original, and the meaning probably is, that it was counted by the labor or ministry of the Levites. The words are a preface to what follows extending to the end of the chapter.

**as they were numbered according to the command of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest** - Ithamar oversaw the Levites who had the responsibility of managing all these resources

**Currid** - Moses delegated the task of taking this inventory to the Levites, under the supervision of Ithamar, the son of Aaron. Ithamar is first mentioned in the genealogy of 6:23, and then in 28:1 he is named as one to be set apart for the priesthood (see commentary on both verses). The duties of the Gershonites in caring for the coverings of the tabernacle during the wilderness wanderings were also placed under the direction of Ithamar (Num. 4:21–28).

**TSK** - The word tabernacle is used in many different senses, and signifies, I. A tent or pavilion, Nu 24:5 Mt 17:4 II. A house or dwelling, Job 11:4 22:23 III. A kind of tent, which is designated, to speak after the manner of the men, the palace of the Most High, the dwelling of the God of Israel, Ex 26:1 Heb 9:2,3 IV. Christ's human nature, of which the Jewish tabernacle was a type, wherein God dwells really, substantially, and personally, Heb 8:2 9:11 V. The true church militant, Ps 15:1 VI. Our natural body, in which the soul lodges as in a tabernacle, 2Co 5:1 2Pe 1:13 VII. The token of God's gracious presence, Rev 21:3

**Exodus 38:22 Now Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD had commanded Moses.**

- **Bezaleel:** Ex 31:1-5 35:30-35 36:1-3
- **the Lord:** Ps 119:6 Jer 1:7 Mt 28:20
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Now Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD had commanded Moses**

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**Question:** [Who were Bezalel and Oholiab in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** Bezalel and Oholiab were two men God chose to aid in the construction of the [tabernacle](#), the holy tent where God dwelled in the midst of His people.

During the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, God called Moses to Mount Sinai, where He gave His Law to the people (Exodus 19–24). In the course of His conversation with Moses, God instructed Moses to gather the people and build the tabernacle (chapters 25–31). As these events took place over 1,500 years before the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit would reside in this tabernacle. God gave specific instructions for the building of the tabernacle, including plans for the tent itself, the courtyard, the consecration of the priests, the priests' garments, and even the furniture. The rich materials to be used in the construction were to be donated as an offering from the people (Exodus 25:1–7; 30:11–16). In the end, the people were generous and brought even more than was needed (Exodus 36:3–7).

Many craftsmen would be needed for this work, and in Exodus 31:2–6 God tells Moses that He had given many men the skills they would need to bring His plans for the tabernacle to fruition. Two of these men God mentions by name: Bezalel from the tribe of Judah and Oholiab from the tribe of Dan. Bezalel in particular was filled with God's Spirit (verses 31:2–3), a rare occurrence in Old Testament times. God's Spirit empowered Bezalel and Oholiab with talent and intelligence, giving them the ability to work in every kind of crafting, including woodwork, stonework, metalwork, engraving, embroidery, and weaving. The Spirit's empowering gave Bezalel and Oholiab skill to work with the raw materials and to form the artistic designs (Exodus 31:4–5; 35:30–32, 35). Bezalel himself constructed the [Ark of the Covenant](#) (Exodus 37:1).

In addition, God inspired both Bezalel and Oholiab to teach all the other craftsmen who had been given special skill by God. Together, led and aided by Bezalel and Oholiab, the craftsmen were able to complete the tabernacle according to God's specifications (Exodus 36:8–39:43).

The story of Bezalel and Oholiab shows us that God cares about aesthetics; He is a God of beauty and design. Fine craftsmanship and skill in various artistic endeavors is a gift from God. Bezalel and Oholiab should encourage Christian artists today to create works of art for the glory of God. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

**Exodus 38:23 With him was Oholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and a skillful workman and a weaver in blue and in purple and in scarlet material, and fine linen.**

- **Oholiab:** Ex 35:34
- **a skillful workman:** Ex 35:34
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**With him was Oholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and a skillful workman and a weaver in blue and in purple and in scarlet material, and fine linen** - See [note above](#) on Oholiab.

**Exodus 38:24 All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary, even the gold of the wave offering, was 29 talents and 730 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary.**

- **All the gold:** 1Ch 22:14-16 29:2-7 Hag 2:8
- **offering:** Ex 25:2 29:24 35:22
- **the shekel:** Ex 30:13,14,24 Lev 5:15 27:3,25 Nu 3:47 18:16
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary, even the gold of the wave offering, was 29 talents and 730 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary.**

**NET NOTE** - There were 3000 shekels in a talent, and so the total weight here in shekels would be 87,730 shekels of gold. If the sanctuary shekel was 224 grs., then this was about 40,940 oz. troy. This is estimated to be a little over a ton (cf. NCV "over 2,000 pounds"; TEV "a thousand kilogrammes"; CEV "two thousand two hundred nine pounds"; NLT "about 2,200 pounds"), although other

widely diverging estimates are also given.

**Bush** - And all the gold, &c. Although the tabernacle, as a portable structure, cannot, from its known proportions and general appearance, have been a very grand or imposing structure, yet we may safely say, that probably the world never saw so small a fabric composed of such rich materials, and reared at so vast a cost. As the quantities of the precious metals employed are stated, some idea of its surpassing richness may be formed. The gold weighed 29 talents and 730 shekels, if we allow 3000 shekels to the talent of 125 lbs.; and this at £4 the ounce would be equal to £175,000 sterling, or nearly \$877,000. The silver was 100 talents and 1775 shekels, being a half shekel from all the males above twenty years of age when they came out of Egypt, whose number was 603,550; the whole value of this would, at 5s. the ounce, be £39,721, or nearly \$188,605. The brass, or rather copper, was 70 talents and 24,000 shekels, which if valued at 1s. 3d. the pound avoirdupois would be worth £138, or \$690. The amount of these several sums would not be less than £213,320, or articles \$1,066,600. But this amount does not include the curtains of the inclosure, the coverings of the tabernacle, the dress of the high priest and its jewels, the dresses of the common priests, or the value of the skill and labor employed in the work, the whole of which may be fairly taken to have raised its value to the immense sum of £250,000, or \$1,250,000!

It may perhaps be difficult for some to imagine how the Israelites should have been possessed of so much wealth in the desert. But it is to be recollected that they had come out of Egypt with great spoil, which was no doubt very much augmented by what they obtained from the dead bodies of their enemies, cast upon the shores of the Red Sea. The subsequent victory over the Amalekites, probably increased still further their predatory treasures. Add to this, that there is no reason to question that they trafficked more or less with the wandering tribes of the desert, on their way to Canaan, though we are nowhere expressly informed that this was the case.

The grand reason for employing so great an amount of riches in the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture was undoubtedly two-fold, (1.) To impress the minds of the chosen people with the glory and dignity of the Divine Majesty, and the importance of his service; and (2.) To convey through the gorgeousness and splendor of the external ritual an intimation of the essential and transcendent beauty, excellence, and glory of the spiritual things that were shadowed out by it. In this there was a wise adaptation to the mental condition of the Israelites. They were in a sense like children, whose minds must be reached through the medium of their senses. But little capable of high abstract apprehensions of spiritual subjects, it was only by means of such a sensuous apparatus of worship that they could receive the inner essential truths which it involved. To us, favored as we are with a higher state of intellectual advancement, such a system is not necessary, and consequently it is done away.

**Exodus 38:25 The silver of those of the congregation who were numbered was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary;**

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**The silver of those of the congregation who were numbered was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary;**

**NET NOTE** - This would be a total of 301,775 shekels (about 140,828 oz), being a half shekel exacted per person from 605,550 male Israelites 20 years old or more (Num 1:46). The amount is estimated to be around 3.75 tons.

**Exodus 38:26 a beka a head (that is, half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for each one who passed over to those who were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for 603,550 men.**

- **beka:** Ex 30:13,15,16
- **every man:** Heb. a poll, Nu 1:46
- **six hundred:** Ex 12:37 Nu 1:46
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**a beka a head (that is, half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for each one who passed over to those who were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for 603,550 men**

**Bush** - A bekah for every man. The value of the bekah is immediately defined to be half a shekel. The original בקע bekah comes from בקע baka, to divide, to cleave, to separate into two. It seems to signify, not a particular coin, but a shekel broken or cut in two. So, according to A. Clarke, the English penny was anciently cut into four parts, and the fourth part called a fourthing, corrupted into farthing.

**Exodus 38:27** The hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets of the veil; one hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket.

- **sockets:** Ex 26:19,21,25,32
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets of the veil; one hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket.

**Exodus 38:28** Of the 1,775 shekels, he made hooks for the pillars and overlaid their tops and made bands for them.

- Ex 27:17
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Of the 1,775 shekels, he made hooks for the pillars and overlaid their tops and made bands for them.

**Exodus 38:29** The bronze of the wave offering was 70 talents and 2,400 shekels.

- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The bronze of the wave offering was 70 talents and 2,400 shekels.

**Ryrie** - Possibly some 2.5 tons of bronze. Though we do not know the value of these metals in those days, the expenditure was enormous and demonstrated the people's dedication to God.

**Exodus 38:30** With it he made the sockets to the doorway of the tent of meeting, and the bronze altar and its bronze grating, and all the utensils of the altar,

- **sockets:** Ex 26:37 Ex 27:10,17
- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

With it he made the sockets to the doorway of the tent of meeting, and the bronze altar and its bronze grating, and all the utensils of the altar,

**Exodus 38:31** and the sockets of the court all around and the sockets of the gate of the court, and all the pegs of the tabernacle and all the pegs of the court all around.

- Exodus 38 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and the sockets of the court all around and the sockets of the gate of the court, and all the pegs of the tabernacle and all the pegs of the court all around.

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