

Exodus Chapter 38

Exodus 38:1 "And he made the altar of burnt offering [of] shittim wood: five cubits [was] the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof; [it was] foursquare; and three cubits the height thereof."

That is, Bezaleel made the following, or it was made by his direction, he having the care and oversight of it, wherefore the making of it is ascribed to him (see 2 Chronicles 1:5); the account of this.

See notes on (Exodus 27:1).

Its horns, vessels, rings, and staves, is carried on to (Exodus 38:2; of which see notes on Exodus 27:1-7).

Exodus 38:2 "And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of the same: and he overlaid it with brass."

See notes on (Exodus 27:2).

I will stop here and remind you that this brasen altar was just inside the outer court.

Take a good look at this, because it symbolizes all that Jesus did for us on the cross.

This was the place of repentance.

In the outer court, brass was used.

Exodus 38:3 "And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basins, [and] the fleshhooks, and the firepans: all the vessels thereof made he [of] brass."

See notes on (Exodus 27:3).

Exodus 38:4 "And he made for the altar a brazen grate of network under the compass thereof beneath unto the midst of it."

See notes on (Exodus 27:4).

Exodus 38:5 "And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grate of brass, [to be] places for the staves."

See notes on (Exodus 27:4).

Exodus 38:6 "And he made the staves [of] shittim wood, and overlaid them with brass."

See notes on (Exodus 27:6).

Exodus 38:7 "And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards."

See notes on (Exodus 27:7).

Exodus 38:8 "And he made the laver [of] brass, and the foot of it [of] brass, of the looking glasses of [the women] assembling, which assembled [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

See notes on (Exodus 30:18-21).

This altar and this laver were in the outer court, as we mentioned before.

We see something very special in this verse; the women brought their mirrors to be used in the outer court.

For a woman to give her mirror was a great act of humility and sacrifice on her part.

Here again, we know this offering would be used in the outer court where all the Israelites could come.

“Verses 9-20” (see notes on 27:9, 16).

Exodus 38:9 "And he made the court: on the south side southward the hangings of the court [were of] fine twined linen, a hundred cubits:"

See notes on (Exodus 27:9).

Exodus 38:10 "Their pillars [were] twenty, and their brazen sockets twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets [were of] silver."

See notes on (Exodus 27:10).

Exodus 38:11 "And for the north side [the hangings were] a hundred cubits, their pillars [were] twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets [of] silver."

See notes on (Exodus 27:11).

We see clearly that this enclosure was not the same as the tabernacle where the Holy Place and Holy of Holies were.

This area was available to the congregation.

We do see the curtains of linen (righteousness), which separates even this area from the outside world.

This was an area where anyone seeking salvation could come.

This was why we see brass and silver in the outer court, brass for repentance and silver for redemption.

Exodus 38:12 "And for the west side [were] hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets [of] silver."

See notes on (Exodus 27:12).

Exodus 38:13 "And for the east side eastward fifty cubits."

See notes on (Exodus 27:13).

Exodus 38:14 "The hangings of the one side [of the gate were] fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three."

See notes on (Exodus 27:14).

Exodus 38:15 "And for the other side of the court gate, on this hand and that hand, [were] hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three."

See notes on (Exodus 27:15).

Exodus 38:16 "All the hangings of the court round about [were] of fine twined linen."

See notes on (Exodus 27:16).

Exodus 38:17 "And the sockets for the pillars [were of] brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets [of] silver; and the overlaying of their chapiters [of] silver; and all the pillars of the court [were] filleted with silver."

“The overlaying of their chapiters of silver”:

This is additional to what is recorded (in Chapter 27), and is parallel to what we find related of the tabernacle pillars (in Exodus 36:38).

“Fillets of silver”:

Rather, "connected with silver rods" (compare Exodus 27:17).

Exodus 38:18 "And the hanging for the gate of the court [was] needlework, [of] blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits [was] the length, and the height in the breadth [was] five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court."

See notes on (Exodus 27:16).

Exodus 38:19 "And their pillars [were] four, and their sockets [of] brass four; their hooks [of] silver, and the overlaying of their chapiters and their fillets [of] silver."

See notes on (Exodus 27:17).

Exodus 38:20 "And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, [were of] brass."

See notes on (Exodus 27:19).

The one thing that stands out so clearly in all of this was that every detail had been closely adhered to.

We see that God had chosen well the people to do this work.

He had chosen people who would follow His plan to the letter.

To see an explanation of the meanings of all of this, read through the earlier lessons.

In all of this beautiful description of the enclosure, we can see the world looking at the church as a separated people.

We also can see the church beckoning the world to come and see.

All the world could see was the linen enclosure.

This linen depicts righteousness.

Is that what the world sees when they look at you?

If you are a Christian, you are the church.

God's grace through Jesus separates the believers from the world.

Verses 21-31

Historians estimated that in following God's instructions to Moses, "Bezalel" and "Aholiab" (38:22-23), used more than eight tons of "gold, silver," and "bronze" when they built the tabernacle and crafted articles for it.

The inventory taken calculates out at half a shekel (30:13-16), per man 20 years old and up to equal 603,550 men (Num. 1:46 and the first census).

Talents were about 75 pounds and shekels about half an ounce.

Exodus 38:21 "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":

This is the Hebrew phrase "mishkan haEdut", translated "the tabernacle of testimony" (see Numbers 17:7).

In (Numbers 9:15), it is "tent of the testimony."

These designations came as a result of the two tables that were placed in the ark which stood in the innermost sanctuary (25:21-22 and discussion).

Thus, the whole tabernacle was appropriately called the tabernacle or tent of the testimony.

This was speaking of the totality of the tabernacle being exactly as Moses had commanded them from God.

It was interesting that the Levites were to be the ministers, through Ithamar, not Nadab or Abihu.

We will see Moses placing on record all of the metals used in the preparation of the tabernacle and enclosure.

This tabernacle was made for everyone.

The mention of the Levites just meant that their family would be the priests who conducted the administration of the services.

Exodus 38:22 "And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses."

Of whom and his descent (see Exodus 31:2).

"Made all that the LORD commanded Moses; gave directions about them, and took care that the tabernacle and all things belonging to it were made.

Which the LORD commanded Moses, and in the exact manner in which they were ordered to be made.

We see here that this man Bezaleel, who was chosen by the LORD from total obscurity, had done the job well that God had called him to do.

It was as if his sole purpose for living was to build the tabernacle.

Exodus 38:23 "And with him [was] Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen."

Of him (see Exodus 31:6).

"An engraver":

Of precious stones, as those in the ephod and breastplate.

"And a cunning workman":

In devising and working curious figured works, either in weaving or with the needle.

"And an embroiderer in blue, and purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen":

Which were used in the curtains and hangings of the tabernacle, and in the priest's garments.

Here for the first time, Aholiab was chosen for his special gifts as an engraver and worker with materials.

Verses 24-31

Someone has calculated that the amount of gold listed here, at \$1300 per ounce that would be about \$53,222,000, an enormous sum in that day.

The silver, though mounting to only about 141,000 ounces would be valued at about \$2,820,000, figuring silver at \$20 per ounce.

Exodus 38:24 "All the gold that was occupied for the work in all the work of the holy [place], even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary."

Rather, that was made use of for the work.

"The gold of the offering":

Was twenty and nine talents.

In any case the amount was remarkable, and indicated at once the liberal spirit which animated the people and the general feeling that a lavish expenditure was required by the occasion.

There is no difficulty in supposing that the Israelites possessed at the time gold to the (highest) value estimated, since they had carried with them out of Egypt.

Besides their ancestral wealth, a vast amount of gold and silver ornaments, freely given to them by the Egyptians (Exodus 3:22; 12:35-36).

Egypt had been made wealthy by the LORD through Joseph.

When the famine came, the wealthy of many countries came to Egypt to buy food.

Now, these Hebrews had brought much of it with them into the wilderness.

Exodus 38:25 "And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation [was] a hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary:"

This was not the offering of silver (Exodus 35:24), but what was collected in numbering the people, where everyone of twenty years old and upwards paid half a shekel (Exodus 30:12).

The sum:

"Was a hundred talents, one thousand seven hundred and threescore fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary":

Which, according to Brerewood, make of English money, 37,721 pounds, seventeen shillings, and six pence.

This figures out to be 150,000 ounces of silver in the 100 talents.

Exodus 38:26 "A bekah for every man, [that is], half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty [men]."

A half shekel was called a "bekah", from "bakah", to divide.

Because it was a shekel divided into two parts.

"For everyone that went to be numbered, from twenty years and upwards; in order to give a ransom, and make an atonement for their souls, as was ordered (Exodus 30:12).

"For six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men":

So that from the time of their coming out of Egypt, which was now about six months ago, there was an increase of 3550 of the above age (see Exodus 12:37).

We see here that the men over 20 years old who went up to be numbered were 603,550.

There was 1/4 oz. of silver for each man.

This bekah was perhaps a very small coin.

Perhaps this was saying, that each man 20 years old or older brought 1/4 oz. of silver to the temple, and this was where all of the silver came from in verse 25.

Exodus 38:27 "And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the veil; a hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket."

On these (see Exodus 26:19; 26:25).

They consisted of forty for each side, and sixteen for the western end; total, ninety-six.

"The sockets of the vail":

On these (see Exodus 26:32).

They were four in number, and supported the four pillars on which the vail was hung.

Thus, the total number of the silver sockets was, as the text expresses, one hundred.

Remember, these sockets were next to the ground and they were what the boards of the walls sat on.

As we said before, the silver symbolically means redemption.

There was redemption between the sinful earth and God who dwelled in the Holy of Holies.

A talent was 125 pounds, so this also helped stabilize the framework.

Exodus 38:28 "And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them."

Which remained of the sum collected (Exodus 38:25) after the silver sockets were cast.

"He made hooks for the pillars":

On each side of the court of the tabernacle on which the hangings were hung; these hooks, as Kimchi says, were in the form of the letter and were made to hang the sacrifices upon, when they took their skins off.

And so it is said in the Misnah, that there were iron hooks fixed in the walls and pillars, on which they hung (the passover lambs) and skinned them.

This was done in the second temple, when the hooks, it seems, were iron, but those of the tabernacle were silver.

"And overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them":

That is, overlaid the heads, tops, or knobs of the pillars with silver plates, and filleted, girded, or hooped other parts of them with silver.

These hooks weighed 1/2 oz.

This was what held the curtains together.

Exodus 38:29 "And the brass of the offering [was] seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels."

I.e., the bronze which the people had offered in consequence of the invitation addressed to them by Moses (Exodus 30:5; 30:24).

"Seventy talents":

No great quantity was needed, since bronze was only required for the laver, for the altar of burnt offering and its vessels, for the sockets of the Tabernacle gate, for those of the court, and for the "pins," or pegs, both of the court and the Tabernacle.

"And two thousand four hundred shekels":

Which, according to Paris weight, were 6,177 pounds, ten ounces, two drachms, and sixty four grains.

This might be had from the neighboring mountains of Arabia, where it is said the metals of brass and iron were first dug.

These 70 talents of brass weighed 8,750 lbs.

In addition, there was 2,400 shekels which weighed 1,200 ounces or 100 lbs.

The total weight of the brass was 8,850 lbs.

Exodus 38:30 "And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the brazen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar,"

Which were five (see Exodus 26:37).

"And the brazen altar, and the brazen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar":

Which were all made of brass (see Exodus 27:2).

Exodus 38:31 "And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about."

These were also of brass, in all sixty.

"And all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about":

The pins for the curtains of the tabernacle, and for the hangings of the court (see Exodus 27:19).

We see here again that the brass was used in the outer enclosure.

Exodus Chapter 38 Questions

1. Where was the brazen altar located?
2. What did the brazen altar symbolize?
3. What did it specifically say the women brought that was a personal item of theirs?
4. What did the curtains of linen symbolize?
5. Why do we see brass and silver in the outer court?
6. What shows us that God had chosen well the people to do this work?
7. If you are a Christian, you are what?
8. What tribe would minister in the tabernacle?
9. Which one of Aaron's sons was singled out for work in the sanctuary?
10. Who was in charge of all the work?
11. Why was Aholiab chosen as an assistant?
12. How much does a talent weigh (estimated)?
13. How does metal weight differ from a regular pound?
14. At today's price of \$400 per oz., how much would 29 talents amount to?
15. Where did Egypt get all of this gold?

16. What does a shekel weigh?
17. What would be the present value of all the gold used in the tabernacle and enclosure?
18. How many men over 20 years old went up to be numbered?
19. What was a bekah?
20. 70 talents of brass weighed what?
21. How many total lbs. of brass were used?
22. Where was the brass used?