

Exodus 38

This chapter records the final construction of the last pieces of furniture for the tabernacle. Chapter 39 will detail the sewing of the priests' clothes while chapter 40 will summarize the construction and show that God sends His glory into the tabernacle (40:34). This is only done because - as is emphasized repeatedly in chapters 39-40 - Israel did exactly as God had commanded Moses.

TRANSLATION - 38:1-7:

1 And he made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide, square, and three cubits high. **2** And he made horns for the four corners from it; they were horns and he overlaid them with bronze. **3** And he made all the utensils for the altar, the pots, the shovels, the basins, and the forks and the firepans. All the utensils he made of bronze. **4** And he made for the altar a grating of the work of a net of bronze under its ledge beneath, halfway. **5** And he cast four rings on the four corners for the grating of bronze as holders for the poles. **6** And he made the poles of acacia wood and he overlaid them with bronze. **7** And he brought the poles into the rings at the sides of the altar to lift it. With their hollow boards he made them.

THE ORIGINAL COMMAND IS RECORDED IN:

See the original command given in 27:1-8.

COMMENTARY:

This paragraph records the construction of the altar of burnt offering, outside the tabernacle in the courtyard.

APPLICATION:

For application, see comments under 27:1-8.

TRANSLATION - 38:8:

8 And he made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the ministering women who assembled at the door of the tent of meeting.

HEBREW WORDS:

The word "mirrors" (ver. 8) was used in Genesis 46:2. This is its only use in Exodus. It is used 12 times in the OT. "Ministering women" is a plural noun, in the feminine gender, based on the same verb in the verse translated "assembled."

THE ORIGINAL COMMAND IS RECORDED IN:

For the original command, see 30:18. It was not mentioned in that text that bronze from the women's mirrors was used in the construction.

COMMENTARY:

This paragraph notes the construction of the laver of bronze for washing. Moses writes in this text that the bronze came from the burnished bronze which the women used. Who these "serving women" were is not known. They are only mentioned once more in 1 Samuel 2:22.

APPLICATION:

For application, see comments under 30:18.

TRANSLATION - 38:9-17:

9 And he made the court toward the south, southward, the hangings of the court of twisted linen one hundred cubits, **10** their pillars twenty and their sockets twenty, of bronze,

and hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver **11** and to the side toward the north one hundred cubits, pillars twenty and their bases twenty of bronze and hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver, **12** and to the side toward the sea hangings fifty cubits their pillars, ten, and their bases ten and their hooks and bands of silver, **13** and to the side toward the east, toward the sunrise, fifty cubits, **14** the hangings fifteen cubits on one side their pillars three and their bases three, **15** and on the second side from this [way] and from that [way] to the gate of the court hangings fifteen cubits their pillars three and their bases three. **16** All the sides of the hangings around [were] of twisted linen. **17** Their bases for their pillars [were] of bronze and hooks of the pillars and their bases of silver and overlaid their tops with silver and these banded with silver, all their pillars of the court.

THE ORIGINAL COMMAND IS RECORDED IN:

The original command for the coverings which formed the tent of worship is found in 27:9-19.

COMMENTARY:

This paragraph notes the sewing of the hangings which formed the walls around the tabernacle.

APPLICATION:

For application, see under 27:9-19.

TRANSLATION - 38:18-20:

18 And the screen of the gate of the courtyard [was] the work of the weaver of blue and purple and the worm of scarlet and linen woven and twenty cubits long and its height five cubits to the front of the hangings of the court. **19** And their pillars four and their bases four of bronze, and their hooks of silver and they were overlaid at their top and their bases of silver. **20** And all the pegs for the tabernacle and the court around [were of] bronze.

THE ORIGINAL COMMAND IS RECORDED IN:

This original command is found in 27:16-19.

COMMENTARY:

This short paragraph notes the sewing and making of the screen which served as a door for the courtyard of the tent.

APPLICATION:

For application, see under 27:16-19.

TRANSLATION - 38:21-23:

21 These [are] the sum of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony which was numbered by the mouth of Moses, the work of the Levites by the hand of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest. **22** And Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur of the tribe of Judah made all which Jehovah had commanded Moses. **23** And with him, Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, a craftsman, and a worker, and a weaver in blue and purple and the worm of scarlet and in linen.

HEBREW WORDS:

“To number” (ver. 21) is the verb “to visit” or “to punish,” depending on its context. It was first used at 30:12-14.

THE ORIGINAL COMMAND IS RECORDED IN:

Multiple references have been made to the contributions of the Israelites for the tabernacle and its utensils: 25:1-9; 35:4-9; 35:20-29.

COMMENTARY:

Ithamar, the son of Aaron, assisted Moses in taking a census of the men of Israel and the shekels which were donated based on the population (ver. 21).

Once again Moses writes about Bezalel and Oholiab (ver. 22) and how they did everything which God commanded through Moses. Oholiab was, in particular, a very skilled man in various textiles.

TRANSLATION - 38:24-31:

24 All the gold they used for the work in all the work of the sanctuary and it was the gold of the offering twenty-nine talents and 730 shekels by the shekel of the sanctuary. **25** And the silver of the number of the congregation one hundred talents and one thousand and seven hundred and five and seventy shekels by the shekel of the sanctuary. **26** A beka per head, half the shekel by the shekel of the sanctuary, for each of the one passing through the census, the son of twenty years and upwards for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty. **27** And it was one hundred talents of silver to cast the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil one hundred bases for one hundred talents, the talent for a base. **28** And the thousand and seven hundred and seventy five he made also hooks for the pillars and he overlaid their tops and he made bands for them. **29** And the bronze for the wave offering seventy talents and two thousand and four hundred shekels. **30** And he made it for bases a door of the tent of meeting and the altar of bronze and the grating of bronze which was for it and all the utensils for the altar. **31** And the bases for the court around and the bases for the gate of the court and all the pegs for the tabernacle and all the pegs for the court around.

HEBREW WORDS:

The "talent" (ver. 24) was first used at 25:39. "Shekel" was used in Genesis 23:15-16 but first in Exodus at 21:32. The "beka" (ver. 25) is a half-shekel; it is used only in Genesis 24:22 and 38:26.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

The "talent" was mentioned first at 25:39; it is the largest unit of measurement in biblical times. It took 3,000 shekels to make one talent. Scholars have an educated guess that a talent in this time was 75 pounds (35 kilograms). A shekel weighed about 0.4 ounces (11,4 grams). This did not refer to money because minted coins were not used until much later in Jewish history. This metal was valuable for the objects which could be made from them. The beka is half a shekel, or 0.2 ounces (5,7 grams).

COMMENTARY:

This extensive paragraph will note the value of the metals which were given and used in the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture. The gold given was 29 talents and 730 shekels (ver. 24). Scholars do not know what is the significance of the phrase "the shekel of the sanctuary." It is presumed either that it was so designated since it was given *for* the sanctuary or because there was a special weight used for the metals donated to the sanctuary. We presume the first explanation is accurate. The total weight of gold is estimated to have been 2,210.65 pounds (95.55 kg).

The silver donated to the tabernacle was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels (ver. 25). Based on the measurements mentioned above under "Archaeology," the total weight of the silver is estimated to have been 7,601 pounds (3,447,76 kg). God had commanded in 30:11-16 that each male, twenty years old and older, would have a half-shekel, identified as a "bekah." Each male, regardless of income, was to give this same amount (30:15). The men who fit this designation numbered 603,550 (ver. 26). This is the same number we see from the census

taken in Numbers 1 (ver. 46). That census was taken around the first of the second month in the second year Israel came out of Egypt (Num. 1:1). That gives us an idea of when these events are taking place. Israel arrived at Mount Sinai after traveling for three months (19:1). Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days in 24:18 and again at 34:28. The tabernacle was completed in the first month of the second year after they left Egypt (40:17), which corresponds to the census recorded in Numbers 1 mentioned earlier. The silver was used for the bases of the sanctuary and for the veil (ver. 27) and for the hooks for the pillars (ver. 28).

The bronze, the cheapest metal offered, was 70 talents and 2,400 shekels (ver. 29). The bronze would have weighed an estimated 5,350 pounds (2,426,72 kg). With the bronze, Moses made the bases for the doorway, the altar of burnt offering, and its grating (ver. 30) as well as the bases for the court and the gate, and the pegs for the tabernacle itself and the courtyard (ver. 31).

APPLICATION:

For application, see comments under 25:1-9; 35:4-9; 35:20-29.