

WEEK 47 — OUTLINE

The Workers of the Tabernacle and the Sabbath in Relation to the Building Work

Scripture Reading: Exo. 31:1-17

« DAY 1 »

I. “...See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom and with understanding and with knowledge and with all kinds of workmanship, to fashion skillful designs, to work in gold and in silver and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for setting and in the carving of wood, to work in all kinds of workmanship. And now, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the heart of all who are wise in heart I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded you...” (Exo. 31:1-17):

A. Bezalel was a master builder, a leader in God’s building (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10):

1. His name means “in the shadow of God,” indicating that as a master builder, Bezalel was a man under the shadow of God’s grace (cf. Psa. 91:1; 1 Cor. 3:10a; 2 Cor. 12:9).
2. Uri, the name of Bezalel’s father, means “light of Jehovah,” and Hur, the name of Bezalel’s grandfather, means “free, noble, white” (signifying clean and pure); these three names indicate what kind of persons the builders of God’s dwelling place should be:
 - a. If we are not under the shadow of God’s grace, many things may come to disturb us, but the shadow of God the Almighty will keep these things away from us and cause us to remain in a peaceful situation and condition to do the building work (Isa. 30:15a).
 - b. All the builders of God’s dwelling place should be full of light, not having any dark part (Luke 11:33-36; Eph. 5:8-9; Matt. 5:14).
 - c. All the builders of God’s dwelling place should be free, noble, and clean and pure (Gal. 2:4 and footnote 2; 5:1, 13; Matt. 5:8; 1 John 1:9; 1 Tim. 5:22b; 1 John 5:18).

« DAY 2 »

3. The building up of God’s dwelling place, the church, is a noble work to be done by all God’s people (1 Cor. 3:10; Eph. 4:12, 16); however, the wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skill for this work must be God Himself as the Spirit to us (cf. Col. 1:28-29).
4. Only the Spirit of God can build His own dwelling place through us (Zech. 4:6; Eph. 4:4a, 30).

5. To build up the church all the believers must know how to use the divine nature as the gold, the redemption of Christ as the silver, and God's righteous judgment as the bronze (cf. 1 Cor. 3:12) as the materials for God's work.
6. To cut stones for setting is to help the saints to be transformed into stones and to be adjusted to fit into God's building.
7. To carve wood is to work on the humanity of the saints for the sake of God's building.
8. To work in all kinds of workmanship is to produce finer virtues in human character with the uplifted humanity of Christ, which are needed for the building up of the church as God's dwelling place (Eph. 4:2 and footnote).

« DAY 3 »

B. Oholiab was Bezalel's co-master builder; his name means "the tent or tabernacle of my father"; Ahisamach, the name of Oholiab's father, means "a brother of strength or support"; these two names signify that Oholiab was a man for God's tabernacle with strength and support (Exo. 31:6):

1. Bezalel was of the tribe of Judah (v. 2), the kingly tribe (Gen. 49:10), the tribe of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 7:14), and Oholiab was of the tribe of Dan (Exo. 31:6), a lowly tribe (Gen. 49:17).
2. The same principle is seen in the building of the temple under Solomon, who was of the tribe of Judah, and Hiram-abi, whose mother was a Danite woman (2 Chron. 2:11-14).
3. This indicates that the work of God's dwelling place must be done by all God's people, including those of high estate and those of seemingly low estate (Eph. 4:11-16).

« DAY 4 »

C. The workers of the tabernacle need to be wise in heart, receive wisdom, understanding, and grace from God, and be stirred up in their heart to do the noble work of building up the church, God's dwelling place on earth (Exo. 36:1-2; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:9-10; 15:10, 58; cf. 2 Chron. 1:10; 1 Cor. 14:4b):

1. If we would build God's dwelling place, we must be a people filled with the Spirit of God (Exo. 31:3).
2. In order to be filled with the Spirit of God, we need the willingness to do something for God's building (v. 6b; cf. Mal. 3:14, footnote 1), we need to abandon our natural capacity, and we need to empty ourselves to have the absolute openness to God in prayer (Matt. 5:3).
3. Every day and all the time we need to be freshly filled with the Triune God through prayer; the Christian life is a life of prayer; if we are short of prayer, we will be short of the Spirit (Col. 4:2).
4. It is when we are willing and empty and continuously praying that we have the

wisdom to work in the divine nature and to minister to the needy ones the particular Christ that they need for their growth in life and God's building.

« DAY 5 »

II. The Sabbath follows the charge for the building of the tabernacle (Exo. 31:12-17):

- A. Exodus 31:13 and 16 through 17 say, "You shall surely keep My Sabbaths; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you...Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed":
1. On the seventh day God "rested and was refreshed"; He looked at man and said, "Very good," resting from His work of creation (Gen. 1:31).
 2. Man was God's refreshment—God created man in His own image with a spirit so that man could fellowship with God and be God's companion and counterpart (v. 26; 2:7, 22).
 3. Man's first day was a day of rest and enjoyment (1:31—2:2):
 - a. God rested because He had finished His work and was satisfied; God's glory was manifested because man had His image, and His authority was about to be exercised for the subduing of His enemy, Satan; as long as man expresses God and deals with God's enemy, God is satisfied and can rest.
 - b. Later, the seventh day was commemorated as the Sabbath (Exo. 20:8-11); God's seventh day was man's first day; after man was created, he did not join in God's work, but he entered into God's rest.
 - c. Man was created not to work but to be satisfied with God and rest with God (cf. Matt. 11:28-30); the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).
 - d. The rest in Genesis 2:2 is a seed that develops through the Bible and is harvested in Revelation; the development of this seed includes the rest of the Sabbath day (Exo. 20:8-11) and the rest of the good land (Deut. 12:9; Heb. 4:8) in the Old Testament, the rest of the Lord's Day in the New Testament (Rev. 1:10; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2), and the rest of the millennial kingdom (Heb. 4:1, 3, 9, 11).
 - e. The consummation of rest is the rest of the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem, in which all the redeemed saints will express God's glory (Rev. 21:10-11, 23) and reign with God's authority (22:5b) for eternity.
- B. Man's first day being a day of rest established a divine principle—God first supplies us with enjoyment, and then we work together with Him; we need to be one with God in His work (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1); this requires that we

enjoy Him.

- C. At Pentecost the disciples were filled with the enjoyment of the Lord at 9 a.m. (Acts 2:13, 15); then Peter and the eleven stood to work together with the Lord.

<< DAY 6 >>

- D. With God it is a matter of working and resting; with man it is a matter of resting and working; then we work with the Lord by being one with Him.
- E. When we take Him and enjoy Him as our real Sabbath rest, He will be our strength to work and our energy to labor (1 Cor. 15:10, 58).
- F. As God's people, we should bear a sign that we need God to be our strength, energy, and everything so that we may be able to work together with Him for the building up of the church as Christ's Body; this honors and glorifies Him.
- G. When we work for God without enjoying Him and without being one with Him, the result is spiritual death and the loss of the fellowship in the Body (Exo. 31:14).
- H. The sign that we bear is that we rest with God, enjoy God, are refreshed with God, and are filled up with God first (v. 17); then we work together with the very One who fills us in oneness with Him.
- I. He is our rest, our refreshment, our energy, our strength, and our everything for ministering the word of God (1 Pet. 4:10-11; 2 Cor. 2:17; 13:3).
- J. This is an eternal covenant, an eternal contract with God (Exo. 31:16):
1. Keeping the Sabbath is an eternal covenant assuring God that we will be one with Him by first enjoying Him and then working with Him, for Him, and in oneness with Him.
 2. The mentioning of the Sabbath here indicates that everything related to the tabernacle and its furniture leads us to God's Sabbath, with its rest and refreshment in the enjoyment of what God has purposed and done.

« WEEK 47 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 31:2-3 “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom and with understanding and with knowledge and with all kinds of workmanship.”

1 Cor. 3:10 “According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid a foundation, and another builds upon it...”

In this message we...consider the workers of the tabernacle....Not even in the New Testament do we have such a detailed picture showing us how to build up God’s dwelling place.

Today God’s dwelling place is the church. The building up of the church is truly a great matter and a very important subject in the Bible....The record in Exodus that speaks of the workers of the tabernacle...[shows] us the detailed way for God’s people to build up His dwelling place on earth in this age. Therefore, we should treasure this record.

Exodus 31:2-5 speaks of the master builder of the tabernacle. Paul uses the term master builder in 1 Corinthians 3:10: “According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid a foundation....” A master builder is a leader in God’s building.

Bezalel is a type in the Old Testament of the master builder [Exo. 31:2]. The name Bezalel means “in the shadow of God.” This indicates that as a master builder, Bezalel was altogether under God’s shadowing. He was a man under the shadow of God’s grace. This corresponds to Paul’s word in 1 Corinthians 3:10, where he says that it was by God’s grace that he was made a wise master builder. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1803-1804)

Today’s Reading

All of us, whether we are leaders in God’s building or common builders, need God’s grace. We need to be under the shadow of His grace. If we are not under the shadow of God’s grace, many things may come to disturb us. But the shadow of God will keep these things away from us and cause us to remain in a peaceful situation and condition to do the building work.

Regarding the building up of God’s dwelling place, there is a real conflict, a severe fighting between God and His enemy. The enemy does not like to see the building of God’s dwelling place going on in a good way. Therefore, he will do everything he can to interrupt, interfere, frustrate, attack, and destroy. The leading brothers in the churches know that it is a troublesome matter to take care of a local church because the enemy often causes disturbances and frustrations. Certain things we know have been sent by the enemy purposely to damage the work of building. There is no logical reason for such things to happen. Nevertheless, they happen because they were caused by the enemy.

Especially the elders must realize that in order to build up a local church we need to be under the shadow of our God. For the building of God’s dwelling place, we all should be named Bezalel. We all should be those under the shadow of God.

The name of Bezalel’s father was Uri, which means “light of Jehovah.” This name indicates that all the builders of God’s dwelling place should be not only under God’s shadow but also full of the Lord’s light.

The name of Bezalel’s grandfather was Hur. Hur means “free, noble, white.” Not only should we be under God’s shadow and full of light, but we should be free and noble. Those who build God’s dwelling place are not low people. On the contrary, they are noble people doing a noble work. No other work is as noble as the building of God’s dwelling place. Furthermore, the builders of God’s dwelling place are “white,” that is, they are clean and pure. When we put together the meaning of the names Bezalel, Uri, and Hur, we can see what kind of person the builders of God’s dwelling place, especially the elders, must be. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1804-1805)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 170

<< WEEK 47 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 31:3-5 “And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom and with understanding and with knowledge and with all kinds of workmanship, to fashion skillful designs, to work in gold and in silver and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for setting and in the carving of wood, to work in all kinds of workmanship.”

If we would build God’s dwelling place, we must be a people filled with the Spirit of God. By our natural life and ability and in our natural man, we are not able to do this work. Nothing natural is capable of building God’s dwelling place. Only the Spirit of God can build His own dwelling place through us. We are the instruments, the means. The actual ability, capacity, strength, and power must be God Himself as the Spirit to us. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1805)

Today’s Reading

According to Exodus 31:3, this filling up with the Spirit of God involves four matters: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and workmanship....This skill, this workmanship, involves knowledge. But it is not sufficient to have only knowledge; we also need understanding and wisdom.

It is possible for us to have knowledge without understanding....You may know all the verses used in a particular message...and may even be able to recite many of them, [but] if you put all the verses together, you may not have any understanding of them. For the understanding of the verses, you need to listen to the ministry of the Word.

However, we may have both knowledge and understanding of verses, but still not have any revelation concerning them....But as a minister of the Word continues to open the Word to you, you eventually begin to see what is revealed in the verses being considered. This is a matter of wisdom.

The way of doing something is equal to the wisdom required for doing it. The Lord Jesus once said that He is the way (John 14:6), and Paul says that Christ is our wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30). By putting these verses together, we see that wisdom and the way are one.

Knowledge is a vast field. Who can claim to know everything related to the building up of the church? It is impossible for anyone to have such a complete knowledge....Do you understand the significance of working in gold, silver, and bronze? Do you know how to cut stones for setting? Do you know how to carve wood? Do you know what it means in Exodus 35:35 to work in blue, in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen? The significance of all these matters has much to do with the building up of the church today. Elders, do you really know what sanctification is? Do you know what is the “wood” used in the building of God today? You may realize that wood signifies humanity, but do you know how to “carve” humanity?

Suppose a brother and sister in the church are having a difficult time in their married life....Do you...really understand their problem? You may know much about them, but...you may not understand the reasons for the situation and the inner causes...[or] the influence of their background....Perhaps some elders would be able to understand the problem of this married couple. However,...they may not have the wisdom to help this couple grow in life and gain more of Christ.

In order to build up the church, the elders need knowledge, understanding, and wisdom....[Not only elders but] all the saints of all ages...may be like Bezalel, Oholiab, and the wise-hearted ones to whom God has given wisdom (31:6)...[to] have a part in building the most noble structure in the entire universe—God’s dwelling place.

We all need to realize that the noble work of building up the church is for every one of us.

We all need to treasure the Lord’s speaking concerning the building up of His dwelling place, the church...[and] see our need to be filled with the Spirit of God in knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and workmanship so that we may do the noble work of building. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1805-1806, 1808-1811)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 170

<< WEEK 47 — DAY 3 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:11-12 “And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ.”

16 “...All the Body...causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.”

Exodus 31:6 speaks of Bezalel’s co-master builder: “And now, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.” The name Oholiab means “the tent or tabernacle of my father.” This signifies that one’s whole person cares for God’s tabernacle. Ahisamach, the name of Oholiab’s father, means “a brother of strength or support.” This co-master worker was a man for the tabernacle of God with strength and support. However, this co-master builder was of the tribe of Dan, the tribe of the lowest estate. The first master builder, Bezalel, was of the tribe of Judah. Judah is a kingly tribe, the tribe of the Lord Jesus. But the second master builder, Oholiab, came from the lowest tribe, the tribe of Dan. This indicates that the building work must include those of both the high estate and the low estate. No matter whether you are high or low, as long as you are one of God’s children, you must be included in the work of building. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1816)

Today’s Reading

The same principle is seen in the building of the temple under Solomon, who was of the tribe of Judah, and Hiram-abi [that is, Hiram], whose mother was a Danite woman (2 Chron. 2:11-14). This indicates that the work of building God’s dwelling place must be done by all God’s people, including those of high estate and those of low estate (Eph. 4:11-16). (Exo. 31:6, footnote 2)

The master builder was King Solomon, who was of the tribe of Judah. But the co-master builder was once again of the tribe of Dan. But his estate was even lower than that of Oholiab, for he was the son of a Danite woman and of a Tyrian father. How wonderful the Bible is! With the building of both the tabernacle and the temple the master builder was of the tribe of Judah, a kingly tribe, and the co-master builder was of the tribe of Dan, a lowly tribe. There is nothing coincidental here. This arrangement is according to God’s sovereignty.

Exodus 35:34 indicates that Oholiab’s main task was to teach. No doubt, Oholiab was wise. However, he must have received most of his knowledge, understanding, and wisdom from Bezalel. Receiving all this from the master builder, he then went out to teach others. Here we see a beautiful and pleasant coordination.

Exodus 35:34 says that both Bezalel and Oholiab did the work of teaching. But I believe that most of the teaching was done by Oholiab. This indicates that in the building up of the church there is the need of adequate teaching. We need some to be today’s Oholiab to teach the saints concerning God’s building according to the knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and skill received from the master builder.

Exodus 35:35 says of Bezalel and Oholiab that they were filled with wisdom of heart to work all kinds of workmanship of an engraver or craftsman, the skilled workman, and the embroiderer in blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen. What is the difference between an engraver or craftsman and a workman? I believe that an engraver or craftsman has a special gift, whereas a workman does ordinary work with skill. The embroiderers, who may have been female workers, worked in blue, signifying heavenliness; in purple, signifying the kingship or royalty of Christ; in scarlet, signifying Christ’s redemption; and in fine linen, signifying Christ’s humanity.

Exodus 35:35 also speaks of the weaver, the doers of every work, and those who fashion skillful designs. By all this we can see that the building up of God’s dwelling place is a fine, detailed work. The fact that many of the words used to describe the workers are similar in meaning indicates that the work of building up the church is fine, delicate, and detailed. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1816-1817)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 171

<< WEEK 47 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 31:6 “And now, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the heart of all who are wise in heart I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded you.”

36:2 “And Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every man who was wise in heart, in whose heart Jehovah had put wisdom, even everyone whose heart lifted him up to come to the work to do it.”

[Exodus 31:6b and 36:2] indicate that all the builders of the tabernacle were wise in heart. They all received wisdom and understanding from God. Here there is no mention of knowledge. It is common for people to have knowledge, at least in a general way. But what is needed for the work of building is wisdom and understanding, not only knowledge. If we have wisdom and understanding, we shall be persons wise in heart.

In order to do the work of building up God’s dwelling place, we need to be filled with the Spirit of God in knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and workmanship. We also need to learn how to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in the carving of wood. The building work includes those of both high estate and low estate. What we need now is to become wise in heart, receiving wisdom and understanding from God, and to be stirred up by our heart to do the noble work of building up the church, God’s dwelling place on earth today. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1818-1820)

Today’s Reading

[Although] you have the willingness to do something for God’s building,...you must realize that your natural capability has to be altogether abandoned....God treasures your willingness, which He initiated, but your capability—what you can do, what you know—in God’s estimation means nothing. If you will reject your ability, this abandonment will give God the ground to come in and fill you. First you need the willingness; then God needs your openness.

God will use only you, not what you have or can do. Therefore, you must empty yourself. To empty yourself means to have an absolute openness to God....What part of you needs to be unloaded? Your capability, your knowledge, your wisdom, your education. It is only when you are empty that God can come in to fill you. When God fills you, it is His Spirit who fills you.

Even real experiences of the church life have to be emptied out. Every day, all the time, you and I in the leadership of the churches need to be freshly filled with the Triune God.

We [also] need...the instant, constant prayer...If we are able to do things, we do not need to pray much. We have confidence, we have knowledge, we have a way, we have ability, we have strength: we are certain we can handle the situation. We need to empty ourselves, knowing that whatever we can do is not counted; it is not only rejected but even condemned by God. Whatever the old man can do is condemned by God. We have to realize this. Then we shall see our need of God and will pray constantly and instantly.

Whenever we have been emptied and are in a prayerful spirit, if we stand up in the church meeting, we are aware, and all the other saints are also aware, that we are living, fresh, and rich. Other times we may stand up and share a lot, but the congregation has the feeling that it is from the old man, that it is empty. When we contact others, we may speak the same word, talk about the same point, but sometimes there is a result and other times it is lifeless. It is when we are willing and empty and continuously praying that we have the wisdom to work in the divine nature and to minister to the needy ones the very Christ they need, not just minister in a general way.

The crucial lack is this continuous prayer...You are short of prayer, so you are short of the Spirit. It is when you are fully condemned in your prayer [of the many things that need to be dropped] that you receive wisdom and the real understanding of the Lord concerning the situation, concerning people, and concerning the church. (Practical Talks to the Elders, pp. 81-82, 84-85)

Further Reading: Practical Talks to the Elders, ch. 7

<< WEEK 47 — DAY 5 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 31:16-17 “Therefore the children of Israel shall...observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”

God rested because He had finished His work and was satisfied [cf. Gen. 2:2]. God’s glory was manifested because man had His image, and His authority was about to be exercised for the subduing of His enemy, Satan. As long as man expresses God and deals with God’s enemy, God is satisfied and can rest.

Later, the seventh day was commemorated as the Sabbath (Exo. 20:8-11). God’s seventh day was man’s first day. God had prepared everything for man’s enjoyment. After man was created, he did not join in God’s work; he entered into God’s rest. Man was created not to work but to be satisfied with God and rest with God (cf. Matt. 11:28-30). The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).

The rest in Genesis 2:2 is a seed that develops through the Bible and is harvested in Revelation. The development of this seed includes the rest of the Sabbath day (Exo. 20:8-11) and the rest of the good land (Deut. 12:9; Heb. 4:8) in the Old Testament, the rest of the Lord’s Day in the New Testament (Rev. 1:10; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2), and the rest of the millennial kingdom (Heb. 4:1, 3, 9, 11). The consummation of rest is the rest of the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem, in which all the redeemed saints will express God’s glory (Rev. 21:11, 23) and reign with God’s authority (Rev. 22:5b) for eternity. (Gen. 2:2, footnote 1)

Today’s Reading

[Exodus 31:17] indicates that the Sabbath was not only a rest to God, but was also a refreshment to Him. Both Genesis and Exodus tell us that God rested on the seventh day. But in 31:17 the words “and was refreshed” are added. This reveals that even God needs to be refreshed.

To rest is one thing...but to be refreshed we need something to eat or drink. We often refer to food and drink as refreshment....The same is true of God. God needs something to refresh Him....After God created man, He rested. He could look upon His handiwork, at the heavens, the earth, and all the living things, especially at man, and say, “Very good!” Then God could rest and be refreshed....God was refreshed with man. Man was God’s refreshment. God loved man. He created him in His own image with a spirit so that man could have fellowship with Him. Man, therefore, was God’s refreshment....Man was like a refreshing drink to quench God’s thirst and satisfy Him. When God ended His work and began to rest, He had man as His companion. To God, the seventh day was a day of rest and refreshment. However, to man, God’s companion, the day of rest and refreshment was the first day. Man’s first day was a day of enjoyment.

It is a divine principle that God does not ask us to work until we have had enjoyment. God first supplies us with enjoyment. Then after a full enjoyment with Him and of Him, we may work together with Him....We need to be one with God in His work. This requires that we enjoy Him. If we do not know how to enjoy God and be filled with God, we shall not know how to work with Him, how to be one with Him in His work.

The New Testament ministry of the apostles began with the enjoyment they had on the day of Pentecost....When they were filled with the Spirit,...they were filled with the enjoyment of the Lord....Others thought that they were drunk with wine. Actually they were filled with the enjoyment of the heavenly wine. Only after they had been filled with this enjoyment did they begin to work with God. This is the way to work with God, the way to work in oneness with Him. When Peter stood up with the apostles to preach the gospel and thereby do a work for God, they all were one with God in His work. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1823-1825)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 172

<< WEEK 47 — DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 31:13 “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, You shall surely keep My Sabbaths; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifies you.”

1 Cor. 15:10 “But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.”

The Sabbath is mentioned again in Exodus 31:13 (cf. 20:8-11), in relation to the work of building God’s dwelling place, signifying that as God’s people work with Him and for Him, they must learn to rest with Him by enjoying Him and being filled with Him. Keeping the Sabbath is a sign (31:17) that God’s people work for God not by their own strength but by enjoying Him and being one with Him. It is also an eternal covenant (v. 16) assuring God that we will be one with Him by first enjoying Him and then working with Him, for Him, and in oneness with Him. God first worked and then rested; man first rests and then works (Gen. 2:2 and footnote). The mentioning of the Sabbath in Exodus 31:13 indicates also that everything related to the tabernacle and its furniture leads us to God’s Sabbath, with its rest and refreshment in the enjoyment of what God has purposed and done. (Exo. 31:13, footnote 1)

Today’s Reading

After God gave the revelation concerning the tabernacle and the furniture, and after God selected the builders and gave Moses a charge regarding them, He went on to speak again of the Sabbath. It seems as if God were saying, “Do not forget My Sabbath. Don’t...think that because you are working to build My dwelling place, you can work every day continually. No, even in doing My divine work, the work of building the tabernacle, you must still bear a sign to indicate that you are My people and you need Me. Therefore you need to enjoy Me first. Then you will be able to work not only for Me, but also with Me and by being one with Me. I will be your strength to work and your energy to labor. But if you work in yourself and by yourself, that will be an insult to Me. You must do the work of building My dwelling place with Me, by Me, and in oneness with Me....You are My people, and you should bear a sign that you need Me to be your enjoyment, strength, and energy. You need Me to be your everything so that you may be able to work for Me. By working in this way you honor Me and glorify Me.”

Keeping the Sabbath is also an agreement or covenant. When we begin to keep the Sabbath, this indicates that we have signed an agreement, a contract, that assures God that we shall be one with Him in this way. We would be one with Him by first enjoying Him and then by working for Him, with Him, and in oneness with Him. This is an eternal covenant. It is not merely for one age, dispensation, or generation. It is an eternal agreement between us and God.

[A covenant] assures Him that from now on we shall enjoy Him and be filled with Him before we go to work for Him, with Him, and in oneness with Him.

In the church life we may do many things without first enjoying the Lord, and without serving with the Lord and by being one with the Lord. That kind of service results in the suffering of spiritual death. Any service to the church that is without the enjoyment of the Lord and that is without the oneness with Him brings in spiritual death. Whenever we serve in that way, we cut ourselves off from the fellowship in the Body.

Everything related to God’s dwelling place leads us to one matter—to the Sabbath with its rest and refreshment of the Lord. Therefore, the tabernacle with its furniture leads us to the enjoyment of what God has purposed and done. Hallelujah, in the church life we are in the tabernacle, and the tabernacle leads us to rest, to the enjoyment of God’s purpose and of what He has done! (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1826-1831)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 182

Thy blueprint, Lord, I treasure dear

The Church — Her Building

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1. Thy blue - print, Lord, I trea - sure dear, It shows Thy ta - ber - na - cle
real, It tells how Thou wouldst have it built, How Thou Thy glo - ry wouldst re - veal.

2. The ark's the center of the tent,
The tent is but its resting-place;
In it the ten commandments are,
And in the tent it ever stays.
3. The ark the God-man, Christ, displays—
God mixed with man, as gold, wood meet;
The law is God's expression full,
Which dwells in Christ the Son complete.
4. Thus Christ's the center of the Church,
Which is to Him a resting-place;
In Christ the Father ever dwells,
And in the Church, Christ's dwelling-place.
5. The tent's the increase of the ark,
Both are of wood with gold o'erlaid;
The Church the increase is of Christ,
God blent with man here too displayed.
6. The boards when joined support the tent
On silver sockets standing sure;
Gold overlaid, with golden rings
And interlocking bars, secure.
7. The Church is thus the gathered saints,
On Christ's redemption standing sure;
In life divine, by Spirit bound,
Together built and framed secure.
8. The tent's four-layered cover shows
The Christ of God in every phase;
God's glory thus is signified,
Covering His holy dwelling-place.
9. Covered by such a glorious Christ,
All saints together knit may be;
Enjoying all He is for them,
In Him they're builded gloriously.
10. The law is placed within the ark,
The ark within the tent doth rest;
So God in Christ within the Church
His wondrous glory manifests.