

April 15, 2018 - Ex. 31:1 – 32:14 - The Calling of Bezaleel; The Golden Calf
Torah Reading: Exodus 31:1 – 32:14 - The Calling of Bezaleel; The Golden Calf
Psalm 65
Haftarah: Isaiah 43:7-15, 21

Work: The Calling of Bezaleel (Exodus 31:1-11)

God provides us whatever is needed for whatever He calls us to do.

Exodus 31:3-5 - "And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship."

Christ is the type here: **Psalm 40:7, Hebrews 10:7** - "in the volume of the book it is written of Me. I delight to do Thy will, O God."

Christ built (and was) the dwelling (tabernacle) place of God in this world.

"The tabernacle of God is with men" (**Revelation 21:3**)

- **Isaiah 11:1-4** - "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears. But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth."

Bezaleel means "In the shadow of God" or "the protection of God."

"In the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge" (**Psalm 57:1**)

Bezaleel was the son of Uri, "light. The "Urim" of the high priests' breastplate is the plural of the same word. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (**1 John 1:5**)

Bezaleel was the grandson of Hur, which means "free," or "at liberty."

Work in gold (glory) silver (redemption) and brass (judgment).

"cutting of stone" refers to the High Priest's breastplate. The stones represented the tribes of Israel.

- **1 Peter 2:5** - "Ye also as living stones, are built up a spiritual house."

Bezaleel's helper is Aholiab from the tribe of Dan. Aholiab signifies "The Tent

(tabernacle) of the Father."

- **John 1:14** - "And the Word became flesh and dwelt (Greek: 'tabernacled') among us, and we beheld His glory,"

Aholiab was the son of Ahisamach, which means "Brother of Support."

As Israel traveled, Judah led off first and Dan brought up the rear. Thus all of Israel is included in type in the making of the Tabernacle.

Rest: The Sabbath in Vital (Exodus 31:12-17)

The Sabbath speaks of things being brought to completion, so that there is no more work to be done.

Once the Tabernacle instructions are completed, they lead to "Rest."

The Sabbath was now, for the first time, appointed as a "sign" between Jehovah and Israel that they were His "sanctified" people. - i.e., the fact that they have entered into rest.

- **Genesis 2:2-3** - "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

When God made the heavens and the earth He had the design of the tabernacle and the redemptive work of Christ in His mind.

The "rest" of God is the consequence of the finished work of Christ.

The wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest (**Isaiah 57:20**)

- **Matthew 11:28** - "Come unto Me, all ye, that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

- **Hebrews 4:9-11** - "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

- **Zephaniah 3:17** - "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing."

Exodus 31:17 - "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."

"refreshed" = *nâphash* - to be breathed upon, as if by a current of air; to stop and take a breath, to pant.

Rashi - "refreshed": for one regains one's soul and one's breath when one rests from the toil of work. He about Whom it is written: "He neither tires nor wearies" (Isa. 40:28), and Whose every act is performed by speech [alone, without physical effort], dictated rest in reference to Himself [only] in order to make it understood to the [human] ear with words that it can understand.

God is "refreshed" because he sees the finished work of Christ, and our refreshment is from the same understanding and source:

- **Exodus 23:12** - "Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed."

- **Acts 3:19** - "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when (so that) the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ, who has been appointed for you."

Giving of the Tablets

Exodus 31:18 - "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."

Rashi - "when he had made an end" - the Hebrew word is spelled defectively here, so that it can mean "like his bride" - for the Torah was delivered to him [Moses] as a gift, as a bride [is given] to a bridegroom, because [otherwise] he could not have learnt it all in such a short time (Tanchuma, Ki Thissa 18) Just as a bride is adorned with twenty-four ornaments [i.e.,] the ones listed in Isaiah 3:18-22, so too must a Torah scholar be adorned with the twenty-four books [of the Scriptures, i.e., possess the knowledge of the entire Scriptures] (Tanchuma, Ki Thissa 16).

See **Isaiah 3:18-23** - "In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils."

The Finger of God

- **Exodus 8:19** - "Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said."

- **Luke 11:20** - "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

The Incident of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32:1-14)

Moses was away for 40 days. The reason was to test Israel.

Israel broke the very first commandment on those tables of stone: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." They had broken the covenant agreed to in Exodus 24:6-8.

Exodus 32:1 - "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

Rashi - When Moses went up the mountain, he said to them [the Israelites], "At the end of forty days I will come, within six hours" [from sunrise of the fortieth day]. They thought that the day he went up was included in the number [of the forty days], but [in fact] he had said to them, "forty days," [meaning] complete [days], including the night. But the day of his ascent did not have its night included with it [because Moses ascended in the morning], for on the seventh of Sivan he ascended. Thus, the fortieth day [of Moses' absence] was the seventeenth of Tammuz.

Also, Satan showed them something resembling Moses, being carried in the air, high above in the sky. -[from Shab. 89a, Midrash Tanchuma 19]

Exodus 32:2 - "And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron."

The rabbis tried to depict Aaron as only trying to stall until Moses returned.

Rashi - Aaron said to himself, "The women and children are fond of their jewelry. Perhaps the matter will be delayed, and in the meantime, Moses will arrive." But they did not wait [for their wives and children to give them their earrings], and they took off their own [earrings]. -[from Midrash Tanchuma 21]

The rabbis held that the molten calf was somehow magical:

Rashi - As soon as they had cast it into the fire of the crucible, the sorcerers of the mixed multitude who had gone up with them from Egypt came and made it with sorcery. Others say there was a plate upon which Moses had inscribed "Ascend, O ox; ascend,

O ox," to [miraculously] bring up Joseph's coffin from the Nile. They cast it [the plate] into the crucible, and the calf emerged. -[from Midrash Tanchuma 19]

Exodus 32:4 - And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Rashi - But it does not say, "These are OUR gods." -from here [we learn] that the mixed multitude who had come up from Egypt were the ones who gathered against Aaron, and they were the ones who made it [the calf]. Afterwards, they caused the Israelites to stray after it. -[from Midrash Tanchuma 19]

Actually it just says "this is 'elohiym" i.e. God.

Compare **Nehemiah 9:18** - "Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations"

Exodus 32:5 - "And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD."

Aaron continued to stall.

Rashi - Aaron "saw" many things. He saw his sister's son Hur, who had reproved them [the Israelites], and they assassinated him. He said, "Better I should be blamed and not they." He also "saw" another thing and said, "If they build the altar [themselves], one will bring pebbles and [another] one will bring a stone. Thus, their work will be done all at once. Since I will build it, and I will neglect my work, in the meantime Moses will arrive."

"a festival to the Lord": In his heart, he meant Heaven. He was confident that Moses would come, and they would worship the Omnipresent. -[from Lev. Rabbah 10:3]

Exodus 32:7 - "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:"

"your people" - not "the people" - Those are the mixed multitude whom you accepted on your own initiative, and whom you converted without consulting Me. You said, "It is good that converts cleave to the Shechinah." They have acted corruptly and have corrupted [others]. -[from Exod. Rabbah 42:6]

In fact, their impatience only reflected a deeper problem - they had cast off their faith and allegiance to the Holy One.

- **Psalms 106:19-21** - "They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. They changed their Glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. They forgot God their Savior, which had done great things in Egypt."

- **Acts 7:38-40** - "This is He that was in the church in the wilderness.. to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us."

"These things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted... Neither be ye idolators as were some of them" (**1 Corinthians 10:6-7**)

- **1 John 5:21** - "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Moses Intercession as Mediator for Israel (Exodus 32:11-14)

The failings and sins of the people recall the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden. Through disobedience man became "alienated from the life of God" (**Ephesians 4:18**)

But like Christ, Moses chooses to become one with his sinful people and intercedes with God for them.

"Thy people" - God's puts responsibility for the people in Moses' hands.

It brings before us the essential elements of those "effectual fervent prayers of a righteous man" which "availeth much." (**James 5:16**)

- **John 17:9** - "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine."

- **1 John 2:1** - "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"

Moses appealed not that the people were worth saving in themselves. He appealed to the grace of God, the glory of God, and the faithfulness of God as revealed in what God had already said and done.

God's Grace - in that they were His people and unworthy in the first place.

God's Glory - "for His names' sake," in that the Egyptians and Gentiles would besmirch his honor.

"For Mine own sake, even for Mine own sake, will I do it: for how should My name be polluted?" (**Isaiah 48:9, 11**)

God's Faithfulness -

Exodus 32:13 - "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swearest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they

shall inherit it forever"

Rashi - Abraham was tested with ten tests and has not yet received his reward. Give this [reward] to him [Abraham] so that the ten will cancel out the ten. -[from Midrash Tanchuma 24, Exod. Rabbah 44:4]

If they are condemned to be burnt [in a fire], remember Abraham, who gave himself over to be burned for Your sake in Ur of the Chaldees; if they are condemned to be killed by the sword, remember Isaac, who stretched out his neck when he was bound; if they are condemned to exile, remember Jacob, who was exiled to Haran (Midrash Tanchuma 24, Exod. Rabbah 44:5). If they [the children of Israel] will not be saved in their [the Patriarchs'] merit, why do You say to me, "and I will make you into a great nation" ? If a chair with three legs cannot stand up before You when You are angry, how much less will a chair with one leg (Ber. 32a) ?

It is vital to stand on scripture in our prayers:

Like Abraham

- **Romans 4:20, 21** - "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform"

- **Joshua 23:14** - "ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof."

Exodus 32:14 - "And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people"

They were now once again "his people."

-- *Most of the commentary above comes from "Gleanings in Exodus" by Arthur W. Pink.*