

Exodus 31

Verses 1 - 5

Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²“See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship, ⁴to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, ⁵and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all *kinds of* craftsmanship.

²“See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.

The name Bezalel means “in the shadow of God” and he came from a family of faith. His grandfather Hur held up the hands of Moses along with Aaron when Joshua fought against Amalek.

See Exodus 17:10 - 13

¹⁰ Joshua did just as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ So it came about, when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed; but when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. ¹² And Moses’ hands were heavy. So they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. So his hands were steady until the sun set. ¹³ And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Hur was later entrusted with legal matters when Moses was on Sinai.

See Exodus 24:14

¹⁴ But to the elders he said, “Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, have him approach them.”

³ I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *kinds of* craftsmanship.

Bezalel was probably the general foreman of the project.

Verses 6 - 11

⁶ And behold, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill, that they may make all that I have commanded you: ⁷ the tent of meeting, and the ark of testimony, and the mercy seat upon it, and all the furniture of the tent, ⁸ the table also and its utensils, and the pure *gold* lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, ⁹ the altar of burnt offering also with all its utensils, and the laver and its stand, ¹⁰ the woven garments as well, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, *with which* to carry on their priesthood; ¹¹ the anointing oil also, and the fragrant incense for the holy place, they are to make *them* according to all that I have commanded you.”

⁶ And behold, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill, that they may make all that I have commanded you:

God appointed Hur and Oholiab, not Moses. God also gave skill to all of those who were involved in building the tabernacle, all of its furniture, the holy garments for the priesthood and the anointing oil and the incense. Nothing was left to chance; God provided all the people and skills needed to complete the Tabernacle.

Verses 12 - 17

¹² The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹³ “But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for *this* is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. ¹⁴ Therefore you are to observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to the Lord; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death. ¹⁶ So the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.’ ¹⁷ It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased *from labor*, and was refreshed.”

¹² The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹³ “But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for *this* is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.’

Up until this time, circumcision had been the sign of the covenant but now keeping the Sabbath became a 2nd sign of a Jew.

¹⁴ Therefore you are to observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

Not keeping the Sabbath was a capital offense and we can see from this verse that the phrase cut off from among his people meant being put to death. However, for many years the Jews did not follow this law about keeping the Sabbath nor did they put people to death for breaking it.

Nehemiah said that the Jews went into captivity for not keeping the Sabbath.

See Nehemiah 13:15 - 18

¹⁵ In those days I saw in Judah *people who were treading wine presses on the Sabbath*, and bringing in sacks of grain and loading *them* on donkeys, as well as wine, grapes, figs, and every *kind of* load, and they were bringing *them* into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. So I admonished *them* on the day they sold food.

¹⁶ Also people of Tyre were living there *who imported fish and all kinds of merchandise, and sold them to the sons of Judah on the Sabbath*, even in Jerusalem. ¹⁷ Then I reprimanded the nobles of Judah and said to them, “What is this evil thing that you are doing, by profaning the Sabbath day? ¹⁸ Did your fathers not do the same, so that our God brought on us and on this city all this trouble? Yet you are adding to the wrath against Israel by profaning the Sabbath.”

However, by the 1st century keeping the Sabbath had become an important issue and the Jews threatened Jesus with death for breaking the Sabbath.

See John 5:16

¹⁶ For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on a Sabbath.

However, the leaders were hypocritical about this issue.

See Luke 13:15

¹⁴ But the synagogue leader, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, “There are six days during which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites, does each of you on the Sabbath not untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it away to water it?” ¹⁶ And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this restraint on the Sabbath day?”

According to this leader it was Ok to help an animal on the Sabbath but not a woman who had been suffering for 18 years.

However, if this was an issue in the Church, you can bet that there would be someone who would say that “two wrongs don’t make a right”. However, the one who says this would be saying that Jesus was wrong (he committed a sin) by working on the Sabbath. That is not a teaching that anyone in the church should argue.

Verse 18

¹⁴ When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.

The exact size of the tablets is not known, but we do know the following:

1. They fit in the Ark of the Covenant

Two and a half cubits long	3.75 feet long
One and a half cubits wide	2.25 feet wide
One and a half cubits high	2.25 feet high

2. And there was enough room left for the pot of manna and the rod of Aaron which budded.

Most of the 40 days and 40 nights on the mountain were probably spent informing Moses about the Tabernacle, all of its furniture, the priesthood and their clothing, and the anointing oil and incense.