

Bezaleel and Aholiab

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Let's look at one of the fun stories from the Old Testament, the story of Bezaleel and Aholiab. These two men aren't as well known as some of the other heroes of the Bible, (I'm not even sure how to pronounce their names), but their story is very important in the history of Israel.

They were not mighty warriors, at least as far as is recorded. They were not famous kings or judges or prophets. Instead they were craftsmen. They were the men who built the tabernacle in the wilderness and the items of its service to God; including the ark of the covenant, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offerings, and many other things. When you consider that the building of the tabernacle takes up almost one third of the book of Exodus, it is an important story. It was an important task.

We are not going to look at all the details of the things they made. Instead we will concentrate on their story. There are four main points we want to consider, that we can apply to our lives today, to be stronger Christians and have a closer walk with God.

We will see first of all that God called them by name to build the tabernacle, second that God blessed them with all the ability they would need to complete it, third that they took the blessings of God and got to work, and finally that they made everything exactly as God commanded.

God called them by name

In the 25th through the 30th chapters of Exodus, God instructed Moses in the mount that he wanted a tabernacle (tent of service to Him) built. He gave Moses all the details of how he wanted it built. Then in the 31st chapter God named Bezaleel and Aholiab as the men who would build it. Other craftsmen would help them, but they were to be the leaders of the effort. Exo. 31:1-2, *“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:”*. And in verse 6 *He added Aholiab. “And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that*

are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee;”.

Notice that He didn't just call them by name for no purpose. He called them for a reason, to make all that He had commanded Moses. Read verses 7-11, *“The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, And the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.”*

In a similar way we are called to be God's people and serve Him today. 1 Pet 2:9-10, *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”* We are called today by the Hearing of God's Word. Rom. 10:17, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Then after responding to that faith in repentance, confession and baptism we are given a new name by God, that of Christian. Acts 11:26, *“...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”*

Why did God have Bezaleel and Aholiab build Him a tabernacle? He certainly could have done it Himself. But throughout history He has given man tasks to be a part of His plan. He allowed Adam to care for the garden, He had David kill Goliath when He could have done it Himself, and He gave Bezaleel and Aholiab the opportunity to work with Him in the building of the tabernacle.

And today, He could save people without the involvement of Christians. And this is what many denominations claim, that God sends the Holy Spirit into a sinner's heart directly and saves them, without any work done by us. But in reality, that is not God's Plan. He involves us as Christians. He doesn't need us, but in His grace He gave us productive and important tasks to do in the saving of sinners. Notice 2 Cor.

4:7, *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”* The treasure Paul is speaking of is the treasure of the gospel, see verses 3-6. And we are the earthen vessels that the gospel is put into.

In practical terms God has given us three tasks in this process: to teach sinners, to receive their confession of faith, and to baptize them. Matt. 28:19, *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”* And in Matt. 10:32 Jesus said, *“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.”*

While God has given us these tasks to allow us to contribute to His cause, He still saves the sinner and deserves all the glory. In 1 Cor. 3:6, when the Corinthians were fussing about who taught them and who baptized them, Paul made it clear that God deserved the glory. *“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”* He simply allows us to be a part of His plan.

God blessed them

God did not send Bezaleel and Aholiab into their task with no ability. He blessed them with everything they needed to complete the job. Notice in Exo. 31:3 that he blessed them with five specific blessings in order to do the work. *“And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,”* A little later on in the story Moses introduced them to the children of Israel as having received these five blessings from God. And he added that God also gave them the ability to teach the other craftsmen who would help them. Exo. 35:34, *“And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.”*

God has blessed us with these same six blessings.

He has filled us with the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. 3:16, *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”*

He has given us wisdom. Wisdom is defined by Jesus Himself as that ability to use the knowledge God has given us. Matt. 7:24, *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of*

mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.”

He gives us understanding. Eph. 3:17, *“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”* His word is not unfathomable. We can understand it and apply it to our lives.

He gives knowledge through His Word. John 8:31-32, *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, (the same applies to us today), If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* Note: how do we know the truth so it can set us free? By continuing in His Word!

There is all manner of workmanship in his Church. There are all kinds of tasks to do: from teaching and baptizing as mentioned earlier to helping and serving those in need, to attending and supporting worship services, and many other tasks. Some, such as attending and participating in worship, are for all. Some are more specialized, such as the leadership and speaking in service being limited to the men, or the elders requiring certain qualifications. Everything we can do, we should, and give God our best effort at it. It is all important to Him. Rom. 8:4-8, *“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.”*

Just as Bezaleel and Aholiab were instructed to teach, so are we. Teaching can be in public worship assembly by men, or in private by men or women (Titus 2:1-7). Peter tells us, 1 Pet. 3:15, to be ready to teach and every opportunity. *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”*

So God has blessed us, just as He blessed Bezaleel and Aholiab.

They put God's blessings to work

Exo. 36.1, *“Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded.”* They took God's blessings, put them to work, and did the job that God commanded them to do. In Exo. 38:22-23, we see that they made everything God had commanded, *“And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the Lord commanded Moses. 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.”*

What a great example that is for us to follow. While we realize that we are not saved by our works, once we are saved God does expect some works out of us. Eph. 2:10, *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”*

Works strengthen our faith and keep it from dying. Heb. 4:11, *“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”* Notice labour keeps us from falling into unbelief. James 2:26, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”* We tend to think of faith as the spirit, the inward part, and works as the body, the outward part. But here James says it is the exact opposite of that. Works is the spirit that keeps our body of faith alive.

Serving God by doing good works should bring us great joy, according to Jesus in John 13:17, *“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”*

Good works will be rewarded in the end. 1 Cor. 15:58, *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”* Gal. 6:9-10, *“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”*

They made everything exactly as God commanded

Again, Bezaleel and Aholiab provide us an excellent example of obedience. They not only made everything God told them to, they made it all in exactly the way God commanded.

The importance of this was stressed to Moses, Exo. 25:9, *“According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”* Verse 40, *“And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.”*

They fulfilled God’s commands. They made everything according to the pattern God showed Moses. Exo. 39:32, *“Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they.”* Note verses 42-43, *“According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.”*

Because of their obedience, God was pleased, and dwelled in the tabernacle they had made. Exo. 40:34, *“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”*

Once we are saved by God’s grace and become a Christian, obedience is important for us as well. Matt. 28:20, *“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

Often we in the church of Christ are accused of being legalistic, because we stress the necessity of obedience. But notice in the following, how much of our Christian life is blessed by obedience.

Jesus said very simply in John 14:15, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”* And not only do we show love to Jesus by our obedience, we are also blessed with His love. John 15:10, *“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and*

abide in his love.” 1 John 2:3-5, “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.”

God works through us when we obey. Phil. 2:12-13, *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*

We mentioned that good works will be rewarded. But they must be works that God says are good, not just that we think are good. Rev. 22:14, *“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”*

Like Bezaleel and Aholiab, we’ve been called by God’s Word to serve Him. God has blessed us with all we need to serve Him. And like them we need to be obedient, putting His blessings to work in the way He commands.

Offered in the name of Jesus,
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