

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS CHAPTER 37

Bezaleel and his workmen are still busy, making

- I. The ark with the mercy-seat and the cherubim, #Ex 37:1-9.
- II. The table with its vessels, #Ex 37:10-16.
- III. The candlestick with its appurtenances, #Ex 37:17-24.
- IV. The golden altar for incense, #Ex 37:25-28.
- V. The holy oil and incense, #Ex 37:29.

The particular appointment concerning each of which we had before the 25th and 30th chapters.

Ver. 1. thru Ver. 9.

I. It may be thought strange that Moses, when he had recorded so fully the instructions given him upon the mount for the making of all these things, should here record as particularly the making of them, when it might have sufficed only to have said, in a few words, that each of these things was made exactly according to the directions before recited. We are sure that Moses, when he wrote by divine inspiration, used no vain repetitions; there are no idle words in scripture. Why then are so many chapters taken up with this narrative, which we are tempted to think needless and tedious? But we must consider,

1. That Moses wrote primarily for the people of Israel, to whom it would be of great use to read and hear often of these divine and sacred treasures with which they were entrusted. These several ornaments wherewith the tabernacle was furnished they were not admitted to see, but the priests only, and therefore it was requisite that they should be thus largely described particularly to them. That which they ought to read again (lest they should fail of doing it) is written again and again: thus many of the same passages of the history of Christ are in the New Testament related by two or three, and some by four of the evangelists, for the same reason. The great things of God's law and gospel we need to have inculcated upon us again and again. To write the same (says St. Paul) to me *is not grievous, but for you it is safe*, #Php 3:1.
2. Moses would thus show the great care which he and his workmen took to make every thing exactly according to the pattern shown him in the mount. Having before given us the original, he here gives us the copy, that we may compare them, and observe how exactly they agree. Thus he appeals to every reader concerning his fidelity to him that appointed him, in all his house, and in all the particulars of it, #Heb 3:5. And thus he teaches us to have respect to all God's commandments, even to every iota and tittle of them.
3. It is intimated hereby that God takes delight in the sincere obedience of his people, and keeps an exact account of it, which shall be produced to their honour in the resurrection of the just. None can be so punctual in their duty, but God will be as punctual in his notices of it. He is *not unrighteous to forget the work and labour of love*, in any instance of it, #Heb 6:10.
4. The spiritual riches and beauties of the gospel tabernacle are hereby recommended to

our frequent and serious consideration. Go walk about this Zion, view it and review it: the more you contemplate the glories of the church, the more you will admire them and be in love with them. The charter of its privileges, and the account of its constitution, will very well bear a second reading.

II. In these verses we have an account of the making of the ark, with its glorious and most significant appurtenances, the mercy seat and the cherubim. Consider these three together, and they represent the glory of a holy god, the sincerity of a holy heart, and the communion that is between them, in and by a Mediator.

1. It is the glory of a holy god that he dwells between the cherubim; that is, is continually attended and adored by the blessed angels, whose swiftness was signified by their faces being one towards another.
2. It is the character of an upright heart that, like the ark of the testimony, it has the law of God hid and kept in it.
3. By Jesus Christ, the great propitiation, there is reconciliation made, and a communion settled, between us and God: he interposes between us and God's displeasure; and not only so, but through him we become entitled to God's favour. If he write his law in our heart, he will be to us a God and we shall be to him a people. From the mercy seat he will teach us, there he will accept us, and show himself merciful to our unrighteousness; and under the shadow of his wings we shall be safe and easy.

Ver. 10. thru. Ver. 24.

Here is,

1. The making of the table on which the show-bread was to be continually placed. God is a good householder, that always keeps a plentiful table. Is the world his tabernacle? His providence in it spreads a table for all the creatures: he *provides food for all flesh*. Is the church his tabernacle? His grace in it spreads a table for all believers, furnished with the bread of life. But observe how much the dispensation of the gospel exceeds that of the law. Though here was a table furnished, it was only with *show-bread*, bread to be looked upon, not to be fed upon, while it was on this table, and afterwards only by the priests; but to the table which Christ has spread in the new covenant all real Christians are invited guests; and to them it is said, *Eat, O friends, come eat of my bread*. What the law gave but a sight of at a distance, the gospel gives the enjoyment of, and a hearty welcome to.
2. The making of the candlestick, which was not of wood overlaid with gold, but all beaten work of pure gold only, **#Ex 37:17,22**. This signified that light of divine revelation with which God's church upon earth (which is his tabernacle among men) has always been enlightened, being always supplied with fresh oil from Christ the good Olive, **#Zec 4:2-3**. God's manifestations of himself in this world are but candle light compared with the daylight of the future state. The Bible is a golden candlestick; it is of pure gold, **#Ps 19:10**. From it light is diffused to every part of God's tabernacle, that by it his spiritual priests may see to minister unto the Lord, and to do the service of his sanctuary. This candlestick has not only its bowls for necessary use, but its knops and flowers for ornament; there are many things which God saw fit to beautify his word with which we can no more give a reason for than for these knops and flowers, and yet we are sure that they were added for a good purpose. Let us bless God for this candlestick, have an eye to it continually, and dread the removal of it out of its place.

Ver. 25. thru Ver. 29.

Here is,

1. The making of the golden altar, on which incense was to be burnt daily, which signified both the prayers of saints and the intercession of Christ, to which are owing the acceptableness and success of those prayers. The rings and staves, and all the appurtenances of this altar, were overlaid with gold, as all the vessels of the table and candlestick were of gold, for these were used in the holy place. God is the best, and we must serve him with the best we have; but the best we can serve him with in his courts on earth is but as brass, compared with the gold, the sinless and spotless perfection, with which his saints shall serve him in his holy place above.
2. The preparing of the incense which was to be burnt upon this altar, and with it the holy anointing oil (#Ex 37:29), according to the dispensatory, #Ex 30:22. God taught Bezaleel this art also; so that though he was not before acquainted with it yet he made up these things according to the work of the apothecary, as dexterously and exactly as if he had been bred up to the trade. Where God gives wisdom and grace, it will make the man of God *perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work.*