

EXODUS

Chapter 31

Bezalel and Oholiab

The LORD said to Moses, 2 “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, 4 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, 5 in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. 6 And behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you: 7 the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent, 8 the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense, 9 and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, 10 and the finely worked garments,[a] the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, for their service as priests, 11 and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense for the Holy Place. According to all that I have commanded you, they shall do.”

31:2 *Bezalel.* Means “in the shadow/protection of God.” (CSB)

Hur. Grandfather of Bezalel. (TLSB)

31:3 *filled him with the Spirit of God.* Ability to work as a skilled craftsman was a spiritual gift, equipping a person for special service to God. (CSB)

In addition to their God-given talents as created beings, these men received supernatural abilities from the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

31:4 *to devise.* Though the Lord revealed the general plans for the tabernacle (25:40; 27:8), the details had to be finalized. (TLSB)

31:6 *Oholiab.* Means “The (divine) father is my tent/tabernacle.” The names of Bezalel and Oholiab were appropriate for the chief craftsmen working on the tabernacle. (CSB)

him. Bezalel. As senior leader, Bezalel was mentioned first in the list (v 2) and distinguished by his specific responsibilities. (TLSB)

31:1–11 Artisans assemble to begin the work, and they follow the Lord’s plans exactly. As you serve in your congregation, remember that “unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (Ps 127:1). Value the service of each person, but give all glory to the Lord, who forgives your sins and makes you one in Christ. • Jesus, we are unworthy servants. “We have only done what was our duty” (Lk 17:10). lead us to use our gifts in honorable service to spread Your Gospel. Amen. (TLSB)

The Sabbath

12 And the LORD said to Moses, **13** “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. **14** You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. **15** Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath

of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. 16 Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. 17 It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.” 18 And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

31:13 *keep my Sabbaths.* Instructions for building the tabernacle and making the priestly garments are concluded by impressing on the Israelites the importance and necessity of keeping the Sabbath even while carrying out this special task. (CSB)

The Sabbath was the pinnacle of God’s revelation. (TLSB)

I, the LORD, sanctify you. The Lord lived with His people in these rites and removed their guilt. Physical rest pointed to spiritual rest (cf Mt 11:28–30; Heb 4:2–6). (TLSB)

31:14 *cut off from among his people.* Not trusting in the Lord’s rest invited temporal death, a precursor to eternal death. (TLSB)

31:16–17 *covenant ... sign.* In her rhythm of work and rest in the service of God, Israel is to emulate God’s pattern in creation as an ever-renewed sign of her covenant with God. (CSB)

31:17 *in six days the LORD made heaven and earth.* Connects the building of the tabernacle to creation. The tabernacle would be a Sabbath-house, a house of rest. (TLSB)

refreshed. The people’s refreshment came in part through physical rest and all the more from a conscience cleansed by the Word of God. (TLSB)

31:18 *two tablets.* In keeping with ancient Near Eastern practice, these were duplicates of the covenant document, not two sections of the Ten Commandments. One copy belonged to each party of the covenant. Since Israel’s copy was to be laid up in the presence of her God (according to custom), both covenant tablets (God’s and Israel’s) were placed in the ark (see 25:21). (CSB)

Common in ancient Near East to record important public documents on enduring surfaces. Cf Jsh 8:32. (TLSB)

written with the finger of God. Because it was God’s covenant (see 19:5–6), and the stipulations of the covenant (20:1–17) were his. (CSB)

God Himself wrote the Commandments. Cf Lk 11:20. (TLSB)

31:12–18 Plans for construction are revealed. Craftsmen, imbued with the Spirit of God, are secured. Such work is not an end in itself. It finds its fulfillment in the Sabbath rest for the sin-wearied soul. • Lord Jesus, may Your Spirit work in our hearts, leading us to repentance, that we may remain in the rest You have for us through all eternity. Amen. (TLSB)