

An Attempt To Listen To God

The Measuring of The Furniture

For The Tabernacle

By

Rowan Jennings

## The Measuring of The Furnishings

It is always interesting the way in which God counts things. By the Sea of Galilee the Lord called to the disciples who had been out fishing. Having caught nothing, He told them where to cast the net and they caught 153 fishes. The interesting thing is fish are not counted but weighed! When building the boards for the tabernacle, we would say the “height” was ten cubits, yet the Lord speaks about the length being ten cubits. Having observed this, when it comes to the Tabernacle and the furnishings:

- 1) Some were counted, some measured and some weighed:
  - a) Those which were counted and measured were:
    - i) The linen curtain for the Tabernacle (Ex. 26:1-2)
    - ii) The covering of goat’s hair (Ex. 26:7-8)
  - b) Those which were counted:
    - i) The pillars for the court, door and veil ( Ex. 26:32, 37; 27:1-15)
    - ii) The sockets for the pillars of the court, Tabernacle boards, door and veil (Ex. 26:32, 37; 27:11-15)
    - iii) The loops and taches for the Tabernacle and goat’s hair? (Ex. 26:4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11)
  - c) Things which were measured:
    - i) Every piece of furniture except the laver and lampstand:
      1. Altar of shittim wood (Ex. 27:1)
      2. Table for shewbread (Ex. 25:23)
      3. Incense altar (Ex. 30:1-2)
      4. Ark (Ex. 25:10)
      5. Mercy Seat (Ex. 25:17)
      6. Distance from the north and south sides to the gate (Ex. 27:14-15)
      7. The height and width of the gate (Ex. 27:16)
      8. The height and width of the door, it is assumed they were 10 cubits by 10 because of the height and width of the Tabernacle.
      9. The height and width of the veil, it is assumed they were 10 cubits by 10 because of the height and width of the Tabernacle.
      10. The length and height of the court curtain, north and south (Ex. 27:18)
      11. The length of the Tabernacle boards (Ex. 26:16)
      12. The length of the court curtain westward (Ex. 38:12)
    - d) Things which were weighed:
      - i) The spices for the anointing oil (Ex. 30:34)
      - ii) The principle spices (Ex. 30:23)
      - iii) The silver sockets (Ex. 38:27)
      - iv) The lampstand (Ex. 25:39)
    - e) Things for which no measurements are given:
      - i) The height, breadth or width of the lampstand (Ex. 25:31-40)
      - ii) The height, circumference and depth of the laver (Ex. 38:8)
      - iii) The width, depth of the foot of the laver (Ex. 38:8)
      - iv) The thickness of the boards of the Tabernacle (Ex. 26:15-16)
      - v) The copper sockets (Ex. 26:37)
      - vi) The dimensions of the bars (Ex. 26:26-28)
      - vii) The amount of wood used (Ex. 25:5)
      - viii) The height of the Mercy Seat (Ex. 25:17)
      - ix) The size or sizes of the pins (Ex. 35:18)
      - x) The length of the cords (Ex. 35:18)
      - xi) Rams skins (Ex. 26:14)
      - xii) Badgers skins (Ex. 26:14)

- xiii) The sizes of the taches (Ex. 36:18)
- xiv) The size of the horns on either altar (Ex. 27:2; 30:3)
- xv) The height of the pillars for the veil and door, but it assumed they were 10 cubits high (Ex. 26:31-37)

### What Do The Measurements Teach About God?

Moses, though trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, was not left to decide the sizes, placement or number of pieces of furniture. It was God who determined each according to His own wisdom, thus indicating the sovereignty of God. This is His dwelling place, and therefore He decides what is to be done and where things are to be placed as is seen by the constant references to the pattern that was shown on the mount. (Ex. 25:40; Heb. 8:5)

Why does God give precise measurements? There are several reasons:

- a) God is the God of symmetrical and aesthetic beauty, thus all was both pleasing to the eye and in perfect balance. Furthermore, He is the practical God, consequently, all the furnishings were made according to the height of the average Jewish man.
- b) He is the God who gives extent and limitations. He determined the boundaries of the seas; the placement of the heavenly bodies and the movements of every planet, sun and star in the solar systems. This aspect of extent and limitations is brought before us in Genesis chapter one, where God created the living things “after their kind”. It is an unchangeable fixed law by God.

The Tabernacle was an earthly building with carnal ordinances (Heb. 9:10) and despite the quality of workmanship and value, the sacrifices did not please God. Today His dwelling place is in those who are His and His collective people. (Jn. 14:17; 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 19; Eph. 2:21; 2 Thess. 1:10)

Individually, it is the purpose of God that: “We all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). God is the Great Measurer whose assessments are always perfect. He measures:

- a) **Man’s days**: “LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am” (Psa. 39:4).
- b) **Man’s faith**: “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3).
- c) **Man’s rule**: “But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you” (2 Cor. 10:13).
- d) **Man’s gift of Christ**: “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph. 4:7).
- e) **The working of each saint**: “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16).
- f) **Divine judgment**: “Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom” (Isa. 65:7).
- g) **His discipline on man**: “For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished” (Jer. 30:11).
  - i) This measured discipline by God is recorded for us in how He dealt and deals with stubborn man. He “gave them up” (Rom. 1:24, 26); “gave them over” (Rom. 1:28).
  - ii) This measured discipline by God is recorded for us in Revelation:
    1. “Repent; or else.” (Rev. 2:16)
    2. “Ye shall have tribulation ten days.” (Rev. 2:10)

3. The deliberate administering of the seals, trumpets and vials. (Rev 6:1 - 16:21)

- h) **Man's time:** There is a frightening expression which uses the word "carcass" for those who are alive. A carcass is that which is dead! Yet read the following:
- i) Between the entry into the land and the end of Samuels judgeship and the beginning of the kingdom (1 Sam. 7) there are two different durations given.

Dark is the heart of man when He puts little value on He who is precious to God: "I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" (Zech. 11:12).

God looked on Christ and we read: "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (Jn. 3:34).

None of these were non consequential, but lessons to learn from, for God reminds us that:

- a) "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matt. 7:2; Mk. 4:24; Lk. 6:38)
- b) "By Him actions are weighed." (1 Sam. 2:3)
- c) "The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just." (Isa. 26:7)
- d) "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity! (Job 31:6)

Sadly, there are those who learn the seriousness of God's measuring:

- a) **Balaam:** God counted at least eight warnings to Balaam (Num. 22:12, 20, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31) and then Balaam says: "I have sinned; for I knew not that Thou stoodest in the way" (Num. 22:34, and finally he says: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (Num. 23:10). He had learnt too late the measuring of God.
- b) **Belshazzar:** Despite his knowledge of God's dealings with his grandfather, he refused to bow, but indeed went more evil than his grandfather. Eventually there was that fateful night when the hand of God wrote on the wall: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN". "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Dan. 5:27). Belshazzar discovered he was too late, God had come to an end of His measuring!
- c) **Pilate:** He asked the question: "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38) and apparently without waiting for an answer, went out and ultimately delivered the Lord to the people. God had given him several opportunities for repentance, but we never read of it coming. God had measured Him and he was found wanting.
- d) **Felix:** Felix and his wife Drusilla, and although Felix trembled, he spurned the proffer of grace. (Acts 24:25)

Deep is the tragedy when man failed to know when the measurements and limitations of God's call ended. The hymn writer has penned the words:

There's a line that is crossed by rejecting our Lord,  
Where the call of His Spirit is lost,  
As you hurry along, with the pleasure-mad throng,  
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

Have you counted the cost, if your soul should be lost,  
Though you gain the whole world for your own?  
Even now it may be that the line you have crossed,  
Have you counted, have you counted the cost?

---

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.**

**John 16:13**