

An Attempt To Listen To God On

Part 3

Initial Receiving and Presentation of  
Materials For The Tabernacle

By

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In our consideration of the materials for the Tabernacle, it is recognized that they are in two sections. This document deals with the initial receiving of the goods by borrowing from the Egyptians, the following will deal with the presentation of that which was given for the work.

### The Initial Receiving Of The Goods By Borrowing From The Egyptians

The release of the children of Israel by God was no sudden impulse. Hundreds of years before, God had promised two unconditional promises:

- 1) He would judge the nation that the children of Israel would serve. (Gen. 15:14)
- 2) He would bring them out with great substance. (Gen. 15:14)

In His fulfilling of those promises, there is manifested the infinite foreknowledge of God and His sovereign power to accomplish that which He had pledged. The deliverance from Egypt was to be the great criteria by which all other deliverances were to be contrasted:

- 1) "For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed." (Josh. 24:17)
- 2) "Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. (Jud. 6:13)
- 3) "Thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD." (1 Kgs. 8:53)

After the 400 years of being evilly afflicted (Gen. 15:13), described as an "Iron furnace" (Duet. 4:20; Jer. 11:14), the time for their release was imminent. God, through Moses, instructed His people to do a series of things. They were to:

- 1) Begin a new year and on the 10th day of the 1st month take a lamb for the Passover. (Ex. 12:2-3)
- 2) The lamb was to be kept for 4 days. (Ex. 12:6)
- 3) On the evening of the 14th day the lamb was to be slain and its blood sprinkled on the lintel and two side posts. (Ex. 12:6-7)
- 4) They were to eat the roasted lamb with various other foods and spices. (Ex.12:8-10)
- 5) They were to be ready to go at a moments notice. (Ex. 12:11)
- 6) Somewhere in that time frame they were to borrow from the Egyptians. (Ex. 3:22; 11:2)

We further read: "the people found favour in the eyes of the Egyptians and they 'lent' unto them such as they required". (Ex. 12:36)

Here there must be the observing of a distinction between how the word "borrow" is used today and its meaning in the ancient world. When we use the word "borrow" it indicates the intention to give that which was borrowed back. Indeed, it became part of God's law that if a thing was lent and damaged it was to be made good to the owner (Ex. 22:14). Yet, in the case of the Israelites "borrowing" from the Egyptians, there was no way these metals and materials would ever be given back. (Psa. 105:37)

When we first read this it appears as an extremely unrighteous activity, bolstered by God Himself. To borrow a thing, or be lent something without any intention of returning, glares of absolute deceitfulness. This cannot be the meaning here for God is the righteous God (Psa. 7:9; 14:5).

This seeming dishonesty is clarified when some observations are made. The words translated "borrow" and "lent" is the same Hebrew word "sha'al", which means to ask. It is used this way in Gen. 24:47 when the servant asked, "Whose daughter art thou?" In 1 Sam. 20:6, He "earnestly asked", and to the ancients they never would have thought of it meaning to lend to get back. The Israelites simply went into the

homes of the Egyptians and asked for, for instance, the gold bracelets, copper looking glasses and silver coins, etc., and they were freely given. The Egyptians were only too happy to give them whatever they wanted to escape the fury of Israel's God (Ex. 12:33; Psa.105:38).

It is noticed that this was a joint effort for: "Let every man borrow of his neighbour and every woman of her neighbour" (Ex. 11:2). It could be suggested that this was God's repayment to them for the many years of labour, and that would have been right, but is that where the purpose ends? In itself, that would not have been righteous because during those 400 years many slaved, were undoubtedly injured, and very possibly thousands died, and they never got paid. So if it was simply a matter of repayment, then why should the last generation there get everything? God had something bigger in mind than repayment.

Giving this a practical application, we know that for the most of us every week or month we receive wages from a job the Lord has given to us. The questions are:

- 1) "Has God given us the job to do and the health to do the work for no other reason than because we have worked for "x" number or hours?"
- 2) "Has God something bigger in mind, or is there a spiritual dimension?"
- 3) Has a job and health and funds been given for no other reason than we have money to buy the necessary items for living, or the extra unnecessary luxuries we crave, i.e. a better car, the newest computer gadgets, or new appliances?
- 4) Is there a spiritual dimension why God gave to the Israelites and to us that which we earn?

There was a spiritual dimension that glorified God and blessed the people spiritually. It was the intention of God, for those who were redeemed by blood and delivered from the great Prince, to build Him a dwelling in the wilderness, a place where He could "sojourn" with them as they travelled the waste howling wilderness (Deut. 32:10).

- 1) There was a spiritual dimension. The materials needed to build His tabernacle were given to them by God from that which they received from the Egyptians.
- 2) They were going to take from that which the Lord had given to them and give to the Lord, an act of gratitude and worship. They would give gold, silver, various cloths and skins, as well ultimately many offerings. (Compare 1 Cor. 16:1-2 and 2 Cor. chs. 8-9.)

Does this mean God is a taker, who gives to ask for things back again? Not in the slightest. God gives abundantly and when they gave to Him He gave them great spiritual blessings for their material givings. Because they gave the materials, God permitted them to build Him a tent to dwell in and they had His continual presence. Furthermore, they lacked nothing all the time they traversed the wilderness. God provided for their bodies by providing food and clothing that did not wear out (Deut. 8:4; 29:5; 33:25; Neh. 9:21). This was a test of their faith and the pathway of faith development.

The reality was that God had given these things to them (Psa. 105:37), and had it not been for His goodness, they would have had none of these things.

However, the human heart can rationalise why that which we have is ours. It is so easy to speak of "this is my home", "I have so much money in the bank", "this is my car", or "this is my hard earned money and I can do what I want with it"! It is so easy to miss the reality that all we have is from God. It is He who gives us health, strength, all our faculties; as well as every material blessing. Nebuchadnezzar made the costly mistake of saying: "Is not this great Babylon that I have builded?" (Dan. 4:30). God is far more interested in people than things. Being God, He could make whatever He desired, but His great desire is the restored fellowship of humanity to Himself.

This opportunity to give to the Lord is seen in the attitude shown in the way they and we give.

- 1) It was a very real test of their attitudes towards material things and true values. The command by God to build a tabernacle demanded them to determine what they should give to the Lord? They had beautiful gold vessels, delightful copper looking glasses, and silver in abundance. All given

by God but:

- a) How much should they give to the Lord and what should they keep for themselves? Should they be like Ananias and Sapphira? (Acts. 5:1-2)
  - b) Which was the more important to them, holding that which was material or giving it to God for the glory of God?
  - c) And how will I feel afterward if I learn that Mr. So in So, who had more than me, gave considerably less! Or contrariwise, if I learn that Mr So in So, who has very little, gave considerably more!
- 2) Such questioning would result in:
- a) A critical spirit judging others and this would grieve the Lord before the Tabernacle was ever started.
  - b) A regret that I gave more or less than others.

No wonder God emphasis a “willing heart” or “spirit made willing”.

- 1) “Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass.” (Ex. 35:5)
- 2) “And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD’S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.” (Ex. 35:21)
- 3) “The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.” (Ex. 35:29)

God does not want nor need that which they or we give begrudgingly.

- 1) He gave His only Begotten Son. There was nothing stingy nor begrudging in that. (Jn. 3:16)
- 2) He gives us all things rightly to enjoy. There is nothing stingy not begrudging in that. (1 Tim. 6:17)
- 3) He gives us great and precious promises. There is nothing stingy not begrudging in that. (2 Pet. 1:4)
- 4) He gives us a living hope. There is nothing stingy not begrudging in that. (1 Pet. 1:3)
- 5) He give us “Christ in you the hope of glory”. There is nothing stingy not begrudging in that (Col. 1:27)

God is the benevolent God, perfectly honest and righteous in all He does, therefore does not want nor need my money from ill gotten gain.

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

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