

Holy Work and Holy Rest Exodus 28-31

Last week, Nate (**Nafan**) looked at the instructions for building the tabernacle. This week we are introduced to those who worked **in** the tabernacle: **the priests**; and those who worked **on** the tabernacle and **on** the priests' garments: **the craftsmen** (those who like to build stuff or like Lowe's should like that part - or those who like to sew!). This whole section on the tabernacle, Exodus 25-31, closes with a note on **the Sabbath**, reflecting the **creation narrative in Genesis**. The work was good, and then there is a word about holy rest.

This theme of work and rest teaches us about the gospel. Here we learn about our **Great High Priest who works on our behalf**, the **Holy Spirit who works in us to do God's work**, and a **holy rest** that we need.

So I invite you need to **un-stick these pages in your Bible**. Here we find **gospel gold** in what is probably an **unfamiliar** part of the Bible for many Christians.

If you are an unbeliever, we are glad you're here. I hope these things make sense to you. The Old Testament is **the back-story of the NT**. It is like the first act of the drama. It is important to know this portion of the Bible because the NT extends the story. **If you don't understand some of the back-story, you'll be like the person who arrives late to the movie and keeps asking everyone "who is this guy?" "What does that mean?" "Where did that come from?"**

Many important parts of the faith begin here in the OT, and **introduce categories, which are later filled up** with more meaning in the NT. Today, these categories involve the *priesthood, the Spirit, and the Sabbath*.

I want to make **three applications for believers, which we will seek to understand in light of the whole Bible**.

1. We have a High Priest who worked/works on behalf of us.
2. We have the Spirit of God working through us.
3. We have a Sabbath rest provided for us.

#1: WE HAVE A HIGH PRIEST WHO WORKED/WORKS

ON BEHALF OF US (28-29)

(READ 1-5) Chapter 28 is about the priests who serve in the tabernacle. We see how Aaron and his sons will serve as priests, and how the priestly garments are to be made for them. Chapter 29 is about how to consecrate Aaron and his sons (like an ordination), and how they are to make daily offerings. Aaron was not self-appointed, but **called** by God to this office (1 Sam. 2:28a).

Now, you can see a few obvious things in these chapters. One is that **worship is important!** A major theme in Exodus 25-40 is worship. It's about the tabernacle. It's about **true worship vs. idolatry**. The tabernacle was a portable sanctuary. It was a big deal because this was how a holy God would dwell in the midst of a sinful people.

Chapters 28-29 reinforce this principle of worship. **God will be worshiped on his terms**. Aaron and his sons were to follow God's directions exactly in their priestly service (the mention of Nadab and Abihu in v. 1 is important, since they fail to do his later).

A second obvious feature is that these **priests must be set apart** for service. They are unique. They are to worship God in the **"beauty of holiness."** In verses 2-4, we see the purpose of these garments: they were for **beauty and for service**. Notice the phrases, "make holy garments ... **"for glory and for beauty"** (2), and the later phrase "They shall make holy garments ... **to serve me as priests**" (4). Notice also that the priests clothing was similar in color and material to the tabernacle.

The priest **"embodied the tabernacle"** you could say. His clothing would have been **absolutely stunning**.

- Like the tabernacle, the priest **points us to God, who is beautiful**. Psalm 27:4 and Psalm 29:2 speak of the beauty of God in worship.
- Like the priests, we as the priesthood of believers, are to be set apart to walk in the **beauty of holiness before God**, not with clothing but in the beauty of a life devoted to God.

A. The Clothes for the Priests

Notice first, there is an outline provided for this clothing, and then the rest of the chapter describes it. Look at **verse 4**, here are the pieces: (1) **a breastpiece**, (2) **an ephod**, (3) **a robe**, (4) **a coat of checker work**, (5) **a turban**, and (6) **a sash**. **Verse 5** gives an outline of their material.

Then in verses **6-43**, we see a further description of the outline. (Insert Biblical text in commentary). “the ephod” (6), “the breastpiece” (15), “the robe” (31), “the turban” (37), “the coat” (39), “coats and sashes” (40), and then “linen undergarments” (42).

And you will notice there is **no footwear** because he was in holy ground.

Let me show you a picture (ESV Study Bible):



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6-14: The **ephod** was like an apron – a long sleeveless vest. **It has two shoulder straps, each holding an onyx stone. The twelve sons of**

Israel were engraved on these stones. The purpose of the engraving was to show **the role** of the High Priest. **He bore their names as a memorial before the Lord.**

15-30: The “**breastpiece of judgment**” was a small pouch worn on the breast. It was adorned with gemstones. It had four rows of three stones. Each stone had one of the twelve tribes of Israel engraved on it. Like the ephod, the **act of representation** is also seen here.

17-19: Nearly all of these stones appear in the **Garden of Eden (Ezekiel 28:13)** and in Revelation (**Rev. 21:19-20**).

- That is not surprising given what we’ve said about the tabernacle. **The tabernacle represents the true story of the whole world.** It points backward and forward.
- There is **language** used through this section that reminds us of the **garden**, where **Adam the priest worshiped God, working in the garden sanctuary.** And there is language picked up in Revelation. **From glory to glory, we see the story of God dwelling with his people.**
- The **tabernacle is a mini-Eden**; Eden was a garden sanctuary; one day we paradise will be restored.

30: Notice also that it also contained **Urim and Thummim** (or perhaps “**lights**” and “**darks**” – Stuart, 613), which were items used for **discerning the will of God.** We don’t know what these items **were or how they were used.** They might have been thrown **like dice.** The people knew that God controlled the dice (Prov. 16:33). Or, after asking a question to God, **the priest may have pulled one out of his pocket to see the answer.** We don’t know. (See Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 14:41-42, 23:9-ff, 28:6, 30:7-8 Ezra 2:63). It seems that they were only used for **decisions related to the whole nation**, and that they could only answer a **yes or no question.** They couldn’t ask, “**Who should I marry?**” or “**Where should I eat?**” **See how the high priest was an intercessor taking the concerns of the people to God.**

What is also clear is that the people apparently knew what these items were. And it is probably a good thing that we don’t!

Otherwise, we would have people offering them to you on an 800 number, or tables set up in the cities along with fortune-tellers and such.

Even with the allowance of the practice, it is important to note that this doesn't seem to be the first resort. God's people were to obey the written covenant, and listen to the prophets.

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We have something better: **the Spirit and the Word**. And we have a great high priest that hears our concerns and takes them before the father!

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- On another level, it is good to get counsel from people on major decisions, **especially your leaders** who are performing the duties of prayer and ministry of the Word.

31-35: The **blue robe** was worn under the ephod. On the hem of the robe was imitation **pomegranates** alternating by **golden bells**. These bells went off when he was in the holy place, so that he might not die (v 35). It may have been a reminder to the priest to make sure the **garments were being worn appropriately**, or as a **“greeting” to God**, or as a **reminder to the people that he was in the holy place**. We are unsure about this, as well.

36-38: The **turban** was made of fine linen. It had a golden plate with **“Holy to the Lord”** engraved on it.

39-41: The **tunic** (or “coat of checker work of fine linen”) was the basic garment for the priest. The embroidered sash underneath probably held the tunic.

42-43: The **undergarments** were made of linen. They kept the priest from being exposed. This reminds us of **the garden**, in which garments had to be made to cover the **shame and nakedness** of Adam and Eve.

But there's more. It's not just about his garments. The priest was also to be **clothed in righteousness**. The Psalm we read earlier speaks of this “Let your priest be clothed with righteousness” (**Ps. 132:9a**).

- **Ultimately, only one high priest would be “holy to the LORD” and would be clothed in righteousness, and by faith**

in Christ, we receive that righteousness. That's the only way we can stand before God.

Hold on to all that, and look with me now at...

B. The Consecration of the Priests (Read section by section)

1-3: Getting Ready. These verses show us what they gathered for this event.

4-9: Washing, Clothing, Anointing. The priests were first **washed** from head to toe, symbolizing spiritual cleansing (**4**). Then they were **clothed** with the garments (**5-6**) mentioned in chapter 28. Then, they were ready to be ordained. So, they brought on the **anointing oil** to pour on his head, showing that he was set apart for this ministry (**7**).

- **Notice 30:22-33.** Moses is told to use some special spices for this occasion. Everything was anointed, including the priests. You can imagine **the difference in smell from the wilderness, which was filled with animals, to this tabernacle!** The oil ran down the head onto the garments of the priests, **like Psalm 133:2** mentions. What did this picture? The oil was a picture of **God pouring out his Spirit on the man**. Like the elements in the tabernacle, he was also **“set apart”** and was to be used for special purpose.

10-28: Sacrifices. The sacrifices for Aaron and the Priests are mentioned next. A **bull** and **two rams** were required. They were slaughtered “before the Lord at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting” (11). The bull was a **“sin offering”** (14, 36; also Lev. 8:14). As for the rams, the first is called a **“burnt offering”** (18) and the second is an **“offering for ordination”** (22).

- **Notice the symbolism of transference.** (read 10-14) They placed their head on the bull (10), and then killed (11), it symbolizing that their sin was transferred to the bull. The same for the rams (15, 19) (read)
- **Notice with the bull that its flesh, skin, and dung are burned “outside the camp” (14)** an idea picked up in Hebrews about Jesus

was crucified outside the gate of Jerusalem “in order to sanctify the people through his own blood” (Heb 13:11-12).

He was the ultimate sacrifice. Our sin was transferred to him! His righteousness was transferred to us! He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

- Notice that blood was applied. It was on the altar (12) and on the priests’ right ear, right thumbs, great toes of their right feet (20). These exposed parts represented the whole person probably, and the “right” was significant because it was a place of honor. Then the priests and their garments are to be sprinkled with blood (21).

Once again, we see, no one can enter God’s presence apart from blood.

- Notice the “pleasing aroma” (18, 25). God was pleased with their sacrifice.

Something similar is said in Ephesians 5:1-2.

[5:1] Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. [2] And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph 5:1-2)

Jesus’ sacrifice was a fragrant offering; it filled heaven with holy perfume. And we are to imitate him through the sacrifice of love to others.

29-34: Sacred Meal. The second ram was to be prepared for a meal for Aaron and the priests. Remember in **chapter 24** how **Israel’s elders ate a meal on the mountain in God’s** presence? Now, we see that Israel’s priests ate with God at the tabernacle during the seven days of their ordination. **This meal displayed the fact that they were in a covenant relationship with God and that they enjoyed fellowship with him.**

- In a similar way, we enjoy a covenant meal with God as we take the Lord’s Supper.

John G. Paton was reminded of the privilege of taking the Lord’s Supper when he first took it with the people in natives of the New

Hebrides. He had left Scotland to reach these cannibals. After a period of patient work, they began to come to Christ. He said:

For years we had toiled and prayed and taught for this. At the moment when I put the bread and wine into those dark hands, once stained with the blood of cannibalism but now stretched out to receive and partake the emblems and seals of the Redeemer's love, I had a foretaste of the joy of glory that well-nigh broke my heart to pieces. I shall never taste a deeper bliss till I gaze Z on the glorified face of Jesus himself. (in John Currid, A Study Commentary on Exodus, 240-41).

Do you know that joy of having a covenant meal with Jesus? How I pray that many will take it for the first time soon. How I pray for the Cardonas, that they will know this joy of seeing the people in East Asia, where they're ministering, take the bread and the wine who have never taken it.

35-37: Repetition. This whole ceremony of offering the bull and the rams was to be repeated for seven days. Each day a fresh bull was sacrificed on the altar. This purified the altar. The altar was set apart; it was where God accepted sacrifices for people's sin. These sacrifices were also for the priests, since they were sinners also.

38-42. Daily Offerings. Once ordained, the priests would offer these sacrifices every day. Two lambs were offered, one in the morning and one at twilight. These daily sacrifices were combined with grain, oil, and wine and were a sign of devotion. They gave a pleasing aroma to God.

•They began and ended each day with God in devotion. That's a good pattern for our lives.

•Notice "fragrant offering" again. Every day, our lives are to be a worship offering (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 2:14-15).

43-46: The Big Idea: God's Dwelling. Here we see what the tabernacle and this whole process was all about: **God dwelling with a sinful people.** "They shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them" (46).

- And so it is with us, God has brought us out of Egypt, and we worship him in the glory of his presence. In the new covenant, through the Spirit, he now dwells **in us** (e.g., **Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19, John 14:17**).
- In the book of Revelation, God is dwelling with his people.

C. Our Great High Priest

These two chapters call our attention to the very important person and work of the High Priest. Jesus is understood as “prophet, priest and king.” We’ve already noted how he is a prophet better than Moses. Now, we see he is a priest better than Aaron.

The book of Hebrews has so much to say about the superiority of Jesus’ priesthood that I can only summarize a few points. It is an awesome book to study after you’ve looked at all of these priestly duties.

Hebrews calls Jesus

- “a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God” (2:17)
- “high priest of our confession” (3:1)
- “a great high priest” (4:14)
- “a high priest forever” (6:20)
- “the high priest of the good things that are already here” (9:11)
- “a great priest over the house of God” (10:21)

Read this text with me:

**[8:1] Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, [2] a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.
(Hebrews 8:1-2 ESV)**

The tabernacle was the place of God’s presence. The true tabernacle is in heaven. Our Great High Priest is in Heaven.

We have a “**great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.**” (Hebrews 4:14)

More Ways He Is Superior

1. A Superior Holiness

The only problem in Exodus is that the priests were sinners. He also had to make sacrifice. His external garments were not enough. Enter Jesus. Throughout the OT the priests show themselves to fail. **But not Jesus. He was not clothed with beautiful garments, but in perfect holiness.**

He was clothed with glory. “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature” (**Hebrews 1:3a ESV**)

He did not need to wear **priestly attire**. He was holy. He **did not need to offer sacrifice for himself. He was sinless.**

[26] For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. [27] He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. [28] For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.
(**Hebrews 7:26-28 ESV**)

2. A Superior Anointing

He too was anointed for his priestly ministry. His baptism was part of this ordination. Instead of oil symbolizing the Spirit, the Spirit himself descended on Jesus (Luke 3:21b-22a). Luke says “**God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power**” (Luke 10:38a).

3. A Superior Representation

The High priest *was* Israel federally. Every Israelite understood that he represented you. He carried your names with him.

We have a better one! Jesus, the Son of God, represents us.

- **Instead of stones on his shoulders; he carried a cross on his shoulders, he carried *us* on his shoulders – bearing our judgment in our place. “He became sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor. 5:21).**
- **Further, He carried our names not on breastpiece, but in his heart – for we are in Christ. We died with him, we were raised with him. We are united with Christ.**
- **Isaiah says he engraved us on his hands! As Isaiah says, “See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.” (Isa. 49:16a).**

It is the righteousness of Jesus Christ that enables us to stand before a holy God.

What is more, is that our representative, provided a better **sacrifice.**

He didn't offer sacrifices of animals, but himself!

[11] But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) [12] he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. [13] For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, [14] how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

(Hebrews 9:11-14 ESV)

What a perfect sacrifice! He entered not by blood of animals but his own blood. He alone can purify your conscious. He then enables us to serve the living God.

[24] For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. [25] Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, [26] for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

(Hebrews 9:24-26 ESV)

A once and for all sacrifice!

Here is the good news: The Father now sees us through our representative. The Father accepted the Great High Priests work, and if you are in Christ, you are as accepted as Christ is accepted!

- Have you ever gotten so weighted down by your sin that you don't see how God could accept you? You have lost your focus. God looks on Christ and pardons us.

This gives us massive assurance! We are not saved by the strength of our faith, but by the object of our faith: Jesus.

[19] We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, [20] where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

(Hebrews 6:19-20 ESV)

We have an anchor of the soul! Our assurance is not based on our work, but his work!

4. A Superior Intercession

The breastpiece was a reminder that the priest interceded for the people. As he took the items for making decision, it was a reminder of this act. He carried their concerns.

Jesus continues to carry our concerns on his heart. One of the things he is doing now is praying to the Father on our behalf. **Notice also that in**

contrast to the former priesthood, Jesus' priesthood is permanent, and there is no one else like him.

[23] The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, [24] but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.

[25] Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

(Hebrews 7:23-25 ESV)

Notice that he saves us **"to the uttermost"** – that is, he saves us **completely and forever!**

We have an intercessor. When our conscious is tempted to despair, we can say like Paul,

"Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who is indeed interceding for us." (Rom. 8:35).

He is forever pleading for us.

On earth Jesus was an intercessor. Remember what he told Peter?

[31] "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, [32] but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." (Luke 22:31-32 ESV)

He says, "I have prayed for you." Then he says, "when you have turned again" – **he is assured of his prayers!**

Take courage in this truth! McChyne said, **"If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me."**

In **John 17**, we see a picture of his great intercessory work.

[5] The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. [6] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'
(Revelation 3:5-6 ESV).

As we confess faith in Jesus, he takes our names before the Father.

In addition to the question of eternal life, we can go to God for daily needs. And Jesus understands our weaknesses, since he was tempted, yet without sin. He knows grief, hunger, physical pain and more.

**[15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
(Hebrews 4:15-16 ESV)**

**We approach a throne of grace now to find help in our time of need!
We can enter God's presence with boldness because of Jesus.**

Draw near to God through Jesus and present your needs to him.

Application: In light of his superior priestly work, the author says:
**[19] Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, [20] by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, [21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [23] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. [24] And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
(Hebrews 10:19-25 ESV)**

Notice the exhortations: **draw near, hold fast to your confession, and find ways to encourage one another.**
We have a Great High Priest who worked on behalf of us, and cried “It is finished,” and a Great High Priest who continues to work on behalf of us through his ongoing intercession.

*Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea:
A great High Priest, whose name is Love,
Who ever lives and pleads for me.*

*My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart;
I know that while in heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart
No tongue can bid me thence depart.*

*When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look, and see Him there
Who made an end to all my sin.*

*Because the sinless Savior died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me
To look on Him and pardon me*

Before we move on to point 2, notice quickly the next chapter...

Chapter 30:

Since we have covered these a bit already, let me just summarize them:

A. An Altar of Incense (30:1-10)

- a. This altar had raised corners or “horns” like the sacrificial altar and was overlaid with gold. It was put just in front of the Holy of Holies.
- b. IT was to have continual burning of incense before the presence of the Lord. The high priest was to light it every morning and evening.

B. Atonement Money (30:11-16)

- a. All the Israelites shared the expense of the tabernacle. A census was taken and a donation of one half-shekel was required.

C. Basin for Washing (30:17-21)

- a. A bronze basin was constructed for the priests. Before they worked at the altar they washed their hands and feet.

D. Anointing Oil (30:22-33)

- a. A special type of oil was used for anointing the tabernacle and the priests. They could not use the oil for any other purpose.

E. Incense (30:34-38)

- a. Like the oil, this special type of incense couldn't be used for any other purposes.

#2: WE HAVE THE SPIRIT OF GOD WORKING THROUGH US (31:1-11). (READ)

What we learn from the **High Priest** is that we need someone to represent us, and to work on behalf of us. What we learn from the **Craftsmen** is that the Spirit of God enables us to serve God's people for God's glory.

The work of God was accomplished of the Spirit of God.

There is another parallel here to the **Creation narrative (1:2-2:3). Just as God did his work in creation by the Spirit, so he does his work in the tabernacle, this little Eden, by the Spirit.**

God chose **Bezalel from Judah, and **Oholiab** from Dan as his craftsmen. Their skill did not originate in themselves but from God.**

- **If you have a gift you are to use it for God's glory. In the next message we'll see how men use their gifts to make a golden calf for idol worship. The same choice is for you. Will you use your gifts for God's glory or your own gratification.**

Notice also that it says of Bezalel that "I have filled him with the Spirit of God" (2). And later, "I have give to all able men ability" (6). The picture is that God is enabling these men to build the tabernacle by his Spirit.

When it says “with ability, intelligence, with knowledge” (3) these are not additional qualities to go along with the Spirit. He really gives him one thing: the Spirit (Stuart). The Spirit sanctified his ability, intelligence and knowledge. The Spirit enabled him to be more able, more intelligent and more knowledgeable.

- Sometimes God may do something supernatural and totally beyond the person; but more often I think he perfects the God-given gifts, like we see here.

Big picture: God empowered them to perform a task for the well being of the people.

In Chapter **35:31**, the work of the Spirit of God is mentioned again. The **repetition** shows its importance. Then you can see how often Bezalel is mentioned as he executes the plan (36:1, 37:1, 10, 17, etc).

The Spirit Enables Obedience (This is a common theme).

Joseph and Joshua are two other key characters in **the Pentateuch** who were filled with the Spirit of God (Gen. 41:38; Deut. 34:9). Like Bezalel and Oholiab, they were **obedient** to God as a result.

Micah is “filled with the Spirit” (Micah 3:8) to declare God’s word forcefully and effectively to the people.

This same focus is seen in the **New Testament, in which all the Holy Spirit indwells all believers, not just the special leaders (Rom 8:9)**, empowering us for obedience to him.

This is the **probable background** for the phrase “filled with the Spirit of God” used in the NT (cf., Luke 1:15; Acts 13:9; Eph. 5:18). They perform tasks effectively by the Spirit.

Notice a few things that we learn from the Craftsmen.

2 Applications:

#1: We need the Spirit of God to accomplish the work of God.

- These men were gifted by the Spirit. That is clear in the text. We need God’s Spirit to carry out God’s work.

When we were in Ukraine, we had an interesting discussion about the Holy Spirit. Around 1960, the Pentecostal Church didn't want to register with the government so they merged with the Baptist Union. To avoid controversy, an administrative policy was put in place that no one was to teach, preach or discuss the Holy Spirit. This lasted until about 1990 (though it wasn't fully honored). What this created was a Deistic rationalistic religion. They talked about God and his power, but not the personal influence of the Holy Spirit, nor anything about gifts.

- They were attempting to “do church” apart from the Spirit!
- My friends, never stop thanking God for the Spirit's work; never stop relying on the Spirit's work. We need him!
- It is easy to become a “professional Christian,” in which you think it's all about mechanics and activity, but all the while live in the flesh. We need the Spirit of God to do the work of God.

#2: The Spirit's fills us to do tasks that are not always considered “sensational” in the eyes of others.

I love how the text says that they were empowered to help **make stuff**! I love it because people have the craziest ideas about the Spirit's work. Many are **sensationalists**. They have “**the incredible hulk syndrome**,” thinking you turn green and into a different creature!

God blesses them with intelligence to construct things. Wisdom is not always about knowing facts, but this type of ability. It is understanding how things work. Proverbs shows us this. Proverbs is wisdom on how life works.

God is the God of arts and crafts! Look at his creation! We are made in his image. Those who can do the arts and crafts display the glory of God.

Those who are carpenters and farmers are wise, though not always seen as such.

Home Ec and Creative Foods class... I needed help.

Yes, the Spirit does miracles things. But in the New Testament you see things that are not what people would call “**spectacular.**” When the Spirit filled the early church, one of the things that they need was “speak with boldness” (Acts 4:31). They talked about Jesus a lot in the face of opposition. They weren’t Houdini, doing magic. **They were obedient disciples. The Spirit empowers us for obedience.**

In the New Testament, some gifts are listed, but they aren’t exhaustive lists. I get frustrated when people get all excited about *spiritual gifts inventories*, as if that’s how people have always discerned their gifts. They’ve been around for about 30 years in one segment of the world. Beside that, those inventories are more like personality tests.

Peter simply says that some serve and some speak; both should use their gifts to serve one another for God’s glory! (**1 Pet. 4:10-11**).

- As for the gifts in the NT that are listed, many of them are not glamorous. Paul mentions gifts like: “**service,**” “**contribution,**” “**acts of mercy,**” (Rom. 12:7); “**helping,**” “**hospitality**” and “**administration**” (1 Cor. 12:28). Sure, they’re others listed like prophecy, tongues, and miracles, but the greatest gift is “**love**” (1 Cor. 13).
- One of the reason I think much of life in the Spirit isn’t sensational to people is that the Spirit is **modest**. He draws attention to Jesus (**John 16:14**).
- Sometimes people may wonder, especially if they have gifts like “mercy” or “helping,” **whether it’s them or the Spirit at work**. I think that’s the way the Spirit likes it.

If you are a Christian, I think more is happening by the Spirit than you realize!

- The evidence of the Spirit’s work is not whether or not you can pinpoint when he was at work, but rather, **was Jesus glorified?** That’s the Spirit’s goal.

- Think about **Acts 6**. When the church gets larger, the needs get greater. So they decide to appoint some men to what is basically the office of deacon. What do they look for? Men “full of the Spirit and of wisdom” ... “full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (6:3, 5). That’s awesome, right? Yes it is. But to do what? To **serve widows**.
- **Those who are filled with the Spirit**, who are walking with Jesus, will gladly: serve widows, visit the sick, care for orphans, make coffee on Sunday, care for children in the nursery, tutor a disadvantaged student, give generous offerings, and help those in need.
- Is that you? Do you think these things are beneath you? God help us in this age of celebrity Christianity, to not lose sight of this biblical vision of the Spirit’s work.

The Spirit of God enables us to do the work of God; and the Spirit’s work through us is not always “sensational works” but it is essential work.”

#3: WE HAVE A SABBATH REST PROVIDED TO US (31:12-17)

(READ)

The Sabbath was a sign of obedience to the covenant. It set them apart from other nations, and so God warns them about breaking it.

Salhaimer points out, “The analogy between God’s work of Creation and Israel’s construction of the tabernacle is made explicit by the reference to the Sabbath at the close of the narrative” (309).

Peter Ens points out that the phrase “Then the LORD said” appears seven times in Exodus 25-31. The first six relating to creating, and the seventh being here, concerning rest.

After six days of creation, God rested. Now, Israel is to do the same.

God's **creation rest** occurred once; the **weekly Sabbath** is a reminder of that divine rest. And now, there remains a **permanent rest** awaiting us (**Heb. 4:9**).

- We have the opportunity to enter an eternal rest, rest of full joy and total refreshment through Christ. "Come to me, and I will give you rest." Other religions gives you burden you can't bear; Christianity gives you rest you didn't deserve.

Without getting into details about what is permissible on the Sabbath (we've already talked about this), consider this idea. There is a **resting in Christ** for God's people. We find our rest in Jesus who has done the work for us.

There is a resting **now** that takes place for Christians, as well as a **permanent** ultimate Sabbath in the new creation.

Many Christians avoid work on the Lord's Day, **but they still are not keeping the Sabbath because they have worried themselves into knots over things**. They are not trusting in Christ.

Conclusion

V. 18: Remember God has been talking to Moses on the mountain. Now, when he finishes, he gives Moses two tablets with the "ten words" written on them.

In the next chapter, Moses will come down and see the opposite of true worship to this glorious God.

We go from a return to Eden, to a return to the Fall.

How should we wrap this up? Let's recap these glorious, gospel truths:

1. We have a Great High Priest who worked/works on behalf of us.
2. We have the Spirit of God working through us.
3. We have a Sabbath (through Christ) rest provided for us.

Praise God... not an idol ... not a calf. Worship this God.

