

# CHAPTER 38

## INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 38

This chapter is a continuation of the account of the making of the things belonging to the tabernacle, particularly the altar of burnt offering, (<sup><0381></sup>Exodus 38:1-7) the laver of brass, and the things it was made of, (<sup><0388></sup>Exodus 38:8) the court and its hangings, pillars, sockets, hooks and pins, (<sup><0389></sup>Exodus 38:9-20) then follows an account of the quantities of gold, silver, and brass, expended in the making of the several things appertaining to the sanctuary, (<sup><03821></sup>Exodus 38:21-31).

**Ver. 1-7.** *And he made the altar of burnt offering*, etc.] That is, Bezaleel made it, or it was made by his direction, he having the care and oversight of it, wherefore the making of it is ascribed to him, (<sup><4005></sup>2 Chronicles 1:5) the account of this, its horns, vessels, rings, and staves, is carried on to (<sup><0382></sup>Exodus 38:2-7) of which ((see Gill on “<sup><0270></sup>Exodus 27:1-8”).

**Ver. 8.** *And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass*, etc.] Not of the brass of the offering, for of that were made the brazen altar, its grate and vessels, the sockets of the court and court gate, and the pins of the tabernacle, (<sup><03829></sup>Exodus 38:29-31) but no mention is made there of the laver; for that was made, as here said,

*of the looking glasses of [the women] assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; though these are called looking glasses, it is not to be supposed that they were made of glass as ours are; for of what use could such be in the making of a brazen laver? Some indeed choose to read the words “with the looking glasses”<sup>f991</sup>, and take the sense to be, that there were looking glasses about the laver, affixed to it, that when the priests came to wash, they might see their spots, and the better know how to cleanse themselves from them: but it should be observed, that the priests did not come hither to wash their faces, but their hands and feet, (<sup><03019></sup>Exodus 30:19) and so stood in no need of looking glasses for that purpose. The particle **b** is here, as Aben Ezra observes, instead of **m**, and denotes the matter of which the laver was made, and therefore these instruments to behold the face in, or those mirrors, were of

brass, as both he and Philo the Jew <sup>f992</sup> affirm; and, indeed, what else could they be, for a laver of brass to be made of? mirrors in former times were made of various sorts of metal polished, some of gold, some of silver, some of brass, and some of brass and tin <sup>f993</sup>; and the Indians to this day have mirrors made of brass, well polished, and exactly represent the complexion <sup>f994</sup>. Pliny says <sup>f995</sup>, that those of Brundisium, which were made of brass and tin mixed, were with the ancient Romans reckoned the best. Aristotle <sup>f996</sup> speaks of mirrors of brass, and of their receiving and showing the least touch, because the brass is smooth and polished; and so in our times, there are such as are made of polished steel, and even of burnished brass too: De la Hay <sup>f997</sup> says that he had one in his study, which was given him, made of brass of Damascus, and was so finely polished that no crystal one could give a truer sight of the face than that; however, it is certain the ancients used such kind of mirrors; (see <sup><18718></sup> Job 37:18) these the good women of Israel, in their great zeal, brought for the service of the sanctuary, though they were of daily use, and peculiarly serviceable to them in their dressing; for though the word “women” is not in the text, it is rightly supplied, as it is in all the three Targums, the word being feminine, and as may be justified by a parallel passage, (<sup><49122></sup> 1 Samuel 2:22) indeed Varenius <sup>f998</sup> proposes another, rendering the words thus,

“of the looking glasses in great number gathered together, which they had heaped together at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation;”

but the word used is active and not passive, and is used of persons gathering together, and not of things gathered, as appears from the above quoted place, and others; and these women gathered together, not for devotion and religion, to pray, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it, or to pray, and hear the words of the law, as Aben Ezra, much less to bear any part in the ministry and service of the sanctuary, which as yet was not built; for this tabernacle of the congregation was no other than the tent of Moses, or, however, some little tabernacle erected while the other was preparing, (see <sup><12317></sup> Exodus 33:7) hither the women crowded with their mirrors of brass for the service of the sanctuary; for the word signifies an assembling in troops like an army; and they came in great numbers and beset the door of the tent where Moses was, that he might take their offerings at their hands; not but that it will be allowed that devout women sometimes did assemble at the tabernacle and temple, to

perform acts of religion and devotion; but this seems not to be the case here, nor this a time and place for it; (see <sup><0122></sup>1 Samuel 2:22 <sup><0125></sup>Luke 2:37).

**Ver. 9-20.** *And he made the court*, etc.] The open court of the tabernacle, where the people met, of which, its pillars, sockets, hangings, hooks, and pins, an account is given, to (<sup><0230></sup>Exodus 38:10-20) of which ((see Gill on “<sup><0270></sup>Exodus 27:9-19”)).

**Ver. 21.** *This is the sum of the tabernacle*, etc.] Not of the several parts of the tabernacle, and the several things belonging to it, before enumerated, as made and delivered to the care and custody of the Levites, but of the materials of which they were made, particularly the gold and silver, and the brass; the several sums and weight of which are given in the following verses:

*[even] of the tabernacle of the testimony*; in which the law, the testimony of the will of God, was put enclosed in the ark:

*as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses*; when it was brought in to him by the people, and delivered by him to Bezaleel, Aholiab, and the artificers;

*[for] the service of the Levites*; or by means of their ministry, who were employed in taking this account:

*by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest*; the youngest son of Aaron, who had the direction and oversight of this affair.

**Ver. 22.** *And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah*, etc.] Of whom and his descent (see <sup><0230></sup>Exodus 31:2)

*made all that the Lord commanded Moses*; gave directions about them, and took care that the tabernacle and all things belonging to it were made, which the Lord commanded Moses, and in the exact manner in which they were ordered to be made.

**Ver. 23.** *And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan*, etc.] Of him (see <sup><0230></sup>Exodus 31:6)

*an engraver*; of precious stones, as those in the ephod and breastplate:

*and a cunning workman*; in devising and working curious figured works, either in weaving or with the needle:

*and an embroiderer in blue, and purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen;* which were used in the curtains and hangings of the tabernacle, and in the priests' garments.

**Ver. 24.** *All the gold that was occupied for the work, in all the work of the [place], etc.]* That was expended in making the mercy seat and cherubim, and the candlestick, which were all of pure gold; besides other things belonging to the ark and shewbread table; and the plates, with which the ark and many other things were covered or glided:

*even the gold of the offering;* which the people brought and offered freely; as their bracelets, earrings, and jewels of gold, (<sup>1082</sup>Exodus 35:22)

*was twenty nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary:* now as it is clear from (<sup>1085</sup>Exodus 38:25,26) that a talent is of the value of 3000 shekels, which, according to Brerewood, amount to three hundred and seventy five pounds of our money; and reckoning as he does the value of gold to be twelve times that of silver, a talent of gold, with him, is, of our money, 4500 pounds; so that twenty nine talents, seven hundred and thirty shekels, are reckoned by him at 131,595 pounds<sup>f999</sup>; but according to Dr. Cumberland<sup>f1000</sup>, who is more exact in his calculation, and who reckons a talent of silver at three hundred and fifty three pounds, eleven shillings, and ten pence halfpenny, and the value of gold to be fourteen times that of silver; so that a talent of gold is, with him, 5067 pounds, three shillings, and ten pence; wherefore this whole sum of gold expended in the tabernacle, according to him, amounted to 148,719 pounds sterling: and, according to Waserus<sup>f1001</sup>, the amount of the whole is 350,920 Hungarian ducats, which make three tons and a half of gold, and nine hundred and twenty ducats: when one considers the distressed case of the Israelites in Egypt, their late deliverance from thence, and the desert in which they were, it may be wondered how they came by these riches, here and after mentioned; but when it is observed, the riches of their ancestors, particularly what Joseph got in Egypt, which descended to their posterity; the repayment of the labour of the Israelites at their departure, with what they borrowed of the Egyptians, and what they found upon their carcasses when cast up by the Red sea, it will in a good measure be accounted for; to which may be added, that, according to Jerom<sup>f1002</sup>, there were, eleven miles from Mount Horeb in the wilderness, fruitful mountains of gold; called Catachrysea.

**Ver. 25.** *And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation,* etc.] This was not the offering of silver, (<sup>402534</sup>Exodus 35:24) but what was collected in numbering the people, where everyone of twenty years old and upwards paid half a shekel, (<sup>40202</sup>Exodus 30:12-15) the sum

*[was] an hundred talents, one thousand seven hundred and threescore fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary;* which, according to Brerewood <sup>f1003</sup>, make of our money, 37,721 pounds, seventeen shillings, and six pence; according to Waserus <sup>f1004</sup>, the whole amounted to 150,887 dollars and a half: and so, according to Lundius <sup>f1005</sup>, the sum is so many imperials, and forty five creutzers or cross pennies.

**Ver. 26.** *A bekah for every man, [that is], half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary,* etc.] A half shekel was called a “bekah”, from [qb, “bakah”, to divide; because it was a shekel divided into two parts:

*for everyone that went to be numbered, from twenty years and upwards;* in order to give a ransom, and make an atonement for their souls, as was ordered (<sup>40202</sup>Exodus 30:12-15)

*for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty [men];* so that from the time of their coming out of Egypt, which was now about six months ago, there was an increase of 3550 of the above age; (see <sup>40225</sup>Exodus 12:37).

**Ver. 27.** *And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail,* etc.] The sockets for the boards of the tabernacle, into which they were put; and the sockets for the vail, which divided between the holy and the most holy place, in which the pillars were set the vail was hung upon, and which was the silver foundation of the whole fabric:

*one hundred sockets of the one hundred talents, a talent for a socket;* there were ninety six sockets for the sanctuary or tabernacle, and four for the vail; and on each of these a talent of silver was expended; which, according to Dr. Cumberland, was three hundred and fifty three pounds, eleven shillings, and some odd pence; so much every socket cost.

**Ver. 28.** *And of the thousand seven hundred seventy five [shekels],* etc.] Which remained of the sum collected, (<sup>40225</sup>Exodus 38:25) after the silver sockets were cast:

*he made hooks for the pillars*: on each side of the court of the tabernacle on which the hangings were hung; these hooks, as Kimchi says <sup>f1006</sup>, were in the form of the letter W, and were made to hang the sacrifices upon, when they took their skins off; and so it is said in the Misnah <sup>f1007</sup>, that there were iron hooks fixed in the walls and pillars, on which they hung (the passover lambs) and skinned them; this was done in the second temple, when the hooks, it seems, were iron, but those of the tabernacle were silver:

*and overlaid their chapters, and filleted them*; that is, overlaid the heads, tops, or knobs of the pillars with silver plates, and filleted, girded, or hooped other parts of them with silver.

**Ver. 29.** *And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand four hundred shekels.*] Which, according to Paris weight, were 6177 pounds, ten ounces, two drachms, and sixty four grains <sup>f1008</sup>: this might be had from the neighbouring mountains of Arabia, where it is said <sup>f1009</sup> the metals of brass and iron were first dug.

**Ver. 30.** *And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, etc.*] Which were five; (see <sup><1237></sup>Exodus 26:37)

*and the brazen altar, and the brazen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar*; which were all made of brass; (see <sup><1272></sup>Exodus 27:2-4).

**Ver. 31.** *And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, etc.*] These were also of brass, in all sixty:

*and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about*; the pins for the curtains of the tabernacle, and for the hangings of the court; (see <sup><1279></sup>Exodus 27:19).