

THE TEXT OF EXODUS
TRANSLATION

38 And he made the altar of burnt-offering of acacia wood: five cubits was the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof, foursquare; and three cubits the height thereof. (2) And he made the horns thereof upon the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of one piece with it: and he overlaid it with brass. (3) And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basins, the flesh-hooks, and the firepans: all the vessels thereof made he of brass. (4) And he made for the altar a grating of network of brass, under the ledge round it beneath, reaching halfway up. (5) And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grating of brass, to be places for the staves. (6) And he made the staves of acacia wood, and overlaid them with brass. (7) And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, wherewith to bear it; he made it hollow with planks.

(8) And he made the laver of brass, and the base thereof of brass, of the mirrors of the ministering women that ministered at the door of the tent of meeting.

(9) And he made the court: for the south side southward the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, a hundred cubits; (10) their pillars were twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets were of silver. (11) And for the north side a hundred cubits, their pillars twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. (12) And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. (13) And for the east side eastward fifty cubits. (14) The hangings for the one side *of the gate* were fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three; (15) and so for the other side: on this hand and that hand by the gate of the court were hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. (16) All the hangings on the court round about were of fine twined linen. (17) And the sockets for the pillars were of brass; the

hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver; and the overlaying of their capitals, of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. (18) And the screen for the gate of the court was the work of the embroiderer, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court. (19) And their pillars were four, and their sockets four of brass; their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their capitals, and their fillets, of silver. (20) And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about were of brass.

(21) This is the sum of *the things* for the tabernacle, even the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were counted, according to the commandment of Mo-ses, for the service of the Le-vites, by the hand of Ith-a-mar, the son of Aar-on the priest. (22) And Be-zal-el the son of U-ri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Ju-dah, made all that Je-ho-vah commanded Mo-ses. (23) And with him was O-ho-li-ab, the son of A-his-a-mach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a skilful workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen.

(24) All the gold that was used for the work in all the work of the sanctuary, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shek-els, after the shek-el of the sanctuary. (25) And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was a hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shek-els, after the shek-el of the sanctuary: (26) a be-ka a head, *that is*, half a shek-el, after the shek-el of the sanctuary, for every one that passed over to them that were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. (27) And the hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the veil; a hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. (28) And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five *shek-els* he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their capitals, and made fillets for them. (29) And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand

and four hundred shek-els. (30) And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tent of meeting, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grating for it, and all the vessels of the altar, (31) and the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the gate of the court, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

1. *Topic:* The Outside Furniture and court; Cost of Materials. The theme of Outside Furniture gives this chapter an easily-remembered topic that contrasts with that of chapter thirty-seven.
2. *Parallel passages:* (See the notes on the earlier parallel passages.)
 - (1) 38:1-7 (Altar of burnt-offering) - 27:1-8.
 - (2) 38:8 (Laver) - 30:17-31.
 - (3) 38:9-20 (Court) - 27:9-19.
 - (4) 38:22-23 (Builders) - 31:1-11; 35:10-18, 30—36:1.
3. *Questions Answerable from the Bible:*
 - (1) What was the source of the brass for the laver and its base? (38:8)
 - (2) Which tribe was to do service for the tabernacle? (38:21)
 - (3) Under whose "hand" (or leadership) was the sum (accounts) of the tabernacle materials counted? (38:21)
 - (4) What craft work was Oholiab particularly skilled in? What materials did he use? (38:23)
 - (5) How much gold was used in the sanctuary? (38:24)
 - (6) How much silver was used in the sanctuary? (38:25)
 - (7) How much silver had been given by each of the men over twenty? (38:26; Compare 30:12-14.)
 - (8) How many Israelite men were counted and assessed for silver? (38:26; Compare Num. 1:46.)
 - (9) What was the silver used for? (38:27-28)

(10) How much brass was contributed for the sanctuary? (38:29)

(11) What was the brass used for? (38:30-31)

4. *Notes on Exodus 38:*

38:1 - The fuller title "altar of burnt-offering" is used here, to distinguish the altar from the altar of incense (37:25). Ex. 27:1 simply referred to "the altar" because the altar of incense had not yet been introduced.

38:8 - Only here is the information given that the laver and its bases were made from copper from the mirrors of the ministering women. See notes on 30:17-21. The laver and its base were not made from the material donated in the Lord's offering (38:29), but from the brass mirrors of the women.

This verse refers to the "ministering women" for the first time. The verb translated "minister" (*tsabah*) means "to assemble for service" (Num. 4:23), "to assemble for military service, to go forth to war" (Num. 3:17). The verb is related to the Hebrew word for "host" (as in the "Lord of hosts"). The same word is applied to the women in I Sam. 2:22, whom the sons of Eli wickedly lay with.

Statements have been made that the reference to the women ministering at the door of the tent of meeting is an anachronism, because there was not yet any tent of meeting built before which they could minister. (See *Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1, [1969], p. 466.) This statement is nonsense, if not blasphemy. The "tent of meeting" referred to is obviously the "tent of meeting" mentioned in 33:7. These women served there; and after the tabernacle was built, they continued their service around the new structure.

38:20 - The reference to the "pins" in the tabernacle is found only here. The word refers to a peg, nail or pin, something used for fastening. Probably it refers to the pins or stakes used to hold upright the tabernacle court and boards.

38:21 - Translation (with slight paraphrase in parentheses):

“These are the enumerations (or accounts) of (the materials collected for) the tabernacle, even the tabernacle of the testimony (or law), which were numbered (counted) by the order (literally “mouth”) of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand (the work of leadership) of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest.” On Ithamar, see 6:23 and 28:1.

Moses specifically ordered an inventory of the materials used. Apparently the Levites did the tabulating and Ithamar supervised the Levites.

The “sum” (literally “enumerations”) of the materials - the gold, silver and brass - is given in 38:24-31.

Observe the striking name “tabernacle of the testimony.” Regarding the “testimony,” see 25:1. “Testimony” means precept, law, or testimony, and refers to the ten commandments.

This verse is the first mention of the service of the Levites since they were consecrated to Jehovah in 32:29. The formal appointment of the Levites to the service of tabernacle is related in Numbers 3:5-51. A special setting-apart ceremony for them was done at yet a later time, and is mentioned in Deut. 10:8.

38:22 - High tribute is here paid to Bezalel. The Greek Bible relates erroneously that Bezalel had made the brazen altar of the brazen censers which belonged to the rebels who joined with Korah. See Numbers 16:36-39 for the real facts about this incident.

38:24 - A talent was approximately seventy-five pounds. A talent consisted of 3000 shekels, as can be calculated easily from 38:25-26. A shekel was about four-tenths of an ounce.

From these values we learn that the gold of the sanctuary amounted to one ton and 350 pounds. This would be worth over five and a half million dollars at \$150 an ounce. “Gold of the offering” is literally “gold of waving.” It was in God’s sight a type of wave-offering. See 29:26.

The amount of metals offered for the sanctuary may

seem very large. But vast amounts of gold, silver and copper are known to have been assembled by ancient kings. See Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, pp. 251-252, for examples. The Egyptians had a great love for valuable and elegant ornaments, gold, rings, necklaces, etc., as can be seen from their monuments. The Israelites had collected much of this Egyptian jewelry.

38:25 - The silver for the sanctuary amounted to four tons. The silver mentioned here was not the silver from the offering of 35:5, but was the silver obtained from the numbering of the men, who all gave a half-shekel when numbered. See 30:12-14. This silver was used for the silver sockets (pedestals), and for overlaying the capitals of the pillars.

We are not informed concerning the uses made of the silver referred to in 35:24. Possibly, as Cassuto suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 472), the silver in 35:24 is actually the same silver as that referred to in 39:25. This appears uncertain to us.

38:26 - The word *bekah* (from a verb meaning "to divide") means "half," hence, half-shekel.

Concerning the heavier "shekel of the sanctuary" see 30:13.

See 30:11-14 for the instructions about taking a census and collecting the half-shekel atonement money. A major census is described in Num. 1:1. It was taken only a month after the tabernacle was set up (Ex. 40:17). But the count in Ex. 36:26 was obviously taken *before* the tabernacle was built. Yet the number of people counted - 603,550 - is exactly the same in Exodus 36 and Numbers 1!

It appears from Numbers 1:18 that that count of the Israelites by families and by tribes was done in a single day! To accomplish such a feat would require complete cooperation by the people and thorough preparation and organization in advance by the leaders. Such preparation is exactly what the count in Exodus thirty-eight would

have provided. The names of the people were all already written down (possibly on potsherds). With the names already on hand, the census takers could quickly have checked and collated them into tribes and families. See Num. 1:2, 20, 22, 24, *passim*.

A collection of money similar to that mentioned in Ex. 38:26 was made in the time of King Joash (II Chron. 24:4-6), apparently at the same rate per head, for the repairing of the temple. This was not an annual tax, but a special one. The tax of Matt. 17:27 (which seems to have been an annual levy) was a later and different tax, even though it involved the same sum (half a shekel) as the special levy for the sanctuary.

38:27 - Regarding the "sockets," see 26:19-25.

38:28 - Regarding the pillars, see 27:10, 17.

38:29-30 - The brass (copper) of the offering amounted to two tons and 500 pounds.

The uses of the brass are described in 38:30. No mention is made of the laver among these uses listed, because the brass for the laver came from a separate source.

See Ex. 27:4 concerning the "brazen grating." This grating seems to have been a network of brass on the sides of the altar, through which a draft of air could be drawn up into the fire inside the altar.

38:31 - The heavy brass and silver sockets and other heavy items were transported about in six covered wagons pulled by twelve oxen. See Num. 7:2-5.

Does the great amount of gold, silver, and brass in the tabernacle indicate that God's people should expect to live in wealthy surroundings and comfort? Does it indicate that we should build church buildings of luxurious quality?

The Israelites themselves, who made the tabernacle, were often brought low and even caused to hunger, that they might learn that man does not live by bread alone, but by the word of

God (Deut. 8:2-3). These people did not live in luxury, even though their tabernacle was somewhat luxurious. Neither can we as God's people expect soft luxurious living. The people of God have often been destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (Heb. 11:37). The early Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their possessions (Heb. 10:34). We really must not expect better treatment.

There is, however, another side to this matter. God's prophet Isaiah (60:5-14) spoke of the time when the "wealth of the nations shall come unto thee," referring to Zion, the people of God. Similarly Haggai 2:7-8 prophesied that "the precious things of all nations" would come to fill God's house with glory. In fulfillment of these prophecies, there have indeed been times when the church has had a great deal of wealth. Even Paul declared that he knew how "both to abound (have abundance) and to suffer need" (Phil. 4:2). Thus it appears that the church should not expect to be poor at all times in all places. The important thing is to learn to be content, whatever our lot, and not to set our hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God. (Phil. 4:11; I Tim. 6:17)

Does the luxury of the tabernacle suggest that we should build luxurious church buildings? Probably not. The New Testament does not even mention church buildings. The PEOPLE of God now constitute His temple, rather than a building of stones and gold (I Peter 2:5; Eph. 2:19-22). The Christians in apostolic times met in homes, public porches, school houses, etc. They were aware that everything in this earth is to be burned up (II Peter 3:10). They did not consider that the tabernacle or even Solomon's temple was a precedent to them to make luxurious structures. In fact, God had never asked Solomon to build any temple; and God caused the temple to be demolished when the people became unfaithful to Him. God dwells with him that is "poor and of a contrite spirit" (Isa. 66:2). We do not condemn the making of adequate attractive meeting houses. They may be helpful and even quite necessary. But the tabernacle is hardly a precedent to us to build buildings of great luxury. If God should grant

us on some occasions a degree of luxury, we shall pray it may be used to His glory. If we suffer want, we shall still praise Him, and be content.

THE TEXT OF EXODUS
TRANSLATION

39 And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made finely wrought garments, for ministering in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aar-on; as Je-ho-vah commanded Mo-ses.

(2) And he made the eph-od of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. (3) And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, the work of the skilful workman. (4) They made shoulder-pieces for it, joined together; at the two ends was it joined together. (5) And the skilfully woven band, that was upon it, wherewith to gird it on, was of the same piece *and* like the work thereof; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as Je-ho-vah commanded Mo-ses.

(6) And they wrought the onyx stones, inclosed in settings of gold, graven with the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the children of Is-ra-el. (7) And he put them on the shoulder-pieces of the eph-od, to be stones of memorial for the children of Is-ra-el; as Je-ho-vah commanded Mo-ses.

(8) And he made the breastplate, the work of the skilful workman, like the work of the eph-od; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. (9) It was four-square; they made the breastplate double: a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, being double. (10) And they set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle was the first row; (11) and the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; (12) and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; (13) and the fourth