

The Book of Exodus

Lesson 25

Chapters 35-38

List of the Command of the LORD

Exodus 35:1 Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and said to them, " These are the things that the LORD has commanded *you* to do.

Moses had arrived in the camp at the end of the second 40 days and nights that he had spent on Mount Sinai. They had seen his face and they were afraid of him. The first time he came down the mountain he found the camp was engulfed in sin a molten calf, nude worship and war covered with guilt. With the first tablets in his hands, he became furious and shattered the stones to show his own anger about what he had seen. This second time Moses arrived with the two new stones, the mood in the camp was very different. A holiness was there. They might have expected the two new tablets because they had probably seen Moses chiseling them out on the side of the mountain. They might have expected a whole new set of commands from the LORD for that was the mode of operation as Moses was going and coming from the mountain. But what they did not expect was his glowing face. It struck them with fear. It was a miracle that they had never seen before and no one will ever see again according to the LORD's Word.

All was in order in the camp. It was time for Moses to deliver the message from the LORD. Surely he delivered all the words that the LORD had said. He probably read them to the congregation. After all, he had spent the last days on the mountain writing them down. A few are reiterated here in this chapter.

Sabbath

Exodus 35:2 " For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy *day*, a sabbath of complete rest to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.

Although the congregation knew of this command because they had heard it from the LORD Himself when He spoke the Ten Commandments to them when they had first arrived at the foot of the mountain, this command still needed to be repeated for clarity as well as to stress the penalty for the sin of breaking it.

No Fire on Sabbath

Exodus 35:3 " You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the sabbath day."

The western mind would take this command at face value, a fire means a fire! Yet, that is not the way the Israelites have interpreted it through the years. The fire in a lamp was permissible to light the dwelling as well as give them heat if needed. This passage focuses on fire for the purpose of work, the making of soap, the preparation of food to be sold, the soaking of hides that will be tanned and such. Those acts constitute work and death was the penalty.

Contributions from Willing Hearts for the Furniture and Fixtures

Exodus 35:4 And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying, ⁵ ' Take from among you a contribution to the LORD; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as the LORD'S contribution: gold, silver, and bronze, ⁶ and blue, purple and scarlet *material*, fine linen, goats' *hair*, ⁷ and rams' skins dyed red, and porpoise skins, and acacia wood, ⁸ and oil for lighting, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense, ⁹ and onyx stones and setting stones, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. ¹⁰ 'And let every skillful man among you come, and make all that the LORD has commanded: ¹¹ the tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its hooks and its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; ¹² the ark and its poles, the mercy seat, and the curtain of the screen; ¹³ the table and its poles, and all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; ¹⁴ the lampstand also for the light and its utensils and its lamps and the oil for the light; ¹⁵ and the altar of incense and its poles, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the doorway at the entrance of the tabernacle; ¹⁶ the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles, and all its utensils, the basin and its stand; ¹⁷ the hangings of the court, its pillars and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; ¹⁸ the pegs of the tabernacle and the pegs of the court and their cords; ¹⁹ the woven garments, for ministering in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.'"

Moses presented the call for donations. In doing so, he presented the plans for the overall project. Surely, as Moses listed the items, he stirred the hearts of the people as they began to imagine a picture of the great Tabernacle they were to build. We must know here that almost all we see in this chapter and the following we have already commented on in detail in the notes on Exodus Chapters 25 – 31. (See notes for Exodus lessons 17 – 22.)

Hearts Stirred

Exodus 35:20 Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel departed from Moses' presence. ²¹ And everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came *and* brought the LORD'S contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments. ²² Then all whose hearts moved them, both men and women, came *and* brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and bracelets, all articles of gold; so *did* every man who presented an offering of gold to the LORD. ²³ And every man, who had in his possession blue and purple and scarlet *material* and fine linen and goats' *hair* and rams' skins dyed red and porpoise skins, brought them. ²⁴ Everyone who could make a contribution of silver and bronze brought the LORD'S contribution; and every man, who had in his possession acacia wood for any work of the service, brought it.

Notice that this offering was not mandatory; it was voluntary based on the hearts of the people as they were moved to give.

The Spinning of Material Began

Exodus 35:25 And all the skilled women spun with their hands, and brought what they had spun, *in blue and purple and scarlet material and in fine linen.* ²⁶ And all the women whose heart stirred with a skill spun the goats' hair.

Spinning was woman's work and there were those who were willing to begin to spin thread that would be used on the looms to make the curtains. Some spun blue, some spun purple and others spun scarlet linen thread. Others volunteered to spin the thread for the goats' hair curtains.

Gifts from the Rulers

Exodus 35:27 And the rulers brought the onyx stones and the stones for setting for the ephod and for the breastpiece; ²⁸ and the spice and the oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense.

The English translation of "rulers" does not represent the Hebrew meaning well. It should be *chiefs*. When we think of rulers we think of kings; these men were not kings and never had been. When we think of *chiefs* we think of the heads of the tribes or family units and that is what is being communicated here. The heads of the family units were bringing the stones the spices Egypt and the oils. These valuable items were most likely gifts from the Egyptians as they were leaving on that last day. Even though they were the chiefs of the family units while they were in Egypt, they were still slaves and poor beyond imagination. Had they been wealthy, they would never have agreed to beg for a savior to deliver them from Pharaoh's heavy oppression. For six months they had probably salivated over their new-found wealth but since the molten calf debacle, their hearts toward the LORD and His call had changed.

A Freewill Offering

Exodus 35:29 The Israelites, all the men and women, whose heart moved them to bring *material* for all the work, which the LORD had commanded through Moses to be done, brought a freewill offering to the LORD.

"Freewill" simply means voluntary. No one was pressured to give.

Moses Introduces Bezalel and Oholiab

Exodus 35:30 Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³¹ "And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship; ³² to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze, ³³ and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, so as to perform in every inventive work. ³⁴ "He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. ³⁵ " He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple *and in scarlet material*, and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs.

Moses had known about these men for almost three months by this time in the story. The LORD had instructed Moses to put them in charge of the building because He had given them the ability and skills to do the work to the level of quality expected. We heard of them first in Exodus 28:3.

Moses Commissions Bezalel, Oholiab and Skilled Persons

Exodus 36:1 "Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the LORD has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded." ² Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful person in whom the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to perform it.

We must notice that in this passage we learn something new. The workers who helped Bezalel and Oholiab were the ones **“whose heart stirred him.”** Once again, working on the Tabernacle, its furniture and fixtures, was completely voluntary.

Bezalel, Oholiab and Skilled Persons Receive Contributions to Build

Exodus 36:3 And they received from Moses all the contributions which the sons of Israel had brought to perform the work in the construction of the sanctuary. And they still *continued* bringing to him freewill offerings every morning.

Just as planned, Moses called for the offerings, received them and then passed them on to the craftsmen. But notice that the offerings did not stop there, they continued to come in morning after morning.

The Work Began

Exodus 36:4 And all the skillful men who were performing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work which he was performing, ⁵ and they said to Moses, "The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the LORD commanded *us* to perform."

We do not know how long it took, but soon the skilled workers realized that they had more supplies than needed to complete the project. They reached out to Moses for help with the problem.

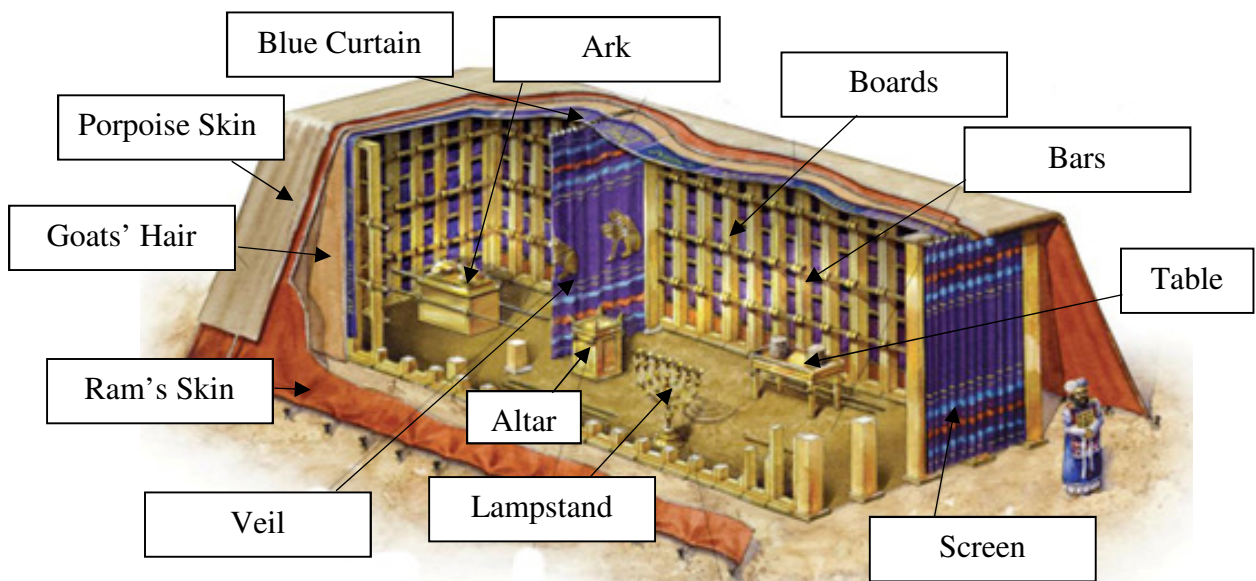
Collection of Offerings Ended

Exodus 36:6 So Moses issued a command, and a proclamation was circulated throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman any longer perform work for the contributions of the sanctuary." Thus the people were restrained from bringing *any more*.

In a different mode of operation, Moses did not call a meeting of all the congregation; rather, Moses simply sent a proclamation throughout the camp that all the contributions needed had been given and no more were needed. That phase of the project was over.

Tabernacle Completed

Exodus 36:7 For the material they had was sufficient and more than enough for all the work, to perform it. ⁸ And all the skillful men among those who were performing the work made the tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet *material*, with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman, Bezalel made them. ⁹ The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; all the curtains had the same measurements. ¹⁰ And he joined five curtains to one another, and *the other* five curtains he joined to one another. ¹¹ And he made loops of blue on the edge of the outermost curtain in the first set; he did likewise on the edge of the curtain that was outermost in the second set. ¹² He made fifty loops in the one curtain and he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was in the second set; the loops were opposite each other. ¹³ And he made fifty clasps of gold, and joined the curtains to one another with the clasps, so the tabernacle was a unit. ¹⁴ Then he made curtains of goats' *hair* for a tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains in all. ¹⁵ The length of each curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits the width of each curtain; the eleven curtains had the same measurements. ¹⁶ And he joined five curtains by themselves, and *the other* six curtains by themselves. ¹⁷ Moreover, he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was outermost in the *first* set, and he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain *that was outermost* in the second set. ¹⁸ And he made fifty clasps of bronze to join the tent together, that it might be a unit. ¹⁹ And he made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of porpoise skins above. ²⁰ Then he made the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing upright. ²¹ Ten cubits was the length of each board, and one and a half cubits the width of each board. ²² There were two tenons for each board, fitted to one another; thus he did for all the boards of the tabernacle. ²³ And he made the boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side; ²⁴ and he made forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. ²⁵ Then for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, he



Artist Rendition of the Tabernacle

made twenty boards, ²⁶ and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board and two sockets under another board. ²⁷ And for the rear of the tabernacle, to the west, he made six boards. ²⁸ And he made two boards for the corners of the tabernacle at the rear. ²⁹ And they were double beneath, and together they were complete to its top to the first ring; thus he did with both of them for the two corners. ³⁰ And there were eight boards with their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets, two under every board. ³¹ Then he made bars of acacia wood, five for the boards of one side of the tabernacle, ³² and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the rear *side* to the west. ³³ And he made the middle bar to pass through in the center of the boards from end to end. ³⁴ And he overlaid the boards with gold and made their rings of gold *as* holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold. ³⁵ Moreover, he made the veil of blue and purple and scarlet *material*, and fine twisted linen; he made it with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman. ³⁶ And he made four pillars of acacia for it, and overlaid them with gold, with their hooks of gold; and he cast four sockets of silver for them. ³⁷ And he made a screen for the doorway of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet *material*, and fine twisted linen, the work of a weaver; ³⁸ and *he made* its five pillars with their hooks, and he overlaid their tops and their bands with gold; but their five sockets were of bronze.

The Tabernacle that Moses had seen in heaven from his perch on Mount Sinai was completed exactly as he had measured and drawn them. (See notes from Exodus 26, Lesson 17 for a full commentary.)

Ark of the Covenant and Mercy Seat Completed

Exodus 37:1 Now Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; its length was two and a half cubits, and its width one and a half cubits, and its height one and a half cubits; ² and he overlaid it with pure gold inside and out, and made a gold molding for it all around. ³ And he cast four rings of gold for it on its four feet; even two rings on one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. ⁴ And he made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. ⁵ And he put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry it. ⁶ And he made a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long, and one and a half cubits wide. ⁷ And he made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered work, at the two ends of the mercy seat; ⁸ one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end; he made the cherubim *of one piece* with the mercy seat at the two ends. ⁹ And the cherubim had *their* wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces toward each other; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat.

The Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant (Testimony) and the Mercy Seat were also completed. (See notes from Exodus 25, Lesson 17 for a full commentary.)

Table of Shew Bread and Utensils Completed

Exodus 37:10 Then he made the table of acacia wood, two cubits long and a cubit wide and one and a half cubits high. ¹¹ And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made a gold molding for it all around. ¹² And he made a rim for it of a handbreadth all

around, and made a gold molding for its rim all around. ¹³ And he cast four gold rings for it and put the rings on the four corners that were on its four feet. ¹⁴ Close by the rim were the rings, the holders for the poles to carry the table. ¹⁵ And he made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, to carry the table. ¹⁶ And he made the utensils which were on the table, its dishes and its pans and its bowls and its jars, with which to pour out libations, of pure gold.

The Table of Shew Bread and all of its utensils were completed as planned. (See notes from Exodus 25, Lesson 17 for a full commentary.)

Lampstand and Utensils Completed

Exodus 37:17 Then he made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand of hammered work, its base and its shaft; its cups, its bulbs and its flowers were *of one piece* with it. ¹⁸ And there were six branches going out of its sides; three branches of the lampstand from the one side of it, and three branches of the lampstand from the other side of it; ¹⁹ three cups shaped like almond *blossoms*, a bulb and a flower in one branch, and three cups shaped like almond *blossoms*, a bulb and a flower in the other branch-- so for the six branches going out of the lampstand. ²⁰ And in the lampstand *there were* four cups shaped like almond *blossoms*, its bulbs and its flowers; ²¹ and a bulb was under the *first* pair of branches *coming* out of it, and a bulb under the *second* pair of branches *coming* out of it, and a bulb under the *third* pair of branches *coming* out of it, for the six branches coming out of the lampstand. ²² Their bulbs and their branches were *of one piece* with it; the whole of it *was* a single hammered work of pure gold. ²³ And he made its seven lamps with its snuffers and its trays of pure gold. ²⁴ He made it and all its utensils from a talent of pure gold.

As with the previous items, the Lampstand and its utensils were completed. (See notes from Exodus 25, Lesson 17 for a full commentary.)

Altar of Incense Completed

Exodus 37:25 Then he made the altar of incense of acacia wood: a cubit long and a cubit wide, square, and two cubits high; its horns were *of one piece* with it. ²⁶ And he overlaid it with pure gold, its top and its sides all around, and its horns; and he made a gold molding for it all around. ²⁷ And he made two golden rings for it under its molding, on its two sides-- on opposite sides-- as holders for poles with which to carry it. ²⁸ And he made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.

The Altar of Incense was completed, perfectly matching its design and specifications. (See notes from Exodus 30, Lesson 20 for a full commentary.)

Anointing Oil and Incense Prepared

Exodus 37:29 And he made the holy anointing oil and the pure, fragrant incense of spices, the work of a perfumer.

The Anointing Oil and the Incense were prepared by the perfumers according to the proper recipe. (See notes from Exodus 30, Lesson 20 for a full commentary.)

Brazen Altar and Utensils Completed

Exodus 38:1 Then he made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits wide, square, and three cubits high. ² And he made its horns on its four corners, its horns being *of one piece* with it, and he overlaid it with bronze. ³ And he made all the utensils of the altar, the pails and the shovels and the basins, the flesh hooks and the firepans; he made all its utensils of bronze. ⁴ And he made for the altar a grating of bronze network beneath, under its ledge, reaching halfway up. ⁵ And he cast four rings on the four ends of the bronze grating *as* holders for the poles. ⁶ And he made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. ⁷ And he inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to carry it. He made it hollow with planks.

Just as planned, the Brazen Altar was completed with all its utensils. (See notes from Exodus 27, Lesson 18 for a full commentary.)

Laver Completed

Exodus 38:8 Moreover, he made the laver of bronze with its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

The Laver was completed. This item was the bowl or basin used to hold water for the ceremonial washing. The notes on its construction can be found in Exodus 30:18 in lesson 20; however, here we see an interesting addition to the design. The bowl was made **“from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.”** Glass was not yet in use for mirrors in any part of the world at that time. Rather, highly polished metal plates were used, and copper was the favorite. Of course, the first mirrors were the clear rivers, streams and lakes in which people were able to see their reflections. Later, copper plates were polished until they were smooth and bright and used as mirrors. These same small mirrors were donated to the cause and molded together to create this large basin to hold the water. It, too, was most likely polished to a mirror finish even before the water was added.

We have absolutely no understanding of the part of the sentence that says, **“of the serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.”** Evidently, a job was established at the door to the Tabernacle for some purpose. Evidently, the women who voluntarily brought their mirrors that were used in the creation of the water basin were allowed to work at the doorway of the Tabernacle. Perhaps that is the reason there was a female doorkeeper at the house of the high priest who allowed Peter to enter when our LORD was being interrogated. Perhaps it was a custom started at the completion of the Tabernacle, but nothing is really known on the subject. In 2 Samuel 4, we find a woman as the doorkeeper to Saul’s son, Ishbosheth, who took King Saul’s place as king over 10 tribes of Israel when his father was killed but it would be a stretch to consider such a job for a woman in the king’s palace the same as that which began with the construction of the Tabernacle. We simply do not know.

Courtyard Curtains Completed

Exodus 38:9 Then he made the court: for the south side the hangings of the court were of fine twisted linen, one hundred cubits; ¹⁰ their twenty pillars, and their twenty sockets, *made* of bronze; the hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* of silver.

¹¹ And for the north side *there were* one hundred cubits; their twenty pillars and their twenty sockets *were* of bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* of silver. ¹² And for the west side *there were* hangings of fifty cubits *with* their ten pillars and their ten sockets; the hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* of silver.

¹³ And for the east side fifty cubits. ¹⁴ The hangings for the *one side of the gate were* fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets, ¹⁵ and so for the other side. On both sides of the gate of the court *were* hangings of fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets. ¹⁶ All the hangings of the court all around *were* of fine twisted linen. ¹⁷ And the sockets for the pillars *were* of bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands, of silver; and the overlaying of their tops, of silver, and all the pillars of the court were furnished with silver bands. ¹⁸ And the screen of the gate of the court was the work of the weaver, of blue and purple and scarlet *material*, and fine twisted linen. And the length was twenty cubits and the height was five cubits, corresponding to the hangings of the court. ¹⁹ And their four pillars and their four sockets *were* of bronze; their hooks *were* of silver, and the overlaying of their tops and their bands *were* of silver. ²⁰ And all the pegs of the tabernacle and of the court all around *were* of bronze.

Finally, the curtain and all its poles, sockets and pegs were completed. This curtain surrounded the Tabernacle and formed a courtyard for the Holy place. (See notes from Exodus 27, Lesson 18 for a full commentary.)

Ithamar Gives Accounting

Exodus 38:21 This is the number of *the things for* the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were numbered according to the command of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest.

After the completion of the work on the Tabernacle with all its furniture and fixtures Ithamar led the Levites in accounting for all that was done. Everything was numbered. Everything was counted. Everything was logged for inventory purposes and reported to Moses.

Works Complete

Exodus 38:22 Now Bezalel, the son of Uri the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD had commanded Moses. ²³ And with him was Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and a skillful workman and a weaver in blue and in purple and in scarlet *material*, and fine linen.

Bezalel and Oholiab had done their work well. Here, they are recognized for their efforts when all the construction was accounted for near the end of the project.

Accounting for Gold

Exodus 38:24 All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary, even the gold of the wave offering, was 29 talents and 730 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary.

It is difficult to reckon just what 29 talents and 730 shekels amounted to in weight and value according to the shekel of the sanctuary. Just how many shekels equaled a talent? We can guess, but we do not know for sure. If a shekel was 9.3 troy ounces as we discussed in Exodus 30, lesson 21, then the 730 shekels equaled 6,789 ounces. If a talent weighed 3,000 shekels as suggested in Easton's Illustrated Dictionary, then the 29 talents weighed 809,100 troy ounces. In all, the gold weighed 815,889 troy ounces or 67,990.75 troy pounds or 55,946.67 pounds in our normal measurement.

Accounting for Silver

Exodus 38:25 And the silver of those of the congregation who were numbered was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; ²⁶ a beka a head (*that is, half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary*), for each one who passed over to those who were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for 603,550 men. ²⁷ And the hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets of the veil; one hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. ²⁸ And of the 1,775 *shekels*, he made hooks for the pillars and overlaid their tops and made bands for them.

If this passage actually means that the silver redemption of each male twenty years old and older equaled the amount of silver given. The redemption was a beka or half shekel per person, making 301,775 equal 100 talents of silver and 1,775 shekels of silver. If the same weight of the sanctuary shekel was 9.3 troy ounces, then the silver weighted 2,790,000 troy ounces. The 1,775 shekels weighed 16,507.5 troy ounces. Together, the silver weighed 233,875.62 troy pounds or 192,446.22 in our normal pounds. In all, the redemption for each man 20 years of age and over weighed approximately a third of a pound per person, a very doable donation.

Accounting for Bronze

Exodus 38: 29 And the bronze of the wave offering was 70 talents, and 2,400 shekels. ³⁰ And with it he made the sockets to the doorway of the tent of meeting, and the bronze altar and its bronze grating, and all the utensils of the altar, ³¹ and the sockets of the court all around and the sockets of the gate of the court, and all the pegs of the tabernacle and all the pegs of the court all around.

As in the accounting of the gold and the silver, the bronze (copper) weighed in at 15,422.5 pounds in our normal reckoning. In all, the three metals of gold, silver and bronze used in the construction of the Tabernacle weighed 207,868.72 pounds. If a man could carry 50 pounds by himself, it took about 4,157 men to carry just the metal portions of the construction each time the Tabernacle was moved, not including the curtains, coverings, ropes, skins, oils, incenses, and wood.